

THE PERCEPTION OF POPULATIONS UPON CORRUPTION IN PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

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ABSTRACT: *The perception of the population is that corruption is one of the main problems faced by local and national public administrations, being a widespread phenomenon in all governments. The most serious consequence of corruption is the illegal redistribution of resources in society, as some social groups win and others lose. In this paper, we study the perception of the civil society upon the problem of integrity, ethics, transparency and corruption to the level of local administration of Vulcan City, Romania. There were discussions with civil servants, with execution and management functions, with contract staff, and a questionnaire for civil society was created and used to analyze the perception of Vulcan citizens.*

KEY WORDS: *corruption, local administration, transparency, population, government.*

JEL CLASSIFICATIONS: *G21, O16.*

1. INTRODUCTION

Corruption is a widespread phenomenon and is encountered worldwide, regionally, nationally and locally. The phenomenon of corruption has come to be present in various critical areas of a state, with its appearance in the judiciary, the medical system, education, mass media, public and local administration, even in religion. Corruption researchers' reactions have been seen since antiquity. Thus, Plato mentioned that "you should not receive gifts for good or bad things," which would be a solution to prevent and combat corruption.

Being considered to be a form of bad behavior, corruption was widespread among civil servants in ancient Greece and ancient Rome. Bribes, for example, were so common in ancient Greece that Plato proposed the death punishment for the officials who received gifts in order to do their duty. Corruption as a social phenomenon has an old history, B. Dandine and other authors even considering that man's tendency to

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corruption is a permanent and inevitable phenomenon in society's existence. N. Machiavelli considers it "the destruction of citizens' virtues".

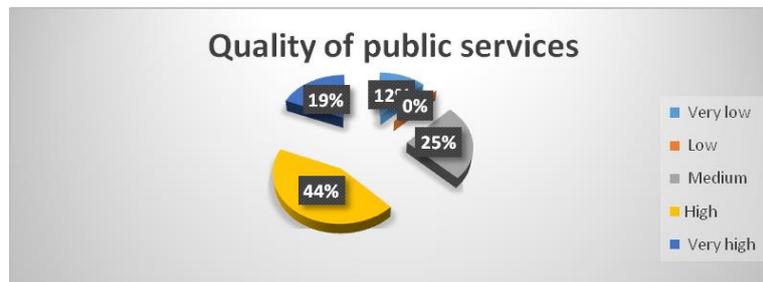
The analysis of the corruption phenomenon has continued so far, being a concern of both scientists and governors. Thus, English and American scholars, S. Rose Ackerman, S. P. Huntington, C., address the interaction between the state and the business, government and civil society in combating the phenomenon of corruption. Other researchers, J. Andersen (1955) and D. Kaufman (1950) highlight the subject of corruption as a field of scientific research, emphasizing the global scientific measurement of the phenomenon. Providing solutions to corruption presupposes to analyze them, and analysis presupposes measurement. One of the reasons for the relative neglect of the phenomenon until recent years has been precisely the difficulties involved in measuring it.

2. RESEARCH - VULCAN CITY HALL

In order to achieve the aim and objectives proposed by the author in the present paper, a number of sociological research methods and techniques were applied on the field, trying to analyze the existing situation regarding ethics, transparency and integrity within the Vulcan City Hall. Thus, there were discussions with civil servants with execution and management functions, with contract staff, and a questionnaire for civil society was created and used to analyze the perception of Vulcan citizens about ethics, transparency, integrity and corruption at the level Vulcan City Hall. For this purpose, a questionnaire was used on a sample of 200 respondents. When considering questionnaires, the legal provisions and normative acts, as well as the studies carried out by ANFP, were considered.

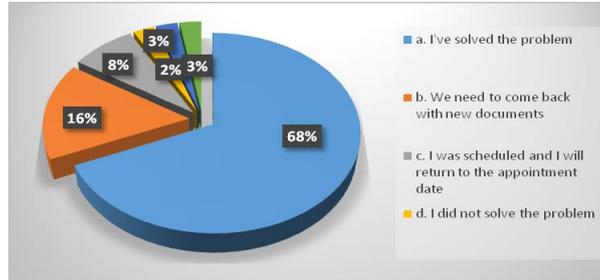
From the answers provided, we observe that 85% of the respondents have high school, university and postgraduate studies, which would allow us to offer a high degree of confidence to the answers of the questionnaire given the difficulty of the concepts to which this questionnaire refers.

1. *How do you appreciate the quality of the public services you have received at the Vulcan Town Hall?*



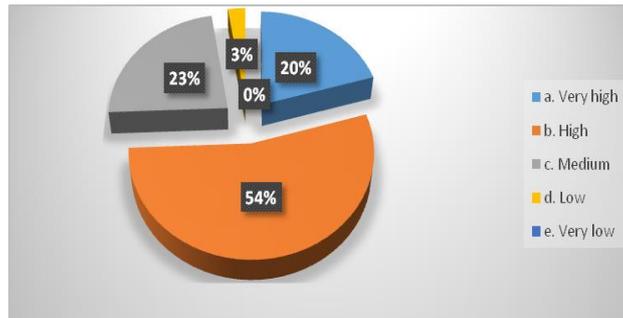
The vast majority of respondents were delighted with the services provided by the Vulcan City Hall, 83% considering them good and very good. Attention should be paid to exceptional cases where citizens have considered poor services for different reasons.

2. Trying to solve a problem at Vulcan Town Hall, have you solved the problem, or do you have to come back?



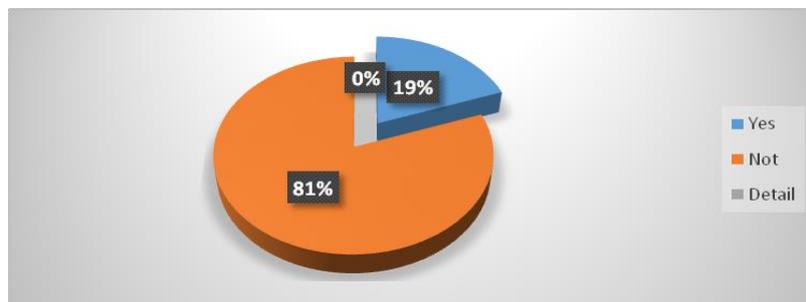
Of the problematic cases indicated only 2% were not resolved, the rest being solvable. 68% responded that they did not encounter problems and found solutions at the Vulcan Town Hall.

3. How do you assess your degree of knowledge of the rules of conduct and integrity specific to the function of public servant?



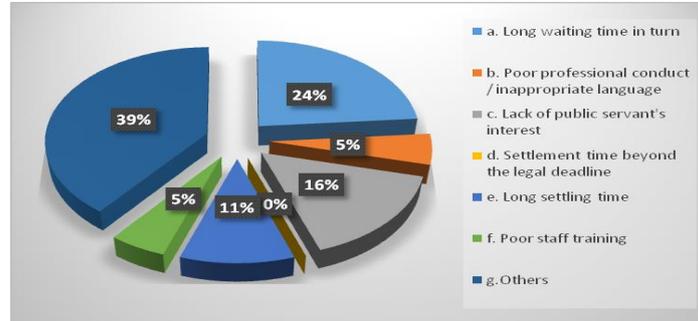
Respondents believe they have a high level of knowledge of conduct and integrity.

4. In the City Hall of Vulcan, have you been confronted with situations where you feel that the rules of professional conduct of civil servants have not been respected?



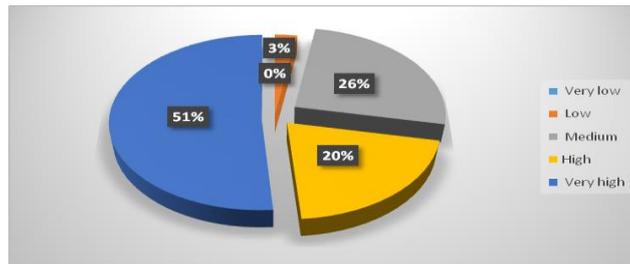
The vast majority have had a normal experience with civil servants, with good professional conduct.

5. If you've been confronted with problematic situations, why was that?



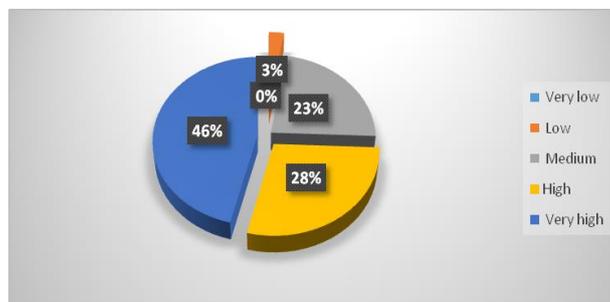
From the graph of question 7 we can conclude that the long waiting time is a problem when it comes to citizen interaction with the civil servant and the problems of another nature representing 39% of the total, would require research on this issue, for to identify specific solutions for each of those in this important percentage.

6. Consider in-depth computerization of public services as a solution to easier solving problems such as bureaucracy, lack of interconnection of state institutions databases, long settlement times, inadequate interaction of civil servants with citizens, etc.?



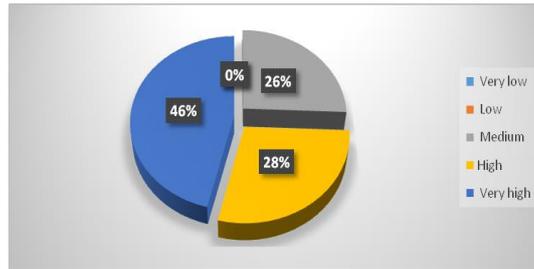
The percentage of those who consider the in-depth computerization of Vulcan City Hall services is very high, 97% considering it as a solution to the potential problems in using these services.

7. Do you consider it important for civil servants to participate in periodic training seminars / campaigns for specialization and improving of the services provided by them?



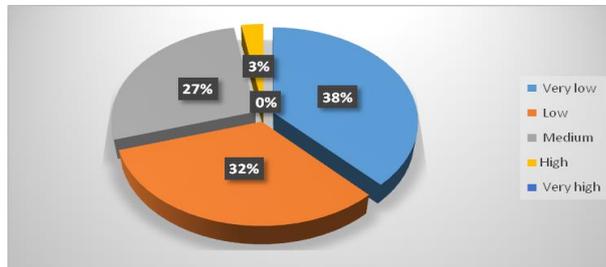
74% of the respondents considered it important for civil servants to participate in periodic training seminars / campaigns for specialization and efficiency of the services provided by them.

8. Consider important that civil servants participate in seminars / training campaigns for raising awareness of the importance of ethics in their conduct in order to prevent corruption, conflicts of interest or inappropriate attitudes towards citizens?

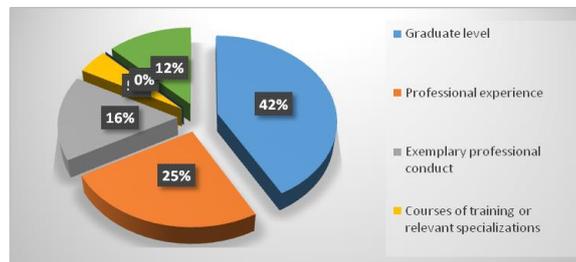


74% of the citizens participating in the sociological survey considered it important for civil servants to participate in seminars / training campaigns and awareness of the importance of ethics in the conduct of their work in order to prevent corruption, conflicts of interest or inappropriate attitudes towards the citizen.

9. In general, do you think that public servants in the Vulcan Town Hall, in the exercise of their job duties, they request or accept gifts, services, favors, invitations or any other advantage?



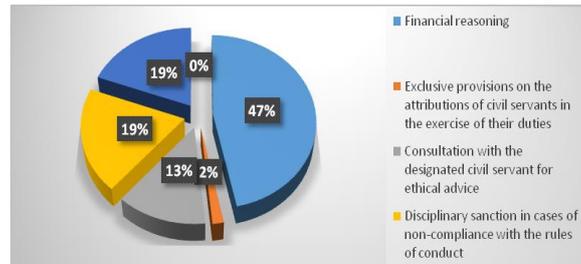
10. Please select in order of importance the criteria that should be the basis for the selection / promotion of the civil servant:



When selecting the employees in the Vulcan City Hall, the highest share of the conditions, according to the respondents in the questionnaire, should be the level of the

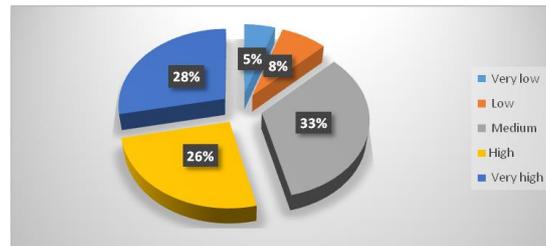
graduated studies, the previously acquired professional experience and the exemplary professional conduct.

11. *What are the measures that could help improve the ethical and professional conduct of civil servants?*



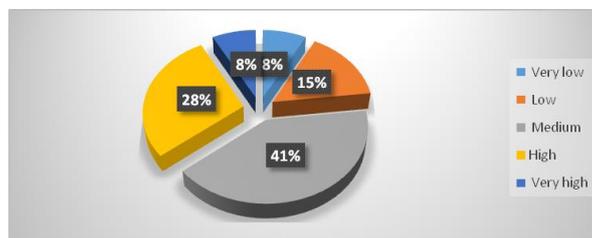
Surprisingly, 47% believe that civil servants should be motivated financially to improve their ethical and professional conduct. A total of 38% is a regular training on ethics and disciplinary sanctions in case of non-compliance.

12. *How do you appreciate the participation of citizens in Local Council meetings, counseling and their involvement in decision-making at City Hall level?*



From the answers given to question 14, citizens are pleased to be very pleased with its participation and its effect in making decisions at the local level. 87% of respondents see the attendance at meetings of the Local Council as being useful.

13. *How do you rate the content, transparency and update frequency of the Vulcan City Hall website?*



From the query on the effectiveness of the Vulcan City Hall website, we can conclude that it should be restructured and streamlined to provide useful information and possibly to solve certain problems without the necessity of getting the citizens to the City Hall.

3. CONCLUSIONS

Analyzing the results obtained, a series of conclusions have been drawn and a series of measures have been developed. In order to reduce corruption and increase ethics and transnationality, it is advisable to take into account in the future the provision of services by the Vulcan Town Hall of the following:

- ❖ Supplementing staff at queues where queues are created during certain time periods or certain monthly periods
- ❖ Creating an accessible web page where citizens can make suggestions for solving certain problems;
- ❖ Due to the high percentage of respondents who consider service computerization a priority, it is necessary that certain services can be made via the internet, inclusive or exclusively, thus leading to a reduction in costs and time used by civil servants in direct contact with citizens. It is necessary to interconnect the city's data bases with those of the various institutions of the Romanian State;
- ❖ Continuation and diversification of civil servants' participation in seminars / periodic training campaigns for specialization and efficiency of rendered services, especially those related to automation and automation of services;
- ❖ Make visits to homologous institutions in larger cities in Romania or the European Union for exchange of experience and gaining experience in good practice for the services provided;
- ❖ Creating a system of rewarding officials with exceptional results
- ❖ Increase of the total income of civil servants that currently have salaries below the gross average salary per country to increase their motivation in interaction with citizens;
- ❖ Achieving a procedural system of control and sanction of the officials with doubtful conduct and unsatisfactory professional results;
- ❖ Upgrading the Vulcan City Hall site so that it provides permanent updated information and possibilities to obtain services without the citizens being compelled to travel to the City Hall.

Also, it is necessary to appoint a person with a management function or coordination tasks to be responsible for the implementation and supervision of corruption prevention policies and procedures and to have direct reporting of integrity incidents and the vulnerabilities of colleagues and managers.

From the study of the legislation and the analysis of the factual situation, the following possible issues and vulnerabilities that may be encountered by the public servant / contract staff, as follows:

- predisposition of public servants and contract staff to corruption;
- the existence of unethical behavior towards citizens or colleagues as well as abusive behavior;
- harassment of work colleagues or persons who come into contact with the official;
- favoring people who come into contact with the civil servant / contract staff;
- accepting undue goods or benefits or even claiming them to solve some tasks at the workplace;
- negligence in service;

- abusive use of the function in order to obtain benefits;
- the existence of conflicts of interest;
- disclosure of secret service information and its publicizing them in the media;
- embezzlement and misappropriation of funds;
- falsification of documents;
- failure to perform job duties or direct orders;
- belonging to political parties;
- Incomplete or incorrect statements of assets;
- non-compliance with the principle of non-discrimination;
- hierarchical insubordination;
- promoting higher positions without respecting the legal criteria;
- manifestations that affect the prestige of the public authority or institution;
- failure to observe the principle of objectivity in the evaluation;
- as well as other specific cases provided by the law.

Romania responds mainly to corruption reprehensively through a strong criminal justice response and we believe that it is necessary to implement integrity standards, clear codes of conduct and compliance management systems.

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