Archives of Business Research – Vol. 10, No. 1
Publication Date: January 25, 2022
DOI:10.14738/abr.101.11562.
Bozdo, R. (2022). Perception of Corruption and the Relationship With Other Variables. Archives of Business Research, 10(01). 61-68.

Perception of Corruption and the Relationship With Other Variables

Rejla Bozdo
University of Tirana, Elbasan Str. 1005, Tirana, Albania

ABSTRACT

People perceive corruption at a rate that might not always be concurrent with the level of real corruption. Despite the fact, research on perception can help governments and other institutions better understand how to deal with the problem. This paper addresses the perception of corruption and its relationship with other variables of daily life, such as perception of the economy, education, health, security and politics in general, thus to investigate at what level the perception of corruption relates with or impacts the expectations and trust in other areas. The 369 respondents in the dataset, used for the analysis, live in Albania and have a mean age of 34.57 years old. Albania's Corruption Index of Transparency International increased during 2020 by five points compared to 2013. 2020, this is at the level of 36 points, ranked 104th . While in 2013, it was 31 points.

Keywords: corruption, perception of corruption, trust, culture, relationship

INTRODUCTION

Even if corruption itself and the perception of corruption may be at different levels, research shows that high levels of corruption perception could have more devastating effects on the corruption itself, as it generates "a culture of distrust" towards some institutions and may create a cultural tradition of gift giving, hence, augmenting corruption. [1]

[2] defines corruption as the abuse of public roles or resources for personal benefit, and emphasizes that "abuse", "public", "private", and even "benefit" are mostly matters of contention in many societies and of various degrees of ambiguity. The author points out that systemic corruption problems disrupt development ideal in a variety of ways symptomatic of underlying participation and institutional problems, by so being a symptom of development difficulties. The cost of corruption is that corruption delays and distorts political and economic development. Michael J. [2]

Corruption is one of the largest problems in our societies today. The OECD document on "Public Integrity" [6] considers corruption as one of the most corrosive issues of our time that wastes public resources, widens economic and social inequalities, breeds discontent, polarizes politics and reduces trust in institutions. The perception of government corruption in OECD countries has a strong negative relationship with levels of trust in government. [3] OECD defines trust as a person's belief that another person or institution will act consistently with their expectations of positive behaviour. [4]

[5] found that the poor and the uneducated tend to perceive higher levels of corruption than the wealthy and the well-educated. However, this relationship only holds in countries at high levels of economic development. In poorer countries, the statistical relationship is much weaker and sometimes runs in the opposite direction. An alternative for their findings is that lower income citizens actually observe more corruption. Their study helps us in the dimension that corruption perceptions will vary based on who is being asked.

This idea is also supported by [1] who in their research conclude that corruption perception decreases with socioeconomic status, the wealthier the people are and the higher their social standing is, the more benevolent are their views of the world and of other people.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND RESEARCH RESULTS

In this research, 369 people in Albania were asked through an online survey, on how they perceive corruption levels during December 2021 and their trust if corruption situation will improve next year. They were also asked on other issues as: their trust that justice will improve next year; their trust if economy will improve next year; their trust if politics will improve next year; their trust if education will improve next year; their trust if health situation will improve next year; their trust if order and security situation will improve next year.

This paper analyzes if there is any potential correlation between the perception of corruption and perception of other variables as economy, politics, education, health, order and security.

The age mean of the group in the study is 34.57 years (minimum age of respondents is 18 years old, maximum age of respondents is 74 years old; age 18 – 38 years old make 60.5% of total); 41.1% of respondents are males and 58.9% are females. The distribution of respondents is from 31 cities all over Albania, from which 73.9% of respondents live in Tirana, the capital of Albania.

Asked on the level of corruption they perceive, the respondents answered in a scale from 0 to 10 (0 – not at all; 10 – extremely much) with a mean of 8.86. (Fig. 1)

(Fig. 1) Descriptive Statistics on the perception of corruption

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
What is the level of corruption?	366	0	10	8.86	2.341
Valid N (listwise)	366				

Asked on the trend of corruption they perceive for the next year (future), only 5.4 % of the respondents answered positively, believing that the level of corruption will decrease during 2022. 39.4% of respondents believe that the level of corruption will increase during 2022, and 55% of respondents believe that the level of corruption will stay the same. (Fig. 2)

(Fig. 2) What is the trend of corruption for the next year?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	It will increase	145	39.4	39.5	39.5
	It will not change	202	54.9	55.0	94.6
	It will decrease	20	5.4	5.4	100.0
	Total	367	99.7	100.0	
Missing	System	1	.3		
Total		368	100.0		

The same respondents were asked on their perception levels if other areas of everyday life will improve during 2022. They gave their opinion on economy, politics, education, health and order and security. (Fig. 3) shows how they rated each of the variables, in a scale from 0 to 10.

(Fig. 3) Descriptive Statistics for all variables

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
• What is the level of trust you have that JUSTICE will improve next year?	367	0	10	2.10	2.464
• What is the level of trust you have that ECONOMY will improve next year?	366	0	10	2.25	2.380
• What is the level of trust you have that POLITICS will improve next year?	365	0	10	1.60	2.351
• What is the level of trust you have that EDUCATION will improve next year?	366	0	10	1.99	2.412
• What is the level of trust you have that HEALTH will improve next year?	366	0	10	1.94	2.306
• What is the level of trust you have that ORDER AND SECURITY will improve next year?	365	0	10	2.00	2.441
• Valid N (listwise)	363				

Asked on what is the overall situation compared to last year, 20.5% of the respondents say that this year is better compared to last year, and 42.1% of respondents say that this year the situation is worse compared to last year. (Fig. 4)

URL: http://dx.doi.org/10.14738/abr.101.11562

(Fig. 4) Overall situation compared to last year

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	The same	137	37.2	37.4	37.4
	Worse	154	41.8	42.1	79.5
	Better	75	20.4	20.5	100.0
	Total	366	99.5	100.0	
Missing	System	2	.5		
Total		368	100.0		

Furthermore, herein is analyzed the data of respondents giving extreme answers. From this dataset, the maximum scale of 10 (extremely much) for the level of corruption has been rated by 64.5% of respondents. Noted that, this is a very high rate for the maximum level of corruption perceived in the country.

For other variables, 0 (zero) is an extreme value that rates at 0 (zero) the level of trust that the situation will improve next year (2022). The value 0 for the level of trust that next year the situation will be improved has been chosen by the respondents in percentages for each variable, as shown below:
Justice - 43.1 %; Economy – 34.7 %; Politics – 54.2 %; Education – 41.3 %; Health – 40.7 %; Order & Security – 41.9 %

For all variables, the extreme value of 0 (zero) is chosen from more than 40% of respondents. This is also a high rate of negative perceptions.

On a specific question "Does perception of corruption correlate with the perception of each other variable (justice, economy, politics, education, health, order and security)?" it is found from the data analyzed, that there is a negative correlation between corruption and justice. It is weak, at the level of -0.142, but it is significant. (Fig. 5)

(Fig. 5) Correlations Corruption - Justice

		What is the level of corruption?	What is the level of trust you have that JUSTICE will improve next year?
What is the level of corruption?	Pearson Correlation	1	-.142**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.007
	N	366	366
What is the level of trust you have that JUSTICE will improve next year?	Pearson Correlation	-.142**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.007	
	N	366	367

****. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)**

From the data analyzed, there is a negative correlation between corruption and economy. It is weak, at the level of -0.103, but it is not significant. (Fig. 6)

(Fig. 6) Correlations Corruption - Economy

		What is the level of corruption?	What is the level of trust you have that ECONOMY will improve next year?
What is the level of corruption?	Pearson Correlation	1	-.103
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.050
	N	366	365
What is the level of trust you have that ECONOMY will improve next year?	Pearson Correlation	-.103	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.050	
	N	365	366

From the data analyzed, there is a negative correlation between corruption and politics. It is weak, at the level of -0.063, but it is not significant. (Fig. 7)

(Fig. 7) Correlations Corruption - Politics

		What is the level of corruption?	What is the level of trust you have that POLITICS will improve next year?
What is the level of corruption?	Pearson Correlation	1	-.063
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.234
	N	366	364
What is the level of trust you have that POLITICS will improve next year?	Pearson Correlation	-.063	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.234	
	N	364	365

From the data analyzed, there is a negative correlation between corruption and education. It is weak, at the level of -0.137, but it is significant. (Fig. 8)

(Fig. 8) Correlations Corruption - Education

		What is the level of corruption?	What is the level of trust you have that EDUCATION will improve next year?
What is the level of corruption?	Pearson Correlation	1	-.137**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.009
	N	366	365
What is the level of trust you have that EDUCATION will improve next year?	Pearson Correlation	-.137**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.009	
	N	365	366

****. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).**

URL: http://dx.doi.org/10.14738/abr.101.11562

From the data analyzed, there is a negative correlation between corruption and order and security. It is weak, at the level of -0.106, and it is significant. (Fig. 9)

(Fig. 9) Correlations Corruption – Order and Security

		What is the level of corruption?	What is the level of trust you have that ORDER AND SECURITY will improve next year?
What is the level of corruption?	Pearson Correlation	1	-.106*
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.043
	N	366	364
What is the level of trust you have that ORDER AND SECURITY will improve next year?	Pearson Correlation	-.106*	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.043	
	N	364	365

***. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).**

From the data analyzed, there is a negative correlation between corruption and health. It is weak, at the level of -0.119, and it is significant. (Fig. 10)

(Fig. 10) Correlations Corruption - Health

		What is the level of corruption?	What is the level of trust you have that HEALTH will improve next year?
What is the level of corruption?	Pearson Correlation	1	-.119*
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.023
	N	366	365
What is the level of trust you have that HEALTH will improve next year?	Pearson Correlation	-.119*	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.023	
	N	365	366

***. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).**

Perception of corruption has a significant negative relation with the variable “justice”, “education”, “health”, “order and security”, while the data analysis shows no significant correlation of perception of corruption with “economy” and “politics”. One potential explanation why this happens, might be that in some areas, where people take direct services, the perception of corruption is more concrete rather than in broader and general areas such as politics and economy, for which they don’t have any direct measure of the corruption to create a perception.

Another result of the data analysis for this group of respondents is that the means of rating for males are higher than the ones made by female respondents. Males perceive corruption at a higher rate (9.07 out of 10) compared to females 8.71 out of 10. (Fig. 11)

Regarding the expectations for next year, male respondents are more optimistic than females in all variables. (Fig. 11)

(Fig. 11) Report for all variables according to gender

Gender		What is the level of corruption?	What is the level of trust you have that JUSTICE will improve next year?	What is the level of trust you have that ECONOMY will improve next year?	What is the level of trust you have that POLITICS will improve next year?	What is the level of trust you have that EDUCATION will improve next year?	What is the level of trust you have that HEALTH will improve next year?	What is the level of trust you have that ORDER /SECURITY will improve next year?
Male	Mean	9.07	2.30	2.40	1.85	2.08	1.95	2.11
	N	149	150	150	150	150	150	149
	Std. Deviation	1.900	2.503	2.567	2.506	2.451	2.371	2.540
Female	Mean	8.71	1.95	2.15	1.45	1.91	1.92	1.91
	N	214	214	213	212	213	213	213
	Std. Deviation	2.609	2.434	2.255	2.238	2.381	2.279	2.363
Total	Mean	8.86	2.10	2.25	1.61	1.98	1.93	1.99
	N	363	364	363	362	363	363	362
	Std. Deviation	2.348	2.465	2.389	2.357	2.408	2.314	2.436

Throughout the study is analyzed if there any significant gender difference in each variable. Independent t-test do not show any significant gender difference regarding the variables justice, economy, politics, health, education, order and security.

CONCLUSIONS

Respondents in Albania perceive a very high level of corruption, at a mean of 8.86 out of 10. Respondents believe that the trend of corruption they perceive for the next year (future) will decrease - 5.4 %; will increase - 39.4%; 55% of respondents believe that the level of corruption will stay the same (8.86). This data makes the situation pessimistic as they actually perceive a very high level of corruption and they still believe it will worsen.

Respondents trust that the situation will recuperate during next year in areas such as justice, economy, politics, education, health, order and security, where they stand separately at a scale less than 3 (scale 0 to 10). The lowest rate is for politics with the values of 1.6 and the highest rate is for economy with the scale of 2.25.

URL: http://dx.doi.org/10.14738/abr.101.11562

The test of correlation between corruption and other variables in this study shows that the perceived corruption correlates with the level of trust of the justice, education, health, order and security's variables. The perceived level of corruption does not correlate with variables of economy and politics. An alleged explanation may be the fact that for justice, education, health, order and security respondents have a clear picture because they take direct services in these areas, so perception is related with direct actions. Economy and politics are broad and rather general issues.

From descriptive statistics it is noted that males have a higher mean rate of perceived corruption than females (9.07 males; 8.71 females), but independent t-test do not confirm any significant differences between gender groups.

Independent t-test shows no differences between gender groups also for the variable justice, economy, politics, education, health, order and security.

References

[1] Melgar N., Rossi M., Smith T., 2010, The perception of corruption, International Journal of Public Opinion Research Vol. 22, No. 1, Oxford University Press, doi: 10.1093/ijpor/edp0o58

[2] Johnston M., 2005, Syndromes of Corruption, Wealth, Power and Democracy, Cambridge University Press, ISBN-13 978-0-52161859-5

[3] Government at a Glance 2019, OECD. Retrieved at: https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/sites/8ccf5c38-en/1/2/10/1/index.html?itemId=/content/publication/8ccf5c38-en&_csp_=40825562de64089b975c3e83eb3f6e04&itemIGO=oecd&itemContentType=book

[4] OECD Guidelines on Measuring Trust, OECD Publishing, Paris. http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264278219-en

[5] Maeda K., Ziegfled A., 2015, Socioeconomic status and corruption perceptions around the world, Research and Politics, Sage Publications. DOI: 10.1177/2053168015580838

[6] https://www.oecd.org/gov/ethics/OECD-Recommendation-Public-Integrity.pdf