E-ISSN: 2360 – 6754; ISSN-L: 2360 – 6754

European Journal of Law and Public Administration

2020, Volume 7, Issue 1, pp. 8-17

https://doi.org/10.18662/eljpa/7.1/109

MICRO-RESEARCH ON IDENTIFYING THE POPULATION'S PERCEPTION ON THE QUALITY AND THE PERFORMANCE OF THE LOCAL PUBLIC POLICE IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF SUCEAVA

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Covered in:

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Published by:
Lumen Publishing House
on behalf of:
Stefan cel Mare University from Suceava,
Faculty of Law and Administrative Sciences,
Department of Law and Administrative Sciences

MICRO-RESEARCH ON IDENTIFYING THE POPULATION'S PERCEPTION ON THE QUALITY AND THE PERFORMANCE OF THE LOCAL PUBLIC POLICE IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF SUCEAVA

Irina BILOUSEAC[1]
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Abstract

The interest shown in dealing with this topic in this article lies, first of all, in the desire to identify and study the public perception on the quality and performance of the local police service in Suceava, while seeking to determine and analyze the main causes generating criticism of police personnel. For the proper functioning of the local police service, we consider it necessary to examine the public opinion on the implications it has in the optimal functioning of the local community, the degree of satisfaction of citizens in the delivery of the local police service being an essential indicator that must be measured.
The local community, as a beneficiary of public services, has a vital role in monitoring, evaluating and adjusting the reforms aimed at the organization and functioning of the local police, as a public service. The involvement of citizens, the recognition, at the same time as the confirmation of the results by them, as well as the personal perceptions on the actions and decisions adopted at local level, are defining elements for ensuring a quality and efficient local police service.

Keywords:

Quality and performance of the public service; Local Police; decentralization in public services.

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JEL classification: H10, H83

INTRODUCTION

The services in the category of public order and citizen safety are currently provided, locally, by the Local Police, a relatively new public service, established in 2010, following the adoption of Law no. 155 of 12 July 2010 [1], being a decentralized administrative structure, operating under the authority of the mayor, expressly established in order to take part in defending the fundamental rights and freedoms of the person, as well as to protect private and public property, in order to prevent and detect crimes that threaten order right.

The study aims to study the public perception on the quality and performance of the public service of Local Police in Suceava, given that the main responsibility of this structure (ensuring public order and peace and supporting the population) places the Local Police at the center of services of public interest.[2] In this context, the effectiveness of actions taken by local police, but also of decisions that directly affect the interests of the citizen, is influenced by the relationship with the community, the support that civil society provides, and the appreciation by citizens of the legitimacy of actions on which these structures undertake. [3]

I. THE PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES OF THE SOCIOLOGICAL SURVEY

The sociological survey conducted among citizens of Suceava on public perception of the quality and performance of the public service of local police aims to identify the image of this service by reporting on the efficiency of activities and prompt decisions, in the context of a society whose requirements and needs varies and is constantly growing. In other words, in the light of this sociological approach, the aim is to know the citizens' perception about the quality of the services provided by the local police from Suceava.

The actions carried out by the local police of Suceava, which carry out their activity on the entire territory of the municipality, through the organization and promptness with which they are put into practice, reflect the tendency to develop this institution and improve its image in relation to the

citizen through a remarkable involvement, assuming to solve the problems reported by the local community and adopting appropriate professional conduct, in accordance with the status enjoyed by local police officers. [4]

Specifically, we wanted to investigate the impact that the direct interaction of citizens with local police staff in Suceava has on the way the activity of this service is evaluated, by reference to the quality and performance of services provided at the local community and the interest shown in the relationship with the citizen.

The main objective of this sociological approach is to perform a qualitative assessment of the general level of satisfaction of the local community to the activity of the Local Police in Suceava, an assessment of the efficiency and effectiveness of services provided by this structure and progressive trends to improve action strategies.

The main objective of the research is also subordinated to several related objectives, with a significant role in drawing valid conclusions:

- Evaluating of the frequency with which direct contacts are registered between the local police in the Muncipality of Suceava and citizens;
- Evaluating the profesionalism of local police officers in fulfilling their duties and in their relationship with the citizens;
- Centralization of the main causes generating criticism from the community to the local police in the Municipality of Suceava.

In order to achieve the goal and the objectives, it is necessary, first of all, to understand the significance of the mission that the local police has in the life of the community and the citizens, and to increase the awareness of the population about the beneficial contribution of active cooperation between local police structures and citizens, as beneficiaries of public services, in a community that tends to operate in an optimal regime of order and safety.

In order to quantify the population's perception of the quality and performance of the local public police service in Suceava, we conducted a micro-research at the municipal level (approach based on the application of a questionnaire). In carrying out this approach we start from the premise that the Local Police is an institution in the service of the community, the relationship between this structure of public interest and the population whose interests

must be served based on trust, mutual support, respect and claiming of a continuous development.

III. THE HYPOTHESES OF THE RESEARCH

The sociological study carried out at the level of the Suceava municipality aims at analyzing and evaluating the image of the Local Police, by reporting the "quality" and "performance" indices. In order to highlight the impact that personal experience, respectively direct interaction with police personnel, has on public opinion regarding the quality and performance of the public local police service in Suceava, we tested three basic hypotheses.

I. The type and frequency of contacts with local police officers, as well as the personal experience of the citizen in relation to the local police staff, are decisive in forming an image on the quality and performance of the local police service.

II. The staff of the local police from Suceava shows permanent availability in solving the problems reported by the citizens and acts with professionalism for fulfilling the attributions provided by the framework law.

III. The public service of Local Police in Suceava has a high level of performance in terms of actions undertaken and decisions made promptly in accordance with the interests of citizens.

The data from this case study were collected between March 2020 and May 2020, as a result of the application of the questionnaire among the citizens of Suceava. Thus, as regards the definition of the target group, it consists of a group of 100 representatives with the common characteristic of belonging to the same municipality of residence.

The structure of the group of 100 people is defined by reference to a set of socio-demographic variables: gender, age, educational level, professional sphere, living environment. "In order to obtain" a sample as diverse as possible, the subjects were given requested to mention the age and the environment from which they come (urban / rural), as well as the occupational sphere in order to identify the current status. The subjects participating in this study were divided according to gender in two categories: women and men, respectively.

IV. INTERPRETATION OF RESULTS

Following the effective processing of the answers provided by the participants, the three hypotheses formulated in the first instance were confirmed.

We present, as an example, two relevant aspects for identifying the perception of the population on the quality and performance of the local public police service in Suceava, namely the type of contact that the citizen has with this public order structure and the public perception of efficiency and performance the local police from the Municipality of Suceava from the perspective of the way of solving the problems regarding the local community.

The reason behind the interaction between the citizen and the local police officer has significant values on the subsequent assessments of the local community.

In order to confirm / disprove the developed hypotheses, the respondents who interacted with the local police from Suceava in the last 12 months were asked to specify the concrete reason for this interaction. According to the results, the main reasons why citizens came into contact with local police are the application of sanctions by police officers (26%) and routine checks (22%), we are talking about the preponderance of contacts initiated by the structures of the local public order.

On the other hand, there are also interactions initiated voluntarily by citizens (18% of respondents asked for information from local police and 15% reported a problem). It should be noted that among the reasons why local police officers approach citizens is the request for support in order to solve public policy problems (11%), which reveals the willingness of local police to cooperate with the citizen. Respondents were given the opportunity to specify other reasons why they came in contact with the local police (based on their individual experience), so that 8% said they witnessed an illegal act and 3% participated in a public event (cultural, sports, educational activities) where the local police were also present.

We note that mainly the interactions between local police and citizens are materialized at the initiative of the structures of the public order in order to exercise their duties.

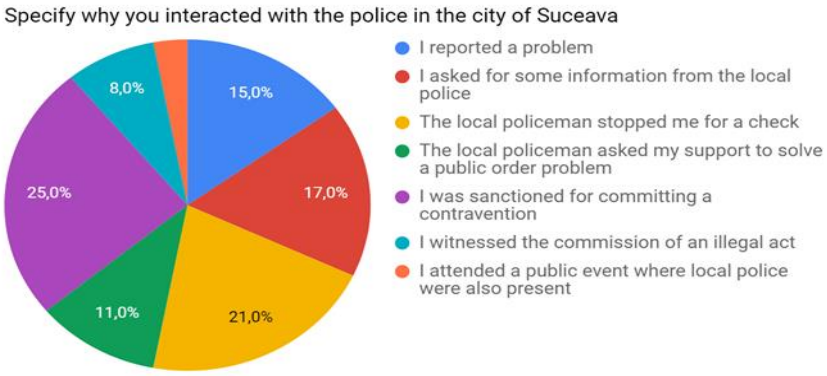


Figure no. 1. Specify why you interacted the police in the city of Suceava

The main hypothesis of this study assumes that the public image on the efficiency and performance of the public service of local police in Suceava is conditioned by contact with this structure (in all its aspects). Thus, personal experience is a key factor in the individual's perception of this service.

Within a community, an efficient public service is one that responds exactly to the needs of citizens. Thus, the efficiency of the activities carried out by the local police is reflected in the degree of satisfaction of the population regarding the way in which their interests were protected and the needs and necessities were satisfied. The knowledge of the public interest allows the development of necessary actions and the adoption of decisions that respond exactly to the public needs.

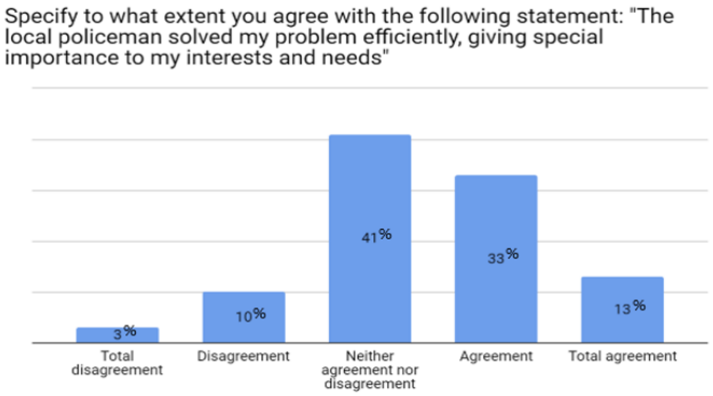
In order to evaluate the public perception regarding the efficiency and performance of the Local Police from Suceava from the perspective of the operation of the problems regarding the local community, the respondents were asked to express their agreement / disagreement regarding the statement:

"The local policeman solved the problem effectively, giving special importance to my interests and needs".

The results show that in the vast majority of cases local police officers manage to respond effectively to the needs of citizens (41% neither agreement nor disagreement, 33% agreement and 13% total agreement), the issue of prioritizing the interests of the individual is not fully clarified. which generates that percentage of 41% for a middle variant). At the opposite pole are the percentages of 10% that reveal the disagreement of the respondents and 3% of the total disagreement, the manifestation of this disagreement (although in a rather small proportion) attests to the existence of issues that must be remedied in the conduct of local police to be in the presence of a service fully efficient and performing.

Table no. 1 Specify to what extent you agree with the following statement: "*The local policeman solved my problem efficiently, giving special importance to my interests and needs*"

The



results recorded based on the application of the questionnaire, which aim to identify the public perception on the quality and performance of the public service of Local Police in Suceava, allowed not only to confirm the hypotheses, but also to identify the main issues to be addressed in order to guarantee services of maximum efficiency and effectiveness. The hostility shown by the local police in relation to the citizens is the main source of dissatisfaction and

inconvenience (35%). At the same time, the disinterest and superficiality with which the local police treat citizens' problems (20%), as well as the lack of patience in listening to the citizen (15%) have unfavorable consequences on the image of this structure and damage the prestige and value given to the local community.

V. CONCLUSIONS

Based on the results recorded following the micro-research conducted among the citizens of Suceava, we can say that the answers provided by respondents certify the quality of services provided by the local police of Suceava, which fall within the optimal parameters. This is important because, in their daily activities, the local police are at the service of the citizens, and a good relationship with the population will lead to positive results. The entire activity within the institution is limited to the public interest, essential needs of citizens, ensuring their physical and patrimonial integrity, the creation and maintenance of the climate of civic normality. [5]

The information obtained from the effective processing of the collected data is significant both for evaluating the success of actions initiated at local level by public order structures and identifying the quality and performance of services provided, and for defining a concrete action plan currently "maintaining public order and peace" to improve the partnership between the local police and the population.

As a conclusive note, in the current context, the success of the activities carried out at the level of the Romanian local public administration (which also implies the activity of the local police structures) is conditioned by the trust that citizens (as first beneficiaries of public services) develop towards the quality and performance of the services provided at the level of the territorial administrative units. Consolidating a better collaboration between the local police and the local community in Suceava can be achieved in concrete terms by raising public awareness of the role and importance of the local police in a society, in order to maintain an optimal climate of public order and peace, on the one hand, and on the other, by the local police prioritizing the public interest and the safety and security needs of the citizens they serve.

The development of security needs at the local level, as well as the need to strengthen strategic perspectives, have resulted in the continuous change of society and the argumentation of the pressure exerted on the public order system.

Based on the aspects presented in this paper, I consider it appropriate to synthesize some personal proposals, categorized as necessary to be considered:

- Revaluation of the current training system for local police personnel, permanently following the ocupational standards, as well as the introduction in the training courses of some compulsory modules regarding the disciplines, related to the professional and professional activities. administrative, public order, road legislation, trade, construction;
- Review of the personnel recruitment process (we must take into account the fact that local police study programs have been established, including in the municipality of Suceava, and graduates should be an adequate source of recruitment and training of personnel);
- Strengthening the partnership with the structures of the Romanian Police by introducing joint action plans, mixed patrols (without neglecting the fact that the national police has the role of coordinating in situations where they participate together in certain actions);
- The establishment of a management system that guarantees an efficient structure and consistency in the application of legal norms. In this sense, we consider it useful to organize periodic meetings of all the directors of the local police structures at the level of the whole country, in order to expose their problems as services in an exhaustive manner and finding efficient and common solutions;
- The existence of a "status" of the local policeman, this issue being already debated at national level. This status of the local policeman would mean a series of expected benefits (the desired stability, the unification of the legislation at the national level, the possibility of a thorough knowledge of the status of the rights and obligations of the law and the obligations of the country), and authority in front of the institutions but also of the individual, as well as the establishment of a form of insurance to establish its protection, through which the most vital and stringent ones are the food allowance and the establishment of work places and activities in special conditions or other conditions of work, two of the most important goals of any local police officer).

In conclusion, analyzing the operative situation through its study in the field, we can say that the local police have a significant contribution in the materialization and implementation of the proposals presented, as they contact directly the citizens, they know and understand their necessities. These citizens' problems are brought to the attention of leading factors, and they implement the strategies. Thus, they gain the trust of the population, obtaining in exchange the understanding and the help regarding the cooperation of the citizens, to ensure the public peace within the localities of the country.

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