Article

The role of anti-corruption legislation in sustainable development

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Abstract: This article identifies the role of anti-corruption legislation in sustainable development. The descriptive approach is used to achieve the research objectives, as it is the appropriate scientific method suitable for the nature of the study subject in terms of presenting information related to combating administrative corruption. The results indicate that efforts to combat administrative corruption to achieve sustainable development in countries can only be achieved through strict legislation specialized in combating administrative corruption with the activation of accountability mechanisms in all state departments, bodies, and ministries. The results also demonstrate the alignment of the national and international efforts to reduce the phenomenon of corruption through international agreements and treaties. Towards the end, key conclusions and recommendations are also appropriately incorporated.

Keywords: anti-corruption; development; laws; legislation; sustainable

1. Introduction

Countries show great international interest in the issue of combating administrative corruption, which has recently become one of the key problems facing those interested in sustainable development (Hindawy, 2023). Countries' interest in raising development rates has increased by making maximum use of all available resources and overcoming everything that hinders the development process in its political, economic, and social dimensions, as administrative corruption is the main obstacle to development plans and programs (Abu Fara, 2020). With this in mind, administrative corruption is defined as "an illegal and non-transparent provision of private earnings to public officials. As a result, an advantage is given to state or non-state actors by deliberately falsifying the prescribed implementation of existing laws, rules, and regulations" (Ünlü and Karacaer Ulusoy, 2021, p. 1). Regarding the philosophical aspect of Sustainable Learning Goals (SLG) and its relationship with administrative corruption, sustainable development, if its rules and regulations are properly implemented, ensures that all learners acquire the knowledge and skills necessary to support sustainable development, including, inter alia, education for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights and gender equality (Ali, 2021; Althunibat et al., 2024). Sustainable development, if achieved, ensures the promotion of a culture of peace, non-violence, global citizenship, appreciation of cultural diversity and appreciation of the contribution of culture to sustainable development, and ensuring universal access to sexual and reproductive health services and reproductive rights, as agreed in accordance with the Program of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development, the Beijing Platform for

Action and the outcome documents for their conferences (Qweider and Muhammad, 2021). Also, sustainable development, if achieved, ensures a significant reduction in corruption and bribery in all their forms, thus achieving the vision of sustainable development and directing it to achieve personal interests at the expense of the public interest (Al-Alami and Al-Obaidi, 2020; AlAli, 2023).

The issue of combating administrative corruption is a major and central issue for all countries in the world (Al-Hanafi, 2020). Due to the belief of countries and international organizations in the seriousness of the effects of administrative corruption, the latter have worked to coordinate international efforts to combat corruption and develop and strengthen national legal systems capable of combating corruption to enhance levels of sustainable development (Troisi et al., 2023). The United Nations General Assembly adopted the United Nations Convention against Corruption (UNCAC), a legally binding international instrument adopted by the UN in 2003 and ratified by 187 states (Hamm, 2022).

In the same vein, national and international efforts have been aligned to reduce the phenomenon of corruption through international agreements and treaties, such as the 2012 Arab Anti-Corruption Convention, the 2014 United Nations Convention against Corruption, and the 2011 International Anti-Corruption Academy as an international organization as an agreement of a procedural, technical, applied nature. Harmonized national and international efforts are reflected in the foundations of sustainable development, developing them and reducing any phenomenon that would reduce the implementation of developmental work that seeks the public good (Daas, 2022).

At the local level, recent efforts in Jordan to bolster anti-corruption measures and promote sustainable development have gained traction in academic discourse. The National Integrity and Anti-Corruption Strategy, launched by the Jordanian government in 2019, is a significant milestone in this regard. This strategy aims to enhance transparency, accountability, and integrity in public institutions, addressing various facets of administrative corruption.

Furthermore, Jordan has made notable progress in enhancing legal frameworks to combat corruption. The enactment of laws such as the Integrity and Anti-Corruption Law of 2016 and amendments to the Penal Code have strengthened the legal infrastructure for prosecuting corrupt practices and enhancing accountability among public officials. Additionally, the establishment of specialized anti-corruption agencies, such as the Integrity and Anti-Corruption Commission (IACC), underscores the government's commitment to tackling corruption at the institutional level (Althunibat et al, 2021; Althunibat et al; 2022; Omar, 2021).

In addition to legislative measures, Jordan has also prioritized awareness-raising and capacity-building initiatives to instill a culture of integrity and transparency. Educational programs, workshops, and campaigns have been implemented to engage citizens, civil society organizations, and the private sector in the fight against corruption. These efforts aim to empower individuals and organizations to identify, report, and prevent corrupt practices and other forms of corruption such as financial corruption and criminal corruption, thereby fostering a more accountable and ethical society.

Of these corruptions is the financial corruption which is defined as abnormal and

dishonest behavior that combines all financial deviations from legislation and laws to work for one's personal benefit at the expense of the public interest, and is directed to private persons or institutions and includes providing bribes to the beneficiary, gifts and bribes, money laundering, and defrauding investors. It is also defined as violating the laws and interests of the state and not abiding by it in order to achieve political and social gains for a particular person or group. Financial corruption often accompanies the economy, as it is in the interest of the corrupt employee to maintain the backwardness in the progress of the investment process in a way that serves his or her interests, exploiting its delay in keeping pace with developments to achieve their personal interests. Thus, he always strives to impose obstacles, modify them or replace them with what is more advanced and easier to implement, which leads to affecting the public interest (Mania, 2021).

In the same content, criminal corruption is defined as a set of dishonest acts carried out by some people in positions of authority. There are many situations in which a person can be considered corrupt, such as giving and accepting bribes and unprompted gifts, money transfer, fraud, and money laundering, which constitutes the evolution of the concept of corruption as dishonest acts to the presence of criminal acts such as bribery, nepotism, forgery, and money laundering. Bribery, nepotism, forgery, and money laundering are acts punishable by law. In addition to the disciplinary penalty imposed on the public employee, it entails criminal liability and the criminal punishment imposed for that crime.

Against this, the focus of this research is on the legislation regulating the fight against administrative corruption and its role to achieve sustainable development, alongside explaining the international documents concerned with sustainable development, such as the Millennium Development Goals and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development Goals (Transforming Our World). The focus of this research is also reflected in identifying the relationship between the International Convention against Corruption and sustainable development, with an eye on the Jordanian Integrity and Anti-Corruption Law, to show the extent to which its provisions are in line with the international obligations to combat administrative corruption towards achieving the sustainable development goals.

Besides, the research pays special attention to the sixteenth goal of the sustainable development goals, which focuses on promoting peace, justice, and strong institutions, including several goals that call for ending violence, strengthening the rule of law, supporting institutions, inclusive decision-making, and reducing corruption to achieve the sustainable development goals. With that being said, the remainder of the paper is structured as follows: Section two provides an overview of the literature review. Section three presents the conceptual framework, while section four shows the research problem. Section five presents a review of the methodology adopted in this paper. Section six provides results, while section seven explains the discussion. Subsequently, section eight makes concluding remarks, while section nine provides recommendations.

2. Literature review

Various studies and research have documented the legislative frameworks targeting administrative corruption and their implications for sustainable development. Salmon and Qaramitia (2023) dissected the intricacies of good governance and sustainable development, shedding light on the mechanisms driving sustainable development activation and elucidating their relationship. Meanwhile, Fhima et al. (2023) scrutinized corruption's impact on sustainable development, employing the Seo and Shin (2016) threshold model across a dataset spanning 1996 to 2019, revealing its hindrance in developed nations and its nuanced effects in developing countries. Concurrently, Hindawy (2023) delineated the obstructive role of administrative corruption, emphasizing strides made in combating it within the Kingdom and advocating for integrity promotion to nurture a vigilant populace capable of challenging administrative corruption.

Castro and Lopes (2022) examined e-government's efficacy in curbing corruption, highlighting its significance alongside other determinants such as accountability and political stability. Al-Mulla (2020) established the nexus between combating corruption and sustainable development in Kuwait, while Hoinaru et al. (2020) elucidated corruption and shadow economy's detrimental impact on economic and sustainable development, particularly in low-income countries. Moreover, Sasongko et al. (2019) analyzed the relationship between government expenditure and economic growth, revealing discrepancies that challenge traditional models like Wagner's Law.

Further insights were provided by Frolova et al. (2019), who explored corruption's impact in Tatarstan, proposing measures to ameliorate its effects on sustainable development. Owusu et al. (2019) investigated the impacts of corruption in construction projects, identifying critical variables affecting project integrity. Additionally, Murshed and Mredula (2018) examined corruption's influence on socioeconomic and environmental development across different regions, offering nuanced insights (Fatimia and Mohammad, 2022).

The philosophy of Sustainable Development Leadership (SDL) embodies a comprehensive set of principles, values, and practices aimed at advancing sustainable development goals (Krastev et al., 2020). At its core, SDL emphasizes the adoption of leadership approaches that prioritize the long-term well-being of society and the environment over short-term gains (Samaha, 2018). Leaders guided by SDL recognize the intricate interconnections between environmental sustainability, social equity, and economic prosperity. They champion holistic solutions that address the needs of present and future generations, promoting environmental stewardship, social justice, and economic resilience. The philosophy of sustainable law and development works to achieve a kind of balance, as the internationally recognized scientific definition of sustainability is to meet the needs of the current generation without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs (Williams and Dupuy, 2017).

This philosophy involves that this law is embodied in the form of a balance of justice that ensures the achievement of balance, reconciliation and stability between the various components of society, individuals and groups. The philosophy of the sustainable development legislation has several dimensions. Among these dimensions

are the economic dimension which relates to ensuring economic development that promotes prosperity and works to achieve social justice and reduce poverty, which requires developing sustainable and innovative activities and promoting comprehensive and sustainable growth. Also, the social dimension is related to achieving social justice, ensuring human rights, and equal opportunities for all, as this dimension requires focusing on mastering government services and enhancing community participation (Al-Jahani, 2019).

Another key related dimension is the administrative dimension which means enhancing the ability to make effective decisions and develop policies and legal frameworks that support sustainable development. This includes enshrining governance and enhancing cooperation and sustainable partnerships between governments, civil society and the private sector (Musa, 2022). Therefore, achieving the various dimensions of sustainable development requires stakeholders in the public and private sectors, individuals and institutions, to adopt sound and disciplined behaviors and practices, where the law and its sovereignty regulate their rhythm within a framework of harmony and integration of roles leading to comprehensive progress in a sustainable, just and stable environment (Hindawi, 2023).

On the other hand, administrative corruption denotes the misuse or abuse of authority within bureaucratic or administrative systems for personal gain or to undermine the public interest. This malpractice encompasses various forms of misconduct, including bribery, embezzlement, nepotism, and favoritism. Administrative corruption poses significant challenges to governance, eroding public trust in institutions, distorting resource allocation, and impeding socio-economic development. Combatting administrative corruption requires robust regulatory frameworks, effective enforcement mechanisms, transparency, and accountability in public administration, as well as fostering a culture of integrity within governmental institutions (Al-Masarwa and Al-Kasasbeh, 2018; Al-Mashad, 2021).

Significantly, the literature and knowledge gap has been addressed and reflected in the fact that the current study holds significant value within the legal discourse by addressing the intricate intersection of administrative corruption and sustainable development. While existing research has explored various dimensions of corruption's impact on development, there remains a critical gap regarding the specific role of regulatory frameworks, especially anti-corruption legislation, in fostering sustainable development. This research uniquely contributes to filling this void by offering a contemporary analysis of how these regulatory mechanisms influence the achievement of sustainable development objectives. By delving into the nuanced implications of anti-corruption laws on international, Arab, and Jordanian sustainable development goals, this study aims to provide valuable insights into the effectiveness of such legal frameworks. Thus, it enriches the ongoing discourse on sustainable development legislation by spotlighting a crucial yet underexplored aspect, thereby paving the way for more comprehensive approaches to combat administrative corruption and promote sustainable development (Bayazid, 2022; Masoudi and Makkawi, 2019).

Moreover, the literature and knowledge gap is demonstrated in the compilation of research, as it underscores its novelty and significance in legal discourse, particularly in addressing administrative corruption's intersection with sustainable development. This study uniquely contributes to understanding the role of anti-

corruption legislation to achieve international, Arab, and Jordanian sustainable development objectives, presenting a contemporary analysis of administrative corruption's implications. Thus, this research addresses a critical gap by investigating the role of legislation frameworks in fostering sustainable development, thereby enriching the discourse on sustainable development legislation.

3. Research questions

Given the previous literature review related to the research subject and content of the article, the following research questions articulated:

- What is the relationship between anti-corruption legislation and sustainable development objectives?
- How do international conventions and legal frameworks contribute to the promotion of anti-corruption measures in the context of sustainable development?
- What are the challenges and opportunities in implementing anti-corruption legislation to achieve sustainable development goals?

4. Research hypotheses

With the research questions addressed in the current research work, the research hypotheses can be read as follows:

- There is a relationship between anti-corruption legislation and sustainable development objectives.
- There are international conventions and legal frameworks that contribute to the promotion of anti-corruption measures in the context of sustainable development.
- There are challenges and opportunities in implementing anti-corruption legislation to achieve sustainable development goals.

5. Method

In the current study, a descriptive analytical approach is employed to investigate the role of anti-corruption regulatory legislation in achieving sustainable development objectives. This methodological choice aligns with the nature of the study, aiming to present comprehensive insights into combating administrative corruption within the context of sustainable development. The descriptive analytical approach is used as it is the appropriate scientific method consistent with the nature of the study in terms of presenting information related to combating administrative corruption as one of the most prominent sustainable development goals, international measures to combat it, and their role to achieve the sustainable development goals.

Data collection section

The data had been compiled or collected from information from a diverse range of sources, including academic literature, reports, legal documents, and international conventions related to anti-corruption measures and sustainable development. The selection of sources is guided by their relevance to the research questions and the need to ensure the comprehensiveness of the analysis. The collected data are analyzed qualitatively through thematic interpretation to uncover patterns, themes, and

associations relevant to the research questions. Quantitative data analysis is not applicable in this study due to the nature of the research design and the focus on qualitative insights derived from literature and legal documents.

6. Results and discussion

This section addresses the role of anti-corruption legislation to achieve sustainable development through the following two parts: Legislation to combat administrative corruption and sustainable development and the impact of legislation to combat administrative corruption to achieve sustainable development.

6.1. Legislation to combat administrative corruption and sustainable development

Legislative measures play a crucial role in addressing administrative corruption and promoting sustainable development. This section explores the significance of anti-corruption legislation and its impact on achieving sustainable development goals.

6.1.1. Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)

The MDGs, established in the United Nations Millennium Declaration from 2000 to 2015, aimed to combat poverty, hunger, diseases, and gender inequality. However, the absence of a specific goal targeting administrative corruption hindered comprehensive progress.

6.1.2. The 2030 international agenda for sustainable development (Transforming Our World)

Building upon the MDGs, the 2030 Agenda comprises 17 goals and 169 targets, including Goal 16, which emphasizes governance and institution-building for comprehensive development. This goal recognizes the critical link between corruption and sustainable development.

6.1.3. The International Convention Against Corruption (UNCAC) as a fundamental pillar for achieving sustainable development

The UNCAC, adopted in 2003, provides a comprehensive framework for combating corruption and upholding sustainable development principles. It includes preventive standards, criminalization measures, asset recovery mechanisms, and international cooperation to address corruption's negative impact.

6.1.4. The Jordanian integrity and Anti-Corruption Law No. 13 of 2016

Jordan's efforts to combat administrative corruption align with international standards, exemplified by the Integrity and Anti-Corruption Law No. 13 of 2016. This legislation expands anti-corruption measures, criminalizes corruption-related offenses, and promotes transparency and accountability in public administration.

6.2. The impact of legislation to combat administrative corruption to achieve sustainable development

This section delves into the consequences of legislative measures aimed at combating administrative corruption and their role to achieve sustainable development goals.

6.2.1. The negative effects of administrative corruption on sustainable development

Administrative corruption poses significant challenges to sustainable development by undermining the rule of law, violating human rights, and impeding progress across social, economic, and environmental domains. Its adverse effects necessitate comprehensive legislative strategies to mitigate its impact. These legislative strategies encompass a range of subjects, including institutional frameworks, legal reforms, capacity building, and international cooperation. Institutional frameworks are crucial for establishing robust regulatory mechanisms and oversight bodies to prevent, detect, and punish instances of administrative corruption. Legal reforms play a vital role in enhancing transparency, accountability, and integrity within public institutions, thereby reducing opportunities for corrupt practices. The aforementioned strategies are also concerned with the preventive and supervisory powers assigned to official bodies and agencies in prosecuting and combating corruption, and even investigating it, and establishing an independent body that cooperates with other bodies and agencies in order to achieve its goal in a systematic, institutional manner controlled by procedural and legal rules that investigate financial, administrative, and functional corruption and collect evidence about it.

One of the most prominent of these pieces of legislative strategies is the Audit Bureau Law concerned with monitoring the state's revenues and expenditures and calculating trusts, advances, loans, grants and aid, providing advice in accounting fields to entities subject to the Bureau's oversight, and monitoring public funds to ensure that they are spent legally and effectively (Al-Sheikh, 2021).

Methodologies within the science of administrative law involve the development of comprehensive regulatory frameworks, streamlined administrative procedures, and strengthened judicial oversight mechanisms. Regulatory frameworks define and prohibit corrupt practices, prescribe sanctions for offenders, and establish mechanisms for enforcement and compliance monitoring. Streamlined administrative procedures minimize bureaucratic inefficiencies and reduce opportunities for corrupt behavior, while strengthened judicial oversight ensures impartial adjudication of corruption cases.

These legislative strategies contribute to the broader anti-corruption policy framework by acting as deterrents to corrupt behavior, fostering a culture of integrity, enhancing enforcement efforts, and facilitating international cooperation. By elucidating these subjects, methodologies, and functionalities, legislative strategies within the science of administrative law play a pivotal role in bolstering anti-corruption efforts and advancing sustainable development goals.

6.2.2. The role of legislation regulating the fight against administrative corruption to achieve social development

Legislation targeting administrative corruption plays a pivotal role in promoting social development by enhancing living standards, fostering justice and equality, and reducing poverty and social disparities. It facilitates fair wealth distribution and fosters societal solidarity.

6.2.3. The role of legislation regulating the fight against administrative corruption to achieve economic development

Legislative measures aimed at combating administrative corruption contribute to economic development by fostering economic efficiency, attracting investments, and increasing government revenues. They enhance transparency and accountability, thereby stimulating economic growth and facilitating development projects.

6.2.4. The role of legislation regulating the fight against administrative corruption to achieve environmental development

Legislation addressing administrative corruption is instrumental to achieve environmental development by curbing pollution, preserving ecological balance, and promoting sustainable resource management. It safeguards natural resources and mitigates environmental degradation, ensuring a sustainable future.

In summary, legislation plays a pivotal role in combating administrative corruption and advancing sustainable development across social, economic, and environmental dimensions. Efforts to enact and enforce anti-corruption laws are essential for realizing the sustainable development goals and ensuring a prosperous future for all.

7. Conclusions

In a word, one of the key findings is that efforts to combat administrative corruption to achieve sustainable development in countries can only be attained through strict legislation specialized in combating administrative corruption, together with working to activate accountability mechanisms in all state agencies. Furthermore, another important finding is that it is necessary to work to educate citizens about the dangers of administrative corruption in sustainable development plans.

With this debate in mind, all this requires the availability of an international and national environment that can deal with the dangers of administrative corruption, with the need to ensure integrity, justice, equal opportunities among the various components of society, and respect and supremacy of moral values (Nasraween, 2020). Combating administrative corruption and achieving sustainable development also require legislation to combat administrative corruption. Other important characteristics related to the universality of anti-corruption rules and standards from an applied standpoint concern the concerned authorities, i.e. the Integrity and Anti-Corruption Commission, as one of its features is that it activates the system of behavioral values in public administration and ensures its integration, ensuring that public administration provides service to citizens with high quality, transparency and justice, ensuring that public administration adheres to the principles of good governance and standards of equality, merit, entitlement and equal opportunities (Al-Shawabkeh, 2018; Hussein, 2022: Almajali et al., 2023; Althunibat et al., 2024).

Other characteristics also lie in consolidating the system of national integrity, law enforcement, preventing corruption and reducing its effects at the national level in accordance with best international practices, thus establishing a national anti-corruption environment, and cooperating in providing and requesting international legal assistance in the field of combating corruption if the conditions for providing it through official channels are met. More key characteristics are also reflected in

investigating financial and administrative corruption in all its forms, detecting violations and transgressions, collecting relevant evidence and private information, initiating investigations and proceeding with the administrative and legal procedures necessary for that, prosecuting anyone who commits any acts of corruption, seizing his or her movable and immovable assets, and preventing them from traveling by decision, and making an urgent request from the competent judicial authority with a request to stop his or her work from the relevant authorities and stop their salary, bonuses and other entitlements from those decisions or cancel them in accordance with the legislation in force.

Given the previous discussion and results, this article recommends contributing to strengthening the role of the legislation regulating the fight against administrative corruption to achieve the sustainable development goals such as verifying the effectiveness of the legislation regulating the fight against administrative corruption on a periodic and comprehensive basis to achieve sustainable development goals and significantly reduce administrative corruption as planned and amending some national legislation in line with international measures to combat administrative corruption, as most of the applicable legislation and policies do not meet the requirements to fill potential gaps in administrative corruption and achieve sustainable development.

Other key recommendations are preparing national plans for sustainable development and aligning them with the international preventive and punitive procedures and measures to eliminate administrative corruption and reforming administrative, political, and economic to reduce administrative corruption and achieve sustainable development. More important recommendations are reflected in strengthening the participatory path of the authorities concerned with combating administrative corruption by activating international cooperation and providing international legal assistance in the field of combating administrative corruption and striving to provide a comprehensive database that enables the exchange of information and providing a guideline related to the importance of revealing potential risks that lead to the occurrence of administrative corruption and the role of combating it to achieve sustainable development that effectively contributes to achieving development goals.

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