

The Culture of Corruption and Educational Institutions in Jordanian Society: A Sociological Analysis in Light of Parsons' Theory

culture of corruption: A sociological study in light of social systems theory

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Abstract:

This research examines the relationship between the culture of corruption and educational institutions from a sociological perspective. Given the role of education as a socialization institution responsible for transmitting the value system within society, the research aims to provide a theoretical analysis of the role of educational institutions in reproducing values associated with corruption.

The research employs a theoretical analytical approach, reviewing sociological literature that addresses the concept of corruption, its causes, and its types. It also analyzes the culture of corruption and the role of educational institutions considering Talcott Parsons' structural functionalist theory. Parsons argues that social institutions play a crucial role in transmitting the value system from one generation to the next.

The analysis concluded that educational institutions may sometimes contribute to the reproduction of a culture of corruption through informal practices and tolerance of actions considered corrupt, such as nepotism and favoritism. However, if they firmly confront such negative behaviors, they will strengthen the values of integrity and transparency within Jordanian society.

Keywords: corruption, culture of corruption, educational institutions, social reproduction.

Introduction

Corruption is considered one of the greatest challenges facing all human societies, including Jordanian society. This is not merely because it is a political, economic, or administrative phenomenon, but because it has transcended these boundaries to become a deeply entrenched socio-cultural problem, permeating the very fabric of society.

Jordan, like other countries worldwide, faces numerous challenges related to the widespread manifestations of corruption in many aspects of life. Corruption is considered a major cause of societal collapse due to its devastating negative effects on individuals, families, and society as a whole. Given that corruption has many facets and is multifaceted, especially when it originates from social structures that embrace and disseminate it among their members through social acceptance and approval, and reproduce it through the various stages and institutions of socialization, this problem is particularly acute.

Therefore, this research aims to understand and analyze the relationship between educational institutions and the changes that have occurred within them on the one hand, and the spread of the culture of corruption in a conservative society like Jordanian society and the interactions that have occurred between them, which have made corruption a value-oriented guide that affects the behaviors of members of society on the other hand.

Research Problem

The prevalence of a culture of corruption in Jordanian society is a serious phenomenon with negative repercussions across various aspects of life. It leads members of society to accept any form of corruption, even newly emerging forms. The existence of such a culture opens the door wide to accepting other negative practices and facilitates their adoption and transmission from generation to generation. Corrupt value systems are generated, transforming corruption from something rejected into a guiding principle for many actions within society. We cannot, under any circumstances, overlook the existence of numerous manifestations of these value systems that have contributed to the formation of this culture of corruption. For example, many popular proverbs facilitate the acceptance of corruption, such as "Something better than this" and "If you know the price, kill him". "Feed the mouth and the eye will be ashamed." What a widespread nepotism, favoritism, embezzlement of public funds, electricity and water, and abuse of power are all manifestations of the corruption we are experiencing, rooted in prevailing value systems that have facilitated the acceptance of this culture.

Based on the foregoing, this research attempts to answer the question: **What role do educational institutions in Jordanian society play in the spread and reproduction of a culture of corruption, based on Parsons' structural functionalist theory?**

The Importance of the Research:

The importance of this research lies in its exploration of a crucial and highly significant issue: the relationship between educational institutions and the prevalence of corruption in Jordanian society. This is particularly relevant given that educational institutions are key institutions of socialization and play a major role in shaping the behavioral patterns of individuals within society.

Research Objectives:

This research aims to identify the role played by educational institutions, as one of the social structures, in perpetuating a culture of corruption within Jordanian society, contributing to its production, and even providing value-based guidance that contributes to reproducing this culture among members of Jordanian society, based on the structural functionalist perspective of the scholar Talcon Parsons.

The Nature of Corruption

Corruption is a human phenomenon as old as creation itself. No human society throughout history has been free from corruption. It is the driving force behind uprisings and revolutions, the destabilizer of the most powerful empires and kingdoms, and the influence on the course of civilizations (Bani Salameh, 2024). Therefore, the writings of philosophers such as Confucius and Plato were not devoid of it. In his book "The Republic," the Greek philosopher Plato linked corruption to both justice and individualism, arguing that the absence of justice leads to the emergence and spread of selfish individualism, which seeks to achieve self-interest without regard for the public good, and often at its expense (Abu Joudeh, 2020).

Corruption

Corruption: Like any term related to human affairs, corruption lacks a universally agreed-upon definition. Every entity that defines it—whether researchers, institutions, governmental or regional bodies, or international organizations—defines it from its own area of interest or perspective. Gardner confirms this, stating, "There is no consensus on the definition of corruption, perhaps due to its widespread and general use in the political sphere and its impact on other sectors and movements" (Al-Batoush & Al-Adayle, 2025). Furthermore, socio-cultural variations among different human societies play a significant role in determining the nature of corruption and which actions are considered corrupt. For example, what is considered bribery in some societies is seen in Brazil as an expression of gratitude, appreciation, and generosity (Abu Joudeh, 2020).

This was confirmed by Douglas Matorera, who stated that the results of searching for the meaning of corruption online yielded (246) synonyms and antonyms on the website thesaurus, (396) on the website meriam-webster, and (94) on thesaurus.yardictionary (Matorera, 2023). Corruption has also been defined at the level of international organizations; Transparency International defined it as "any act involving the abuse of public office for private gain," or as: an act against the public function, which is a public trust (Transparency International, 2004). The World Bank, on the other hand, defines corruption as "the abuse of public office for private gain".

Although the 2004 United Nations Convention against Corruption criminalizes corruption and provides a set of standards, measures, and rules to assist countries in combating it, it is noteworthy that it does not include a specific definition of corruption (United Nations, 2004).

In Islamic law, however, corruption encompasses all forms of wrongdoing and sin, such as aggression against persons and property, any deviation from what is right, and any departure from the straight path, whether it be through behavior, criminal offenses, or violations of public or civil rights (Atatoot, 2019).

In the social sciences, the concept of corruption is a complex and multifaceted one, encompassing deviant practices that are legally, morally, ethically, culturally, politically, economically, or structurally flawed. It is often viewed as a pathological social phenomenon that distorts human relationships (Kalantaryan, 2025).

Sociologically, corruption has been defined as: "A social relationship characterized by the violation of the rules of social conduct that govern social life in relation to the public interest, especially since these rules maintain the balance of exchanges of gratifications and benefits and ensure the security, stability, and well-being of individuals and society" (Ararour & Zarfa, n.d.). (Wralth, and Simpikins), have defined it as "any act that society considers corrupt, and whose perpetrator feels guilt while committing it" (Alimat, 2014).

While Jordanian law does not provide a unified definition of corruption, Article (16/A) of the Integrity and Anti-Corruption Law No. (13) of 2016 stipulates the acts that constitute corruption, specifying them as follows:

1. Crimes related to breach of official duties and crimes against public trust, as stipulated in the Penal Code.
 2. Economic crimes as defined in the Economic Crimes Law.
 3. Illicit enrichment.
 4. Failure to declare or disclose investments, assets, or benefits that may lead to a conflict of interest, if required by laws and regulations, and if such declaration would result in a direct or indirect personal benefit for the party refusing to declare them.
 5. Any act or omission that leads to the squandering of public funds, funds of public shareholding companies, non-profit companies, or associations.
 6. Abuse of power in violation of the law.
 7. Public administration employees accepting favoritism and nepotism that nullify a right or establish a falsehood.
 8. Using information obtained by virtue of one's position to achieve personal gain.
 9. Corruption crimes stipulated in international conventions ratified by the Kingdom.
- (Integrity and Anti-Corruption Law, 2016) We can identify the characteristics of

corruption based on all the preceding definitions:

- Corruption is a human phenomenon prevalent in all human societies.
- Corruption is relative, varying according to the prevailing culture in a society, place, and time.
- Corruption is a behavior that may be individual or collective.
- Corruption is an illegal and unlawful behavior practiced to achieve a legitimate desire.
- Corruption is incompatible with the general morals of society.
- Corruption has many forms and manifestations.
- It is practiced secretly and covertly, and then openly and ostentatiously concealed by manipulating religious texts or exploiting public social interests.
- Corruption knows no bounds; all sectors are susceptible to it.
- Corruption is a behavior that impacts the perpetrator and their interaction with society.
- Corruption is inherently selfish, prioritizing individual interests over the interests of society and other individuals.

- Corruption is a contagious behavior that spreads gradually, starting with one individual and spreading to others until it becomes the norm, the standard, and the culture.
- The results of corruption are attractive to individuals, offering the easy and quick fulfillment of desires. It is like quicksand, sinking deeper into the mire of those who engage in it.

Factors that lead to corruption.

There are many factors that lead to corruption, and we will try to cover the most important ones as comprehensively as possible:

Social factors.

Among the most important social factors behind the spread of corruption are the following:

- Socialization: This is the process by which an individual's personality is formed, and they absorb social values and norms that define socially acceptable and unacceptable behaviors. (Benhamou, 2023)
- Low standard of living: This may drive some individuals to resort to forgery, perjury, bribery, embezzlement of public funds, and abuse of power to meet their family's basic and urgent needs (Al-Shahri, 2017).
- The pursuit of maintaining social loyalties and familial and tribal affiliations, where these social relationships are given priority over the application of laws and regulations in the provision of services, benefits, and facilities (Hafnawi, 2019).
- The deviant environment in which an individual lives within their family. Parents may be embezzlers of public funds, electricity, and water, or they may accept bribes and achieve their goals through favoritism and nepotism (Abu Joudeh, 2020).
- The decline of positive values and concepts that were prevalent in society, such as moral and religious values, in favor of materialistic, selfish, individualistic, consumerist, and superficial values. This manifests as an increased desire for wealth and riches by any means, even if it violates conscience, morality, religion, and all positive values (Hafnawi, 2019).
- Popular traditions that reflect the prevailing culture in society stand out as a motive for the survival, cohesion, and preservation of the strength of corruption in the justifications that are socially presented for corruption. There are many social sayings that support corruption, such as "He who has no connections has no value," and "He who has a back does not get hit in the stomach" (Abu Joudeh, 2020).

-Religious factors:

These factors include the following:

- Turning away from religion and a weakening of religious conscience. Ruling by other than what God has revealed, and the loss of the duty to enjoin good and forbid evil (Al-Shahri, 2017).
- The race and pursuit of worldly things, striving to provide for one's family and improve their standard of living (Benhamou, 2023)
- The dominance of instincts and the love of desires and pleasures, which is considered the gateway to corruption in society (Al-Shahri, 2017).
- The presence of a spiritual void and a weakness of faith and morals create an imbalance in the individual's personality, making them more susceptible to deviance and corruption, and weakening their system of personal moral values, thus weakening their internal control (Al-Masarweh & Al-Rashaideh, 2017).
- A misunderstanding of some religious concepts, including obedience to the ruler or benefactor, where it is understood that one must obey the official in everything and at all times, even if he asks you to carry out a corrupt act such as forgery or accepting bribes. However, religion means that obedience is only required in matters that are pleasing to God and beneficial to society (Benhamou, 2023)

- Administrative factors.

We can identify the most important administrative factors as follows:

- Duplication and overlap of authorities, jurisdictions, and powers, and multiple decision-making centers. This means that multiple entities issue decisions for the same employee, leading to conflicting decisions, which facilitates corruption and provides justifications for it (Hafnawi, 2019).
- Bureaucratic red tape and complex procedures, which consume significant time and effort, may drive individuals to offer bribes or resort to favoritism to get things done (Ahmad, 2011).
- Inefficiency of the systems and procedures for appointment, promotion, incentives, and rewards in place in society (Hafnawi, 2019).
- The structure of institutions and bodies, remaining unchanged despite the evolving aspirations and ambitions of individuals, as well as the development of equipment and technology (Mahdi, 2019).

- Weak administrative oversight of employee performance and laxity in addressing corrupt practices through proper channels and timely deterrent measures (Hafnawi, 2019).

- Economic factors

The most important economic factors that cause corrupt behaviors are the following:

- Government intervention in economic activities opens the door to bribery of officials to expedite procedures and overcome obstacles that may hinder economic activity in general (Al-Masarweh & Al-Rashaideh, 2017).
- Weak and underdeveloped economic conditions in society in general, and high levels of inflation (Hafnawi, 2019).
- Disrespect for working hours, poor performance, reluctance to participate effectively, and mismanagement of public funds (Al-Shahri, 2017).

- Political factors.

Among the most important political factors contributing to corruption are the following:

- High-level positions are concentrated in the hands of a specific group of influential figures within society, making them the controllers of administration who serve their personal interests and those of their associates, depriving others of these opportunities without regard for laws and legislative principles (Hafnawi, 2019).
- A lack of transparency, disclosure, and trust between the government and citizens, and an absence of integrity in governmental and economic work (Al-Batoush & Al-Adayle, 2025).
- State control over the country's resources and the deprivation of the rest of society, especially when coupled with the absence of administrative and financial oversight and the lack of clarity in government procedures aimed at protecting public funds and combating corruption (Benhamou, 2023).
- Poor government policies, economics, and education, and flawed planning (Al-Masarweh & Al-Rashaideh, 2017).
- Lenience in imposing penalties on corrupt individuals and punishing them for their corrupt actions (Alimat, 2014).

- Legal factors.

The legal factors that cause corruption include the following:

- The absence of effective legislation to combat corruption, strengthen oversight, and impose deterrent penalties (Al-Batoush & Al-Adayle, 2025).

- Weak oversight by civil society organizations of government performance, and a lack of the required impartiality, integrity, and transparency (Al-Masarweh & Al-Rashaideh, 2017).
- Lenience in applying penalties to corrupt individuals, either due to limited resources available to oversight bodies to pursue them abroad, for example, or due to the influence wielded by the corrupt (Benhamou, 2023).
- The ambiguity surrounding some laws and regulations, whether related to administrative aspects, the lack of clarity in government procedures, and the lack of sufficient awareness of what these laws mean, may lead individuals to exploit the situation (or fish in troubled waters, as they say) and interpret them in a way that serves their own self-interest (Alimat, 2014).

Types of Corruption

Therefore, the types of corruption vary depending on the perspective from which it is viewed and categorized. It should be noted that all types of corruption are interconnected and interdependent, with some serving as gateways to others. Thus, we will attempt to summarize all the types addressed by scholars, categorized according to the following:

First: Corruption by Sector Classification:

- Public corruption, such as embezzlement and misappropriation of public funds, is perpetrated by public officials, whether local or foreign.
- Private corruption, such as bribery, fraud, influence peddling, and profiteering, involves only individuals in the private sector.
- Mixed corruption, which has emerged with the blurring of lines between the public and private sectors and between formal and informal rules, is typically practiced routinely in transactions between the public (government) sector, companies, and individuals.
- Isolated corruption, which is rare and practiced individually and in an unorganized manner. The corrupt individual seizes a temporary opportunity that rarely arises. (Public Safety Canada, 2022)

Second: Corruption according to the extent of corruption (Institutional Level):

- Grand Corruption: This refers to corruption perpetrated by individuals with significant economic, financial, or political influence, whose corruption has a profound impact on the economy, legislation, and policies of their society (Matorera, 2023).

- Minor Corruption: This pertains to corruption committed by lower-level employees in the public and private sectors, such as direct bribery, expediting transactions for certain individuals, and misappropriating public funds (Benhamou, 2023).
- Incidental Corruption: This is limited corruption and deviant behavior by some employees who deviate from established administrative practices. It is often committed by junior employees, self-serving employees, or opportunistic individuals. It takes the form of small-scale embezzlement and the misuse of institutional resources for purposes outside their designated scope (limam, 2022).
- Structural (Organized) Corruption: This is institutional corruption that takes the form of systems, processes, and rules that facilitate, encourage, and permit corruption. It is designed by individuals, groups, or institutions from the politically or economically powerful elite. It becomes so ingrained in any system, regardless of its nature, that it is difficult to separate it from the system. (Matorera, 2023)
- Unorganized Corruption: This is the opposite of the previous type of corruption. It involves bribing officials, but there is no guarantee of the outcome, as they may require further bribes. (Alimat, 2014).

Third: Corruption according to its prevalence (geographical scope):

- International corruption: This type spreads globally, transcending continents and borders. It is linked to globalization and the requirements of the open global market, multinational corporations, and international organizations. (Al-Derby & Ismail, 2012).
- Domestic corruption: This is corruption that occurs within the borders of a single country. It is linked to local actors and has no connection to external entities. (Alimat, 2014)

Forms of Corruption.

The forms of corruption are numerous and varied, permeating all aspects of life. They are also characterized by their complexity and interconnectedness. Here, we will mention the most prominent manifestations of corruption in Jordanian society:.

- Bribery: This is the act of obtaining money or other benefits to nullify a right or establish a falsehood that violates professional ethics (Mahdi, 2019).
- Nepotism: This is the practice of performing actions to benefit an entity to which a person belongs, whether individuals or an entity such as a party or region, without them being entitled to these actions (Abu Dieh & Al-Shaibi, 2004).

- Favoritism: This is the practice of intervening on behalf of an individual or group, without regard for the laws regulating work that ensure equal opportunities and merit, such as appointing employees who lack competence but are chosen based on kinship and affiliation (Mahdi, 2019).
- Misappropriation of public funds and embezzlement of state resources: This is done by seizing state funds and disposing of them as if they were personal funds, unlawfully and covertly, under various pretexts, such as exempting companies and individuals from customs duties and taxes (Faraj, 2022).
- •Abuse of granted authority: This involves exploiting one's position for personal gain through various means such as blackmailing, intimidating, or bribing others to achieve personal benefit (Hafnawi, 2019).
- Money laundering: This refers to the process of concealing the sources of illicit funds and integrating them into legitimate activities (Al-Shahri, 2017).
- Blackmail (Blackmailers): This involves threatening to disclose confidential information about someone to harm them to obtain a benefit or money from the blackmailer (Faraj, 2022).
- Engaging in prohibited activities: These include promoting drugs, human trafficking, trading in weapons and materials from the nuclear industry, money laundering, and counterfeiting and distributing currency (Ahmad, 2011).
- Identity theft: This is the use of a false and fake identity to gain a benefit for oneself or others, or to harm others (Al-Shahri, 2017).
- Fraud: This is the deception and deception carried out by certain individuals or entities to provide opportunities for benefits not granted to them, such as changing numbers and falsifying data and financial statements to make them generate profits for themselves (Faraj, 2022).

The Secrets and Power of Corruption's Spread and Perpetuation

Based on the aforementioned factors, we can observe that the power of corruption lies in several aspects. These also conceal the secrets of its spread and persistence. Among the most important of these are :

- (1) Social tolerance or normalization, meaning viewing corruption as a widespread phenomenon, with the prevailing attitude of "everyone takes" and "just keep quiet." This implies that it is a phenomenon that cannot be eradicated and is merely a minimal form of evil that cannot be condemned or punished (Kamenskiy, 2014). This involves societal silence regarding corrupt behaviors, the acceptance of some of them, and their social endorsement. This aspect is the most dangerous of all, as it represents the true force contributing to the continuation, spread, and proliferation of corruption (Abu Joudeh, 2020).
- (2) The dominance of the selfish material interests of the corrupt individual over ethical, religious, and communal considerations. This is especially true considering the rapid pace and materialistic pursuit we are experiencing, where material standards have become the criteria for success and excellence adopted among individuals, societies, and nations (Matorera, 2023).
- (3) Technological advancements and communication technologies have played a significant role in exposing members of the poorer classes in various societies to higher living standards and the associated benefits and luxuries. Therefore, to attain this status, given their limited resources and the scarcity of legitimate opportunities, corruption has become the easiest and quickest way to achieve their aspirations (Abu Joudeh, 2020).
- (4) Weak government oversight and the absence of effective anti-corruption legislation that imposes deterrent penalties on corrupt individuals (Abu Dieh & Al-Shaibi, 2004).
- (5) Double standards and selectivity in condemnation: Corruption is not criticized in all cases; that is, the corruption of some is denied while the corruption of others is overlooked (Kamenskiy, 2014).
- (6) A weakened will to resist succumbing to corruption within the individual, stemming from their enjoyment of the corrupt outcomes on the one hand, and their habituation to the advantages and status it brings on the other. This is compounded by the fact that their actions remain unexposed, unpunished, and unaccountable (Abu Joudeh, 2020).
- (7) The existence of (also corrupt) methods and techniques for concealing corruption. Corruption is hidden through corruption and manipulation (Matorera, 2023).
- (8) The corrupt individual's skill in circumventing the law and social norms. This is what is referred to in psychological literature as the "dark side of intelligence" (Abu Joudeh, 2020).

The Culture of Corruption: Its Nature and Origins

Having discussed corruption from many angles, a perplexing question arises: How does corruption transform into a societal culture? This is especially perplexing given the juxtaposition of the words "culture," with its usual positive connotations and social acceptance, and "corruption," which denotes negativity, crime, and social rejection.

This relationship has been a point of contention in discussions among intellectuals and researchers. Some caution against simplistic explanations of corrupt behavior, viewing it as simply part of a culture of corruption. Others argue that the concept of corruption is a Western construct, given that social standards of what is acceptable or unacceptable are relative and vary across societies. A third group, however, relies on quantitative research methods to understand the relationship between the two, comparing the cultural factors of a society with its perceived indicators of corruption. (Costa & Camargo, 2024).

So how can we define a culture of corruption?

Defining a clear and explicit concept of "a culture of corruption" has been very difficult, especially since the characteristics of each word are quite distinct. Therefore, there are three main approaches to understanding the relationship between culture and corruption :

The first approach views corruption as a form of organizational or institutional culture. Therefore, it necessitates analyzing corruption from all angles (its symbols, myths, customs, perceptions, and core values that are reproduced within the professional community or institution).

The second approach sees corruption as a temporary condition, a dysfunction, or a pathological state affecting the culture. This approach is linked to the structural functionalist theory of Parsons and Merton. Corruption becomes an expected behavior when norms are lost (anomie), which arises when a large segment of society lacks conviction in social values and norms because of conflict between elements within the value system itself.

The third approach views corruption as a phenomenon that is continuously reproduced through the prevailing cultural traditions in society. This approach focuses on the stable and constant features of the societal culture (Kamenskiy, 2014).

The term "culture of coexistence with corruption" has sometimes been used as an alternative to the term "culture of corruption" and has been defined as: "a societal culture in which the concept of corruption is transformed from a rejected, reprehensible, and unacceptable phenomenon into a concept that makes this phenomenon a justifiable behavior in which everyone participates, whether at the top or bottom of the state hierarchy, and they coexist with it under various

justifications. It is closer to a style of courtesy or assistance in conducting financial or administrative transactions, but in illegitimate ways" (Faraj, 2022).

As for (Kamensky), he defined the culture of corruption as: "a set of value-normative controls that regulate corrupt activity as an institutional criminal phenomenon, formed as a result of the historical development of corrupt practices in social interaction, which determines the emergence and continuity of the stereotypical forms of its practice within the prevailing legal framework in a specific period of time, in addition to the social representative forms of the corrupt activity itself." (Kamenskiy, 2014)

How does a culture of corruption develop?

A culture of corruption is an anomaly within the broader culture of society. It begins with an individual who influences others, and then spreads, especially as the benefits gained increase. It becomes a pervasive corrupt culture, difficult to confront, particularly since it has served the interests of several parties, leading to its social acceptance. The culture of corruption then becomes an accepted cultural pattern, an integral part of the society's culture, and ingrained in all its aspects. (Abu Joudeh, 2020)

As long as the state is unable to provide services to all members of society equally, ensuring an acceptable standard of living through laws, regulations, and a fair distribution of resources, there is ample room for corruption to spread as a normalized and socially accepted cultural practice (Costa & Camargo, 2024). Consequently, social relations among members of society become dominated by selfish individualism based on personal gain, self-interest, and consumerism, leading to a loss of mutual trust, a decline in social interaction, and a disregard for the public good and societal development. This can even extend to opposing societal progress and any positive changes, as long as these changes significantly impact their self-interest (Abu Joudeh, 2020).

Types of Corruption Culture:

Corruption is not merely a system; it extends to form a specific mindset and a deeply ingrained culture within social thought. Everyone is aware of the existence of corruption, yet this awareness is transcended by accepting it and finding justifications to defend and encourage it. This indicates the extent of the changes that have occurred in social thought within society. This aligns with the ever-present saying, "If you are unaware, that is a calamity; but if you are aware, the calamity is even greater". Because the culture of corruption is an issue that links cultural and institutional dimensions, encompassing shared points of interest and values related to corruption (Al-Rashid, 2017), it has been divided into three types:

- A culture that tolerates corruption: where corruption is considered an integral part of life and its necessities. In this culture, the term "corruption" is replaced by terms that lend it a more palatable social acceptance, such as "gift" and "kindness." Requests submitted by those with vested interests do not require fulfilling all the established procedures, relying instead on these favors with those in positions of authority. In this case, informal structures replace formal ones in determining the criteria for obtaining benefits and services (Faraj, 2022). This type of collapse of state institutions may result from severe state weakness, reaching a point where the state is unable to control all its territories. This necessitates a concerted effort from all parties to rescue the country from such a situation (Al-Rashid, 2017) .
- A culture that tolerates corruption conditionally: This type of culture publicly combats corruption but fails to identify practical and effective means of fighting it. This can be a precursor to the first type (a culture that tolerates corruption) if efforts to combat it are not taken seriously. The most prominent example of this type is corruption for the sake of basic living standards (Faraj, 2022).
- A culture that rejects corruption: This culture is formed by cultural factors, as in Japan, or by factors related to social control institutions, as in Scandinavian countries. This provides a suitable environment for a culture of integrity that actively combats corruption (Al-Rashid, 2017) .

Educational Institutions:

Educational institutions occupy the second position after the family in the lives of individuals in society. They play a significant role in shaping personality and determining attitudes and beliefs. Many individuals acquire education, character, and ways of interacting with others outside the family and neighborhood, especially since they enter this world during the formative years of early childhood, around the age of five or six. These are years that remain imprinted on an individual's mind and influence their behavior and beliefs. This is particularly true during kindergarten and preschool, followed by formal schooling and then university education .

It is worth noting that the role of educational institutions in reproducing corrupt values will be analyzed within the framework of the structural-functional theory of the American sociologist Talcott Parsons (1902–1979). This theory views society as a system composed of structurally interconnected and functionally interdependent parts, bound by a system of values and culture. The harmony and integration of these parts result in societal balance and continuity (Alketbi & Altai, 2025).

Parsons' analysis focuses on four fundamental concepts: social action, social attitude, social actor, and actor orientations.

Social action: This encompasses all forms of human behavior driven and directed by the meanings that the actor constructs about the external world—meanings that the actor considers and responds to. (Al-Hourani, 2008) This is considered one of its most important concepts, and Parsons was influenced by it, drawing on the work of Max Weber, one of the first users of the concept, who divided social actions into:

- Rational social actions: These fall into two categories: value-based rational actions and goal-based rational actions.
- Irrational actions: These are also of two types: conventional actions and emotional actions.

He considered this concept to be the fundamental element of the analysis and focused on conscious social actions that carry meaning, meaning that the individual performs them consciously and understands that what he is doing contributes to the stability of society and achieves something for himself. He divided the elements that constitute social action into four elements:

- (1) The Actor: Who performs the action? This (conscious) actor may be an individual, a group, or a society, with all its distinguishing characteristics.
- (2) The Goal or Purpose: This refers to the outcome the actor seeks to achieve. Every social action is directed towards a specific goal, whether material (job), social (status), or ethical (justice).

- (3) The Situation: This is the circumstance surrounding the actor, interacting with and influencing them, and compelling them to make decisions. This situation arises within a group or society.
- (4) Normative Orientation: This represents the regulatory framework that makes the action ethically and socially structured, rather than merely an individual response. It also controls the actor's direction, determines acceptable or unacceptable behavior, and outlines how to achieve goals and the socially acceptable alternatives. (Al-Hourani, 2008) (Alketbi, & Altaii, 2025).

Parsons also suggested that every social system seeking stability and continuity must perform four functions (the Four Functions Model or System Functional Requirements), which he summarized as (AGIL). He emphasized that any disruption in their performance will lead to the emergence of deviant, negative, and abnormal behaviors in society. These functions are:

- (1) Adaptation: This refers to the extent to which a social system can adapt to its surrounding physical or social environment.
- (2) Goal Attainment: This means the system's ability to define clear goals, prioritize societal needs, and unify all efforts to achieve those goals.
- (3) Integration: This refers to the ability to maintain relationships and interactions among the components of society while simultaneously avoiding internal conflicts that threaten the stability of the overall structure.
- (4) Latent Pattern Maintenance: This relates to the system's ability to maintain its values, norms, and cultural standards to ensure the continuity of the social order. (Parsons, 1951).

Returning to educational institutions, which are defined as: a social organization comprising a group of actors who occupy positions and play specific roles in providing educational and cultural services to students to develop their intellectual, psychological, physical, social, and professional abilities, and to meet their future needs and social life within the cultural and value system of society (Jafal, 2021). These include kindergartens, childcare centers, schools, institutes, technical and vocational training centers, universities, and higher education institutions, whether governmental or private, civilian or military (Al-Jahafi, 2018).(

Educational institutions are of great importance to the individual and society in several aspects; they are based on spreading science, knowledge and culture, providing them with educational and creative experiences and future professional orientations, building the students' personality,

shaping their intellectual system and social behaviors, and socializing them to conform to the values and standards of their society (Sabha & Khaleel, 2023) (Al-Jahafi, 2018) Education at all levels is a period of preparation for students to enter the arena of life, and during these stages, students' awareness is either built or shaped. This building is positive and beneficial when the educational environment, with all its components (administration, faculty and administrative staff, courses and curricula, and student activities), is a healthy academic environment conducive to teaching and scientific research—an environment capable of refining students' skills, shaping their awareness and belief in justice, transparency, and equality, guiding them to practice everything positive and beneficial to their society, and combating corruption and deviance. Conversely, it becomes destructive if the educational environment is a breeding ground for administrative, financial, academic, and social corruption (Al-Tafhaha, & Al-Awamra, 2025). (Educational institutions perform visible functions in human development by transmitting education, knowledge, skills, and culture to future generations, eradicating illiteracy, preparing the workforce, and instilling social values such as commitment, cooperation, and national belonging (Shah, 2014). Beyond the purely academic role of teaching and research staff, educational institutions serve as examples and models for many individuals who attempt to emulate their behaviors and absorb their ideas (BNS Institute, 2025). (It contributes to reducing crime, improving performance, job opportunities, and civic participation (Sabha & Khaleel, 2023). Conversely, it has latent functions such as delaying young people's entry into the labor market for a longer period, weakening parental control over them, reinforcing class inequality due to the disparity in the quality of education provided and the availability of higher education opportunities, in addition to forming social networks and friendships (shah, 2014). (

It should be noted here (according to the State of the Country Report: The Fourth Industrial Revolution and the Jordanian Labor Market (2023), issued by the Economic and Social Council of Jordan) that Jordanian educational institutions at all levels face numerous pressures resulting from:

- The increasing population and refugee numbers have led to an imbalance between the growing number of students and the number of educational institutions. This has negatively impacted the quality of educational outcomes and, consequently, the competencies of graduates.
- Government spending on education is not commensurate with the actual needs of educational institutions. This has increased their debt, reduced the quality of their services, and hindered their development.
- Structural imbalances exist, characterized by the dominance of academic education over vocational and technical education, and a mismatch between educational

outcomes and labor market needs. This contributes to high unemployment rates, reaching 54.9% among high school graduates and above.

- There are problems with student retention and adherence to educational standards. This is compounded by weak management within the Ministry and the supervising authority, hindering effective monitoring and oversight.
- Educational curricula fail to keep pace with labor market demands and the advancements in artificial intelligence, impacting the efficiency of graduates, particularly given the need for constantly evolving technical skills.

According to Parsons' Agile Functional Requirements Inventory (AGIL), educational institutions perform essential functions:

- (1) Adaptation: Educational institutions provide members of society with the necessary skills and knowledge to adapt to the economic, social, and technological changes occurring within the community. Simultaneously, they supply society, across all its sectors, with qualified human resources possessing the knowledge required for its various activities (Al-Tafhaha & Al-Awamra, 2025). However, focusing on degrees rather than genuine skills, and failing to consider labor market needs in terms of required education and available specializations, renders education incapable of supporting economic adaptation. This leads to unemployment among graduates, which in turn causes frustration, prompting them to resort to illegitimate means (such as nepotism and favoritism) to secure employment opportunities (Economic and Social Council of Jordan, 2023).(
- (2) Goal Attainment (G): This relates to the ability of educational institutions to achieve higher societal goals, namely development, justice, and human capital building. However, educational policies often fail to translate these goals into practical implementation—due to the disparity in the quality of education provided in the capital, Amman, compared to other regions, particularly peripheral areas like the Badia and other outlying regions, and the gap between public and private education. In such cases, the focus shifts to achieving individual goals, even through corrupt means (Sabha & Khaleel, 2023).(
- (3) (3)Integration – I: Educational institutions bear the responsibility of building cooperative, harmonious, and interactive relationships among participants in the educational process (students, teachers, administrators, and parents) and promoting integration through their curricula, teaching methods, and student activities, as well as reinforcing values of discipline and combating corruption and deviance to serve society. However, a lack of trust in the fairness of the educational environment and its freedom from discrimination and corruption can negatively impact achieving the required harmony among those responsible for education and limit adherence to standards (Al-Tafhaha & Al-Awamra,

2025). This pushes individuals towards informal alternatives such as favoritism and nepotism to achieve their goals.

- (4) Latency: Educational institutions participate in the socialization process by instilling cultural and social values, and contribute to shaping students' awareness of preserving everything that is beneficial and useful to society (Parsons, 1951). However, their shortcomings in instilling values, especially integrity, responsibility, and the rule of law, contribute to producing individuals who superficially comply with standards without genuine adoption, which leads them to accept, participate in, and justify corrupt behaviors.

Accordingly, from Parsonage's perspective, corruption within the educational system is not considered an individual deviation, but rather reflects an accumulated dysfunction within it that allows for the reproduction of a culture that tolerates corruption as an informal mechanism for adaptation and achieving goals. Educational institutions, therefore, transform from instruments for shaping societal awareness to combat a culture of corruption into active contributors to its perpetuation within society by reproducing values that coexist with corruption.

Accordingly, corruption in Jordanian society cannot be understood as merely an individual, subjective behavior or a moral deviation. Rather, it is considered a structural and cultural product, arising from the repeated functional imbalances of social structures, of which educational institutions are one of the important structures. Weak adaptation to economic and social changes considering limited resources, widespread poverty and unemployment, and low monthly income will lead to the creation of an environment that allows for alternative illegal behaviors (such as bribery and abuse of office) to adapt to the Jordanian economic reality.

While the inability of existing political and administrative institutions in Jordanian society to clearly define objectives, coupled with the absence of fair distribution and weak equality of opportunity, individual goals take precedence, leading individuals to pursue them through devious and illegitimate means, such as bribery, favoritism, and nepotism. In this context, corruption transforms from a reprehensible behavior into a tool for achieving individual goals.

The weak integration among official institutions tasked with achieving justice, integrity, and the rule of law, coupled with declining public trust in them, and the conflicting values and interests between individuals and institutions, lead to a weakening of shared standards. This strengthens affiliations, which then supplant the rule of law, especially given that Jordanian society is a traditional, tribal society. Consequently, favoritism and nepotism become an unwritten social norm that maintains social cohesion and integration.

The same applies when socialization institutions (family, education, and media) fail to consistently fulfill their function of instilling social values and standards. Adherence to social norms, the value

system, and the principles of reward and punishment weakens. Consequently, individualistic values that prioritize self-interest over the common good, regardless of the means employed, have taken their place. In this context, corruption transforms from a rejected and condemned practice into a rational, socially acceptable, and even justifiable behavior. Values and standards are redefined. New terms are applied to them: bribery is called a "gift," nepotism is called "cleverness," and favoritism is called "help." This helps perpetuate the dysfunctional system instead of reforming it. Thus, corruption gradually transforms into a persistent and widespread culture within society, fulfilling alternative adaptive and complementary functions at the expense of institutional stability and social justice, and is passed down and inherited by future generations.

Conclusion:

The theoretical analysis reveals that corruption has transformed from an unacceptable individual behavior in Jordanian society into a serious phenomenon affecting all aspects of society. This is because it is linked to a system of social values and norms that now reproduce and even justify it. Educational institutions, as crucial socialization bodies responsible for producing these values and practices within society, play a significant and pivotal role. This gives them a contradictory role: one positive, in combating the culture of corruption and limiting its spread, and the other negative, in reinforcing, reproducing, and disseminating this culture among members of society.

Theoretical analysis also reveals that the function of educational institutions is by no means limited to cognitive aspects and scientific research alone. Rather, they play a crucial role, consistent with Talcott Parsons' structural-functional perspective, in societal stability and balance. This is achieved through contributing to the transmission of values among members of the educational institution at all levels, guiding their behavior, and reinforcing the values of justice, integrity, and transparency in service of society's higher goals. However, some negative practices within the educational system, such as nepotism, favoritism, and leniency towards academic cheating, contribute to entrenching negative trends by adopting corrupt practices and finding justifications for them.

Considering the theoretical analysis of sociological literature related to the culture of corruption and educational institutions in society, we can draw several conclusions, the most important of which are:

- Educational institutions bear a significant and pivotal responsibility for maintaining the continuity and stability of society, particularly as they are key institutions of socialization in Jordanian society.
- Some negative practices occur within educational institutions that constitute corruption (according to the Jordanian Anti-Corruption and Transparency Law), such as nepotism and favoritism.

- Lax enforcement of laws, regulations, and instructions within higher education institutions reinforces a culture of corruption in society.
- Analysis based on Parsons' perspective reveals that the educational environment is a crucial environment for reproducing social values within society, whether positive or negative.

Recommendations:

Based on the results, we can formulate a set of recommendations, the most important of which are:

- Promoting positive values within the educational system to combat the culture of corruption and reduce its spread in society.
- Enforcing laws and regulations aimed at combating corrupt practices within educational institutions and dealing with them firmly.
- Developing educational awareness programs to enhance the awareness of members of educational institutions (teaching and administrative staff and students) about the dangers of corruption to society and the importance of combating it..
- Strengthening the role of teaching staff in educational institutions at all levels as behavioral role models for students to instill values of integrity and transparency and to combat corruption and its culture.

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