

Palestinians Attitudes Toward Food Bank Project

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Abstract

The study aims at investigating Palestinians attitudes toward food bank project. The study approached the literature as a multi-dimensional phenomenon, which addressed both theoretical and applied research. The significance of this recent study is the first, which dealt with this theme, to the authors knowledge, which in turn encourages other researchers to work on further research on this important issue. The study adopted the quantitative research approach using the sampling survey method. The questionnaire is appropriate for the exploratory nature of the research. An index of a 12-item scale was used to measure Palestinians attitudes toward food bank project, developed by the research team, which was administrated to three hundred sixty participants in Arroub refugee camp in the West Bank during 2022, who were stratifiedly selected. The sample size was calculated using the sampling web, <http://www.surveysystem.com/sscalc.htm>, sample size calculator, with a margin error of 0.05. The collected data was statistically analyzed using the statistical package for social sciences (SPSS). The findings demonstrate that Palestinians scored high attitudes toward food bank project. Factors which significantly influenced Palestinians attitudes toward food bank project included work status, marital status, children number, and monthly income. The study findings confirm the value of the food bank in reducing poverty and enhancing food security for Palestinians in general and for refugees in particular, and recommend, empowering Palestinian families economically through the food bank which is an urgent demand in the current circumstances, and further studies should be conducted for a better understanding of the food bank among Palestinians using the qualitative research design.

Keywords: Attitudes, food bank, poverty, food security, Palestine.

1. Introduction

Over the last decades, the food bank project worldwide has been paid increasing attention in many disciplines including nutrition, agriculture, and social sciences. According to World Food Program-WFP (2022), almost 800 million people are underfed and two billion are malnourished across the

globe. The WFP is fighting to alleviate hunger and powering communities worldwide for zero hunger (WFP, 2022).

The food bank project aims to provide poor families with their daily food needs, in order to enhance their food security. According to the WFP (2022) a food bank is a non-profit, charitable organization that distributes food to those who have difficulty purchasing enough to avoid hunger, usually through intermediaries like food pantries and soup kitchens. Some food banks distribute food directly with their own food pantries.

Santa Mary's food bank was the world's first food bank, established in the United States in 1967. Since then, many thousands have been set up all over the world. In Europe, which until recently had little need for food banks due to extensive welfare systems, their numbers grew rapidly after the global increase in the price of food which began in late 2006, and especially after the financial crisis of 2007-2008 began to worsen economic conditions for those on low incomes (The Global Food Banking Network, 2005, Wikipedia, 2022).

2. Background and Literature Review

Since the 1980s food banking has spread around the world. There are over 30 countries and regions with active food bank groups under the umbrella of The Global Food Banking Network. Countries and regions in the international network include Australia, Turkey, Russia, India, Taiwan, Colombia, Brazil, Argentina, Chile, Guatemala, South Africa, Hong Kong, Singapore, South Korea and the UK. There are also several countries with foodbanks but which have not yet joined the network, either as they do not yet meet the required criteria or as they have not applied (The Global Food Banking Network, 2022).

In the Arab World, The Egyptian Food Bank was established in Cairo in 2006, and less than ten years later, food banks run on similar principles spread to other Arab countries in North Africa and the Middle East (Wikipedia, 2022).

The rise of food banks has been broadly welcomed. Not only do they provide a solution to the problem of hunger that does not require resources from the state, but they can be viewed as evidence of increasing community spirit and of active, caring citizenship (Banat, 2014a; Prendergast, 2017).

Sociologically, humans are sociable by nature and live within groups. Ever since the existence of man on Earth, he moved towards living in social groups. An individual cannot survive and exist for his livelihood without a society; he should be in constant contact with others sharing their lives and everyday activities (Banat, 2014a).

Moreover, other academics and commentators have expressed concern that the rise of foodbanks may erode political support for welfare provision. Researchers have reported that in some cases food banks can be inefficient compared with state-run welfare (Prendergast, 2017).

Food bank have been the object of study by nutrition, agriculture, social sciences and others related fields around the world. The American sociologist Janet Poppendieck warned that the rise of food banks can contribute to a long-term erosion of human rights and support for welfare systems. Once food banks become well established, it can be politically impossible to return responsibility for meeting the needs of hungry people to the state. Poppendieck says that the logistics of running food banks can be so demanding that they prevent kind-hearted people from having time to participate in public policy advocacy; yet she also says if they can be encouraged to lobby politicians for long-term changes that would help those on low income, they often have considerable credibility with legislators (Korrki, 2012; Davis, 2013).

The study of Bazerghi et al. (2016) concluded that while food banks have an important role to play in providing immediate solutions to severe food deprivation, they are limited in their capacity to improve overall food security outcomes due to the limited provision of nutrient-dense foods in insufficient amounts, especially from dairy.

3. Statement of the Problem

There is an increasing literature that addressed food bank all over the world. However, there is a scarcity of empirical studies regarding this topic especially in the conflicted societies in general and in the Palestinian society in particular, where the highest percentage of poverty, with: 47.5% of the refugee families are at risk of poverty, as a result of the high unemployment rate; the fertility rate is high; family size is large; the dependency rate is high (Banat, 2014b; Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, 2021).

The aim of this study is to identify Palestinians attitudes toward food bank project; to find out the main indicators associated with this topic, and to explore the demographic breakdown over Palestinian attitudes toward food bank project with the aim of identifying any differences.

4. Significance

Food bank has an impact on reducing poverty and enhancing food security worldwide, which brings a lot of positive impact towards the individuals and the society. The present study shed the light on Palestinians attitudes toward food bank project as an urgent demand of human being's life.

The present study considered the first of its kind, to the authors knowledge, and one of the leading studies that will enable us to understand this basic component that represents the advance stage of a human being's life in order to satisfy their daily needs and to improve their quality of life under the on-going difficult economic circumstances of Palestinians.

5. Objectives

The study seeks to achieve the following objectives:

1. Exploring the Palestinians attitudes toward food bank project.
2. Addressing the indicators of Palestinians attitudes toward food bank project.
3. Exploring the demography breakdown over Palestinians attitudes toward food bank project with the aim of identifying any statistical significant differences.

6. Questions

The present study seeks to answer the following questions:

1. What are the Palestinians attitudes toward food bank project?
2. What are the indicators of Palestinians attitudes toward food bank project?

3. Are there any statistically significant differences in Palestinians attitudes toward food bank project according to their age, gender, marital status, educational level, work status, children number, and monthly income?

7. Hypotheses

Taking into consideration, the set objectives, questions and variables of the study, the study addresses the main hypotheses:

1. There are no statistically significant differences at $\alpha \leq 0.05$ in the Palestinians attitudes toward food bank project according to gender.
2. There are no statistically significant differences at $\alpha \leq 0.05$ in the Palestinians attitudes toward food bank project according to work status.
3. There are no statistically significant differences at $\alpha \leq 0.05$ in the Palestinians attitudes toward food bank project according to marital status.
4. There are no statistically significant differences at $\alpha \leq 0.05$ in Palestinians attitudes toward food bank project according to educational level.
5. There are no statistically significant correlation at $\alpha \leq 0.05$ between age and Palestinians attitudes toward food bank project.
6. There are no statistically significant correlation at $\alpha \leq 0.05$ between number of children and Palestinians attitudes toward food bank project.
7. There are no statistically significant correlation at $\alpha \leq 0.05$ between monthly income and Palestinians attitudes toward food bank project.

8. Definition of Terms

Food bank: It is a project that aims to provide poor families with their daily food needs, in order to enhance their food security (WFP, 2022).

Palestinian refugees: the term refugees refer to Palestinians over fifteen years of age who are living in the refugee camps in the West Bank in general and in Arroub Camp in particular regardless of their social, legal status, race, class or any other factor (Banat, 2002, 2014b; Banat et al., 2018).

9. Limitations

The population of the present study was limited to Palestinian refugees over fifteen years of age, at Arroub Camp in the West Bank, Palestine during 2022.

10. Methods and Design

10.1 Approach

The study uses a quantitative approach design, using a questionnaire, which is appropriate to the exploratory nature of the research, and will provide more meaningful in-depth data.

10.2 Population and Sampling

The target population consists of Palestinians over fifteen years of age at Arroub Refugee Camp, in the West Bank during 2022, which includes 5797 persons; the population is comprised of 2909 males and 2888 females, as indicated in table no. 3.1 (Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, 2022).

Three hundred sixty Palestinians over fifteen years of age were stratifiedly selected, based on gender. The sample size was calculated using the sampling web. of <http://www.surveysystem.com/sscalc.htm>, sample size calculator, with a margin error of 0.05, as indicated in table no. 3.1.

10.3 Instrumentation

The index of a 12-item scale was used to measure Palestinians attitudes toward food bank project. A 5-point Likert scale (strongly agree, agree, neither, disagree and strongly disagree) was used to measure responses. The survey was conducted electorally through google drive in the period February 2-28, 2022. The sampling survey instrument sought background information about participants' which included age, gender, marital status, educational level, work status, children number, and monthly income.

10.3.1 Instrument Validity

Validation of the instrument proceeded in two distinct phases. The initial phase involved a small focus group session (N=16); while the second phase involved the implementation of a pilot study (N=30) to validate the survey using exploratory factor analysis. Factor loading for all items exceeded 0.60 (0.65 to 0.86), which means that those items are suitable in measuring every item of Palestinians attitudes toward food bank project, as indicated in table no. 3.9.

10.3.2 Instrument Reliability

The reliability was tested using Cronbach's Alpha and Guttman split-half coefficients to ascertain reliability and consistency of the survey. Cronbach's Alpha and Guttman split-half for the survey instrument was 0.89 and 0.85, respectively, indicating very good reliability and consistency, as indicated in table no. 3.10.

10.4 Sample Socio-demographic Characteristics

The demographic breakdown of the participants was based on age, gender, marital status, educational level, work status, children number, and monthly income. In total, three hundred sixty Palestinians and two focus groups were conducted. Respondents were between 15 and 63 years of age (M 31.87, SD 11.77). Females represented 50.3% of the participants, while the remaining 49.7% were males; and the majority (58.3%) were married. Half (55.8%) of the participants were well-educated with bachelor or above level of education; and having on average of 3.91 children, with a range of 1 to 10 (SD 1.85). Almost 64.7% of the sample population was working; and their monthly income average was 3502.05 NIS, with a range of 80 to 12500 (SD 1903.13), as indicated in tables' no. 3.2-3.8.

10.5 Data Analysis

The questionnaire items were rated on a 1–5 Likert scale (1=strongly disagree to 5=strongly agree), the highest score indicates a high level of attitudes toward food bank project. Descriptive statistics gauged level of attitudes among the sampled population.

Additionally, the following statistical techniques were measured: Regression, T.test, One-way analysis of variance, Tukey test, Cronbach's Alpha, Guttman Split-Half Coefficient and Factor Analysis using SPSS.

11. Findings

The mean score of Palestinians attitudes toward food bank project as reported by the sample of three hundred sixty participants was high (M 4.16, SD 0.54). The vast majority of the participants (83.2%) scored high attitudes toward food bank project, as indicated in table no. 4.1.

Furthermore, findings revealed the indicators of Palestinians attitudes toward food bank project ranked in a descending order as follows, “It is necessary to inform citizens about the importance of the food bank project” (M 4.44, SD 0.66); “I think that the food bank project protects poor families from asking for help” (M 4.41, SD 0.69). “Families benefiting from the food bank must be dealt with professionally” (M 4.40, SD 0.76).

Moreover, Palestinians indicated that they will not hesitate to support the food bank project (M 4.40, SD 0.70); since “The food bank project is an urgent demand” (M 4.36, SD 0.68); believing that the food bank project enhances food security (M 4.31, SD 0.70); “The food bank project is a national duty” (M 4.31, SD 0.73); “Contributing to supporting the food bank project is the responsibility of every citizen” (M 4.21, SD 0.75); since “It is very difficult to reduce poverty without the food bank project” (M 3.95, SD 0.78).

Furthermore, participants indicated that they have a clear vision of the food bank project (M 3.74, SD 0.96); and they opposed the idea that the food bank project in the current circumstances is not feasible (M 2.36, SD 1.03); or that it is a waste of time (M 2.16, SD 1.04), as indicated in table no. 4.2.

Furthermore, the study explored the demographic breakdown over Palestinian attitudes toward food bank project with the aim of identifying any differences. Findings showed that gender, age and educational level do not show any significant differences, as indicated in tables' no. 4.3, 4.8-4.9, 4.10. However, it was found that work status, marital status, children number, and monthly income were significant variables, as indicated in tables' no. 4.4-4.7, 4.10. In relation to work status, the differences were in favor of non-working participants (M 4.32, SD 0.62): T.test value was (-3.770,

$P=0.000$), as indicated in table no. 4.4. As for the marital status, the differences were in favor of married participants (M 4.26, SD 0.40), F-value was (37.054, $P=0.000$), as indicated in tables' no. 4.5-4.7.

Finally, findings indicated that there is a statistical significant positive correlation between number of children, and Palestinians attitudes toward food bank project, Beta-value was (0.224, $P=0.012$); however, findings showed a statistical significant inverse correlation between monthly income, and Palestinians attitudes toward food bank project, Beta-value was (-0.189, $P=0.010$), as indicated in table no. 4.10.

12. Discussion

The findings of this study showed that Palestinians scored high attitudes toward food bank project. In fact, Palestinians in general and Palestinian refugees in particular are living miserable social, psychological and economic conditions.

Generally, Palestinian camps is a critical body in the social structure of the Palestinian society. The camps are a symbol of the urgent Palestinian concentrations through unavoidable Diaspora, which the Palestinian 1948 and post 1967 war were exposed to. Palestinian refugees constitute the largest single group of refugees around the globe, and worldwide, one in three refugees is a Palestinian, with an estimated seven million Palestinian refugees spread throughout the world. Many are in the 59 official camps, i.e.: 19 in the West Bank; 8 in Gaza Strip; 10 in Jordan; 10 in Syria; 12 in Lebanon. The remainder can be found throughout the Arab Diaspora, both in Arab countries (outside of the camps) and outside the traditional Arab world, including in the two Americas, Australia and many other countries (Banat, 2002, 2014b).

All these camps are over-crowded, and there are no open or green spaces that can be used for recreational purposes or sporting activities. Camp residents live in very small houses that do not exceed 30 square meters, with each family living in two rooms. These Palestinian refugee housing conditions are among the worst in the world and the health of the refugees is generally poor. Statistics published by the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (2021) suggests the highest percentage of poverty and the toughest socio-economic conditions in refugee camps anywhere in the world, with: 47.5% of the refugee families are at risk of poverty, as a result of the high unemployment rate; the fertility rate is high; family size is large; the dependency rate is high (Banat,

2014a, 2014b).

To sum up, these camps bear witness to the catastrophic results of the homelessness caused by uprooting Palestinians from their homeland. Their ongoing daily suffering is seen at all levels: cultural, social, economic, political, and there are needy of food bank project to satisfy their daily needs, stop their suffering and poverty and enhancing their food security.

13. Recommendations

Based on the findings and discussion of this study, the following recommendations are made:

1. Given the concept of food bank the Nakba the utmost importance in the current economic circumstances.
2. Empowering Palestinian families economically through the food bank which is an urgent demand in the current circumstances.
3. Further studies should be conducted for a better understanding of the food bank among Palestinians using the qualitative research design.

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15. Appendixes

Table no. (3.1). Distribution of the study population and sample by gender

Gender	Population	Sample
Males	2909	181
Females	2888	179
Total	5797	360

Table no. (3.2). Sample distribution by gender

Gender	N	Percent %
Male	181	50.3
Female	179	49.7
Total	360	100

Table no. (3.3). Sample distribution by marital status

Marital status	N	Percent %
Single	121	33.6
Married	210	58.3
Other	29	8.1
Total	360	100

Table no. (3.4). Sample distribution by educational level

Educational level	N	Percent %
Basic or below	18	5.0
Secondary	69	19.2
Diploma	72	20.0
Bachelor or above	201	55.8
Total	360	100

Table no. (3.5). Sample distribution by work status

Work status	N	Percent %
Working	233	64.7
Not working	127	36.3
Total	360	100

Table no. (3.6). Sample distribution by age

Variable	N	Min.	Max.	Mean	Std. Deviation
Age	360	15	63	31.87	11.77

Table no. (3.7). Sample distribution by number of children

Variable	N	Min.	Max.	Mean	Std. Deviation
Number of children	239	1	10	3.91	1.85

Missing=121

Table no. (3.8). Sample distribution by monthly income

Variable	N	Min.	Max.	Mean	Std. Deviation
Monthly income	233	80	12500	3502.05	1903.13

Missing=127

Table no. (3.9). Factor analysis of Palestinian attitudes toward food bank project scale

No.	Items	Extraction
1.	The food bank project is an urgent demand	0.75
2.	The food bank project is a national duty	0.78
3.	I think that the food bank project enhances food security	0.75

4.	It is very difficult to reduce poverty without the food bank project	0.85
5.	I have a clear vision of the food bank project	0.79
6.	I think that the food bank project in the current circumstances is not feasible	0.74
7.	It is necessary to inform citizens about the importance of the food bank project	0.86
8.	Contributing to supporting the food bank project is the responsibility of every citizen	0.65
9.	Families benefiting from the food bank must be dealt with professionally	0.74
10.	I think that the food bank project protects poor families from asking for help	0.71
11.	I think that the food bank project in the current circumstances is a waste of time	0.70
12.	I will not hesitate to support the food bank project	0.75

Table no. (3.10). Reliability of Palestinian attitudes toward food bank project scale

Model	No. of items	Alpha
Cronbach's Alpha	12	0.89
Guttman Split-Half	12	0.85

Table no. (4.1). Number, mean, standard deviation, and percentage of Palestinian attitudes toward food bank project total score

Variable	N	Mean*	Std. Deviation	Percent %
Attitudes total score	360	4.16	0.54	83.2

*Mean out of 5 points.

Table no. (4.2). Mean scores, standard deviation, and percentage for the indicators of Palestinian attitudes toward food bank project ranked in a descending order

Attitudes indicators	Mean*	Std. Deviation	Percent %
It is necessary to inform citizens about the importance of the food bank project	4.44	0.66	88.8
I think that the food bank project protects poor families from asking for help	4.41	0.69	88.2
Families benefiting from the food bank must be dealt with professionally	4.40	0.76	88.0
I will not hesitate to support the food bank project	4.40	0.70	88.0
The food bank project is an urgent demand	4.36	0.68	87.2
I think that the food bank project enhances food security	4.31	0.70	86.2
The food bank project is a national duty	4.31	0.73	86.2
Contributing to supporting the food bank project is the responsibility of every citizen	4.21	0.75	84.2
It is very difficult to reduce poverty without the food bank project	3.95	0.78	79.0
I have a clear vision of the food bank project	3.74	0.96	74.8
I think that the food bank project in the current circumstances is not feasible	2.36	1.03	47.2
I think that the food bank project in the current circumstances is a waste of time	2.16	1.04	43.2
Total	4.16	0.54	83.2

*Mean out of 5 points.

Table no. (4.3). T-test for the differences in Palestinians attitudes toward food bank project according to gender

Gender	N	Mean*	Std. Deviation	DF	T-value	Sig.
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Male	181	4.21	0.55	358	1.763	0.079
Female	179	4.11	0.53			
Total	360	4.16	0.54			

*Mean out of 5 points.

Table no. (4.4). T-test for the differences in Palestinians attitudes toward food bank project according to work status

Work status	N	Mean*	Std. Deviation	DF	T-value	Sig.
Working	233	4.08	0.47	358	-3.770	0.000
Not working	127	4.32	0.62			
Total	360	4.16	0.54			

*Mean out of 5 points.

Table no. (4.5). One-way analysis of variance for the differences in Palestinians attitudes toward food bank project according to marital status

Source	DF	Sum of squares	Mean square	F-value	Sig.
Between groups	2	18.476	9.238	37.054	0.000
Within groups	357	89.003	0.249		
Total	359	107.479	-----		

Table no. (4.6). Tukey test for the source of differences in Palestinians attitudes toward food bank project according to marital status

Marital status	Single	Married	Widow
Single		-0.07270	0.77710
Married			0.84979*
Widow			

Table no. (4.7). Mean scores and standard deviation for the differences in Palestinians attitudes toward food bank project according to marital status

Marital status	N	Mean*	Std. Deviation
Single	121	4.18	0.60
Married	210	4.26	0.40
Other (Divorced, Widow)	29	3.41	0.60
Total	360	4.16	0.54

*Mean out of 5 points.

Table no. (4.8). One-way analysis of variance for the differences in Palestinians attitudes toward food bank project according to educational level

Source	DF	Sum of squares	Mean square	F-value	Sig.
Between groups	3	1.793	0.598	2.013	0.112
Within groups	356	105.686	0.297		
Total	359	107.479	-----		

Table no. (4.9). Mean scores and standard deviation for the differences in Palestinians attitudes toward food bank project according to educational level

Educational level	N	Mean*	Std. Deviation
Basic	18	4.28	0.52
Secondary	69	4.14	0.43
Diploma	72	4.04	0.79
Bachelor or above	201	4.21	0.46
Total	360	4.16	0.54

*Mean out of 5 points.

Table no. (4.10). Regression coefficients between age, number of children, monthly income and Palestinians attitudes toward food bank project

Variables	N	Beta	Sig.
Age	360	0.103	0.255
Number of children	360	0.224	0.012
Monthly income	360	-0.189	0.010

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

This study was submitted to participate in the International English Olympiad, Palestine 2022. We thank the anonymous referees for their kindly and useful suggestions.

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

The authors declare no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

HOW TO CITE THIS PAPER?

Ajarmeh, M., Hurani, A., Banat, R., Wahidi, A., Mahdi, M., Ahmed, R., Madi, R., Janazreh, T., & Titi, S. (2022). Palestinians Attitudes Toward Food Bank Project. *International Humanities Studies*, 8(3), 19-36.

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