

A Survey on **Wasta in Jordan**



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23. Do you think that the practice of wasta must be eliminated?

Yes No

Sample

In distributing 400 copies of this survey, we followed the method of stratified random sampling. According to this method, a set of principles upon which wasta is based are presumed. The sample is divided into partial groupings in accordance with these principles. A simple random sample from each grouping is selected as follows:

Universities, ministries and public institutions, private institutions, and schools and hospitals from different residence areas: Amman, Ajloun, Zarqa, and Jerash refugee camp. We excluded while counting 40 respondents for various reasons. Results are as follows

TABLE 1- The Sample

Question	Group	Total	Percentage
Sex	Male	232	64.4%
	Female	128	35.6%
Age	Under 20	37	10.27%
	20 - 30	139	38.61%
	30-40	90	25%
	40-60	81	22.5%
	Over 60	13	3.61%
Academic Qualification	None	7	1.94%
	Primary	20	5.55%
	Middle	31	8.61%
	Secondary	78	21.66%
	University	224	62.22%
Marital Status	Single	156	43.33%
	Married	166	46.11%
	Divorced	8	2.22%
	Widowed	30	8.33%
Career	Public Sector	110	30.55%
	Private Sector	163	45.27%
	Working abroad	12	3.33%
	None	75	20.83%
Place of Residence	Amman	188	52.22%
	Another Town	92	25.55%
	Village	40	11.11%
	Refugee Camp	40	11.11%
Religion	Muslim	292	81.11%
	Christian	64	17.77%
	Other	4	1.11%

TABLE 2

Question	Group	Total	Percentage
9) If you need to get business done at a government office, company or organisation:	a) Deal with it directly	126	35%
	b) Look for wasta before beginning	165	45.83%
	c) Look for wasta after beginning	69	19.16%
10) If you answered (b) or (c) to the previous question, is the reason for this:	a) Procedures are complicated	117	50%
	b) deficiencies with your case.	10	4.27%
	c) Not possible to complete the task without wasta.	95	40.59%
	d) Social standing	12	5.12%
11) Do you think that the completion of your task is impeded by:	a) Sex	53	14.72%
	b) Religion	15	4.16%
	c) Country of origin	76	21.11%
	d) Don't know	216	60%
12) After you used wasta to complete the required task, what was the result:	a) Completing task that is not possible without wasta.	58	16.11%
	b) No effect	18	5%
	c) Facilitated it	270	75%
	d) Impeded it	14	3.8%
13) With reference to past experience, will you use wasta:	a) Always	72	20%
	b) Sometimes	252	70%
	c) Never	36	10%
14) With reference to your present situation, do you think that your need for wasta:	a) Will increase	152	42.22%
	b) Will decrease	46	12.77%
	c) Will remain as is	162	45%

TABLE 3

Question	Group	Total	Percentage
17) Would you like to use wasta but you can not?	Yes	152	42.22%
	No	208	57.77%
18) Do you think wasta is one form of corruption?	Yes	309	85.83%
	No	51	14.16%
19) Did you try to use wasta for a relative or a friend?	Yes	256	71.11%
	No	104	28.88%
20) Do you get subjected to social pressure to use wasta?	Yes	206	57.22%
	No	154	42.77%
21) Do you try to avoid using wasta but you can not?	Yes	230	63.88%
	No	130	36.11%
22) Who do you use wasta for?	Relatives	98	27.22%
	Friends	62	17.22%
	Anyone who asks	200	55.56%
23) Do you think wasta should be eliminated?	Yes	314	87.22%
	No	46	12.77%

Question	Group	Total	Percentage
9) If you need to get business done at a government office, company or organisation:	a) Deal with it directly	126	35%
	b) Look for <i>wasta</i> before beginning	165	45.83%
	c) Look for <i>wasta</i> after beginning	69	19.16%

This table shows that respondents have predetermined conviction that *wasta* is inevitable. More than 60% said they will be looking for *wasta* to get their papers done while those who said they don't need *wasta* comprise 35% of respondents which is quite a small percentage.

Question	Group	Total	Percentage
10) If you answered (b) or (c) to the previous question, is the reason for this:	a) Procedures are complicated	117	50%
	b) Deficiencies with your case.	10	4.27%
	c) Not possible to complete the task without <i>wasta</i> .	95	40.59%
	d) Social standing	12	5.12%

More than 90% of respondents referred their use of *Wasta* to bureaucratic procedures or any other administrative reason (as shown in a and c). This clearly reflects the lack of confidence Jordanians place in the administrative system in its capacity to carry out its duties.

Question	Group	Total	Percentage
11) Do you think that the completion of your task is impeded by:	a) Sex	53	14.72%
	b) Religion	15	4.16%
	c) Country of origin	76	21.11%
	d) Don't know	216	60%

Most respondents (60%) preferred to say : "I don't know" to the reasons behind complication of administrative procedures. There might be other

reasons that respondents would like to say but that the questionnaire did not specify.

Question	Group	Total	Percentage
12) After you used <i>wasta</i> to complete the required task, what was the result,	a) Completing task that is not possible without <i>wasta</i> .	58	16.11%
	b) No effect	18	5%
	c) Facilitated it	270	75%
	d) Impeded it	14	3.8%

This question revealed the importance of *wasta* and explained previous answers. It showed that *wasta* not only got things done, but that it facilitated complicated procedures as 75% of respondents said.

Question	Group	Total	Percentage
13) With reference to past experience, will you use <i>wasta</i> :	a) Always	72	20%
	b) Sometimes	252	70%
	c) Never	36	10%

It is natural that 90% of respondents say that they will employ *wasta* again in future business. It has worked in the past and is expected to work in the future.

Question	Group	Total	Percentage
14) With reference to your present situation, do you think that your need for <i>wasta</i> :	a) Will increase	152	42.22%
	b) Will decrease	46	12.77%
	c) Will remain as is	162	45%

There is a pessimistic outlook on the future of the elimination of *wasta*. Around 88% of the respondents said they would still need to use *wasta*, half of which said their need for *wasta* will increase- which reflects the lack of confidence in possible positive changes in the future towards the

Question	Group	Total	Percentage
15) With reference to the predominant trend, do you think that the need for <i>wasta</i> generally in Jordan:	a) Will increase	195	54.16%
	b) Will decrease	25	6.94%
	c) Will remain as is	140	38.88%

This question is a re-emphasis of the pessimistic outlook. Not only respondents said that they will use *wasta* themselves but that the spread of this "corrupt" phenomenon will increase in the country in general.

Question	Group	Total	Percentage
16) If your response to the previous two questions was (a) or (c), do you think the reason for this is:	a) Administrative backwardness	117	34.92%
	b) Corruption	75	22.38%
	c) Family ties/ parochialism	105	31.34%
	d) Lack of democracy	38	11.34%

While respondents were afraid in a previous question to cite personal discriminatory reasons behind the success of *wasta* in Jordan, they did not hesitate here to cite corruption, administrative backwardness, democracy and parochialism as the basic reasons for the dominance of *wasta*.

General Reading

A swift look at the results shows that:

First:

While 87 per cent of respondents stress the need to eradicate *wasta* because it is one form of corruption, more than 90 per cent believe they will be using it...

Second:

Around 60 per cent of respondents say they are subjected to social pressure as a result of *wasta*. If this result is read along with the high percentage of those who believe *wasta* is corruption or those who believe it should be eradicated, then one can easily deduct how everyone in the society uses and accepts the use of *wasta* while they are unconvinced by it and unable to accept it.

Third:

One surprising result is that respondents prefer to use *wasta* for "anyone who asks" much more than they would for relatives and friends. This astonishing result might reflect the fact that people think *wasta* is one form of integration in the society and improving their relations to get a better role in the society and a popular base in the future for

parliamentary or municipality elections. But it also shows that family considerations are not as high as it is generally thought they are...

Fourth:

Another important outcome is that 75 per cent of respondents use wasta to facilitate procedures, which means that they try to avoid the waste of time and money on administrative procedures, or still, the disrespect that comes with bureaucracy...an aspect that should be further studied since it gives legitimacy to wasta..

The use of wasta involves three main parties:

1- The seeker:

The person who is in need of wasta and wishes to carry it out as fast as possible. The seeker's need could be legal and could be illegal:

It might be needed to go around the law.

It might be needed to regain a lost right, position or acquisition.

It might be needed to simply avoid routine and administrative complications.

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