

MAROŠ PAULINI

Measuring public
integrity – a journey,
a puzzle and a
personal quest

Who are we
and how we
got to
measuring of
integrity?

- ▶ Small (11 people), independent organisation tasked (among others) with ethics of civil servants
- ▶ Civil Service Council, Slovakia
- ▶ Been on the track since 2018
- ▶ Research, Oversight, Trainings

Public integrity as a journey

- ▶ Phase one, setting up the organisation and preparing for drafting of Code of ethics
- ▶ Getting to know the integrity landscape in Slovakia – 1st 2018 questionnaire

Public integrity as a journey

(International Civil Service
Effectiveness Index,
Oxford)



Public integrity as a journey

First questionnaire

- ▶ the ethical awareness of the civil servants (information awareness, sources of information on ethics, ethical process awareness),
- ▶ how are the ethical breaches dealt with in the workplace,
- ▶ the perceptions and regulation of gifts and benefits,

Public integrity as a journey

- ▶ types of ethical problems encountered,
- ▶ the perceptions of the areas prone to integrity risks (procurement, HR, subsidies and funds allocation)
- ▶ the factors of ethical motivation and demotivation – M: leaders, cultures, colleagues, D: leaders, culture, fear of reprisal and persecution

Public integrity as a journey

- ▶ trust in various public institutions regarding the detection and dealing with ethical breaches,
- ▶ Dimensions of ethical leadership of civil service managers, compared to a similar research carried out in private sector - pretty same results
- ▶ perception of level of ethical behaviour in civil service and its evolution,

Public integrity as a journey

- ▶ Results of 2018 questionnaire, top 3 integrity breaches encountered in the workplace:
 1. Favouritism and nepotism
 2. Conflict of interest
 3. Interpersonal relations

Public integrity as a journey and a puzzle

Putting together the Code of Ethics

- ▶ The results were incorporated into drafting process of Civil servant's code of ethics
- ▶ Also two groups were tasked to help with drafting of the code, one group were independent experts from academia and from integrity and compliance practitioners, other group were the civil servants.
- ▶ This helped to add qualitative element to results of quantitative questionnaire and triangulate the research

Public integrity as a journey and a puzzle

- ▶ One of the main areas for improvement was lack of integrity awareness
- ▶ Ethical training were designed to tackle this task
- ▶ Gradually moved to onsite, tailored, interactive, sharing-oriented trainings with the support from the top management of the institution
- ▶ Trainings serve as two-way communication and trust builder, with many trainings including ethical advising and consulting

Public integrity as a journey and a puzzle

- ▶ In 2022 we decided to go for another research project
- ▶ Integrity self - assessment questionnaire based on Dutch and Polish questionnaire
- ▶ Included few tweaks focused on Slovak context including organisational injustice

Public integrity as a journey and a puzzle

- ▶ In 2022 we decided to go for another research project
- ▶ Integrity self - assessment questionnaire based on Dutch and Polish questionnaire
- ▶ Included few tweaks focused on Slovak context including organisational injustice
- ▶ Data on following slides are for the whole of the Slovak Civil Service

Perception of the relations with colleagues

5 = completely agree
1 = completely disagree

My colleagues at work help me when needed	4,18
My closest colleagues show personal interest in me	4,02
I feel satisfied in my organization	3,68
The quality of cooperation between my closest colleagues and me is high	4,25
My closest colleagues let me know if the quality of my work becomes an issue	3,95
My closest colleagues let me know if our interpersonal relations become an issue	3,66
My colleagues are doing their jobs well	4,04

Just and fair treatment


5 = completely agree
1 = completely disagree

The employees can count on being treated fair	3,34
My co-workers are assessed objectively and fairly, that is appropriately to their merit, commitment and workload	3,25
My direct supervisor treats employees with respect	4,06
In my organization, honesty is a pre-requisite for success	3,73
My organization takes information about inappropriate employee behavior seriously	3,54
When someone receives an award, recognition or promotion, they did indeed deserve it	3,50

Integrity breaches

5 = very often


1 = never



Irresponsible use of the organization's property, including the use of e-mail, Internet, telephones, etc. for private purposes	1,82
Dishonest use of the organization's funds, such as reimbursement of travel expenses, etc.	1,26
Non-compliance with working hours	1,73
Accepting gifts, offers and other occasional payments that may affect the civil servant's impartiality when performing their duties	1,19
Accepting invitations to trips, conferences, events and dinners that may affect the civil servant's impartiality when performing their duties	1,16
Questionable or unusual informal contacts with third parties	1,30
Misuse or mishandling of confidential information	1,31
Sharing confidential information with colleagues from other departments	1,48

Colleagues' behaviour and their attitudes towards work

5 = completely agree
1 = completely disagree



My colleagues do not take responsibility for the results of their work	2,27
My colleagues are not honest when it comes to the results of their work	2,41
My colleagues are demotivated	3,18
During discussions with our supervisors, my colleagues tend to whitewash the real state of things	2,59
My colleagues tend to cover up their mistakes	2,54
Sometimes during working hours, my colleagues engage in non-work related activities, such as private communications, booking accommodations for vacations or simply browsing the Internet	2,75
It deliberately takes my colleagues longer to perform tasks than necessary	2,27

How do you perceive the level of ethical behavior of the following public sector representatives?

1 = best

5 = worst

How do you perceive the level of ethical behavior of the following public sector representatives?	Oversight by Independent Agency (%)
Rank-and-file civil servants	2,05
Civil servants in managerial functions	2,21
Presidents of regional civil service administration	2,55
Presidents and leaders of central institutions and agencies	2,58
Members of the governments, state secretaries and their advisors	3,37
Members of the parliament	3,66
Prosecutors	2,81
Judges	2,80
Law enforcement and security agencies	2,56

Colleagues' behaviour and their attitudes towards work

5 = completely agree
1 = completely disagree

What form of oversight over the ethical behaviour of following public officials would increase your trust in the rule of law the most?	Oversight by Independent Agency (%)
Career civil servants	74,56
Appointed civil servants in public office (state secretaries, heads of regional district offices, heads of institutions, other appointed civil servants in public office)	80,61
Members of the government	87,63
Members of Parliament	88,11
Prosecutors	85,66
Judges	85,62
Law-enforcement and Armed forces	84,30

Perceived organisational injustice

- ▶ perceived unfairness is a demotivating factor threatening an employee's productivity, psychological health, and engagement
- ▶ open questions were in three categories (colleague, supervisor, management)
- ▶ Subsequently, they were sorted into categories (clustering)
- ▶ the results serve as a context for quantitative research and a basis for future research on demotivation

Top 3 categories –

Perceived injustice
on the part of
colleagues, superiors
or the office

- ▶ salary
- ▶ Interpersonal relations
- ▶ assignment of tasks

Public integrity as an ongoing journey and personal quest

- ▶ The road ahead of us is in the research on the relationship between integrity and motivation (engagement)
- ▶ Horizontal networks and working groups help to streamline the research into practice - need for more integrity in HR – Col Risks - integrity being part of selection procedures for top jobs - Slovak Antitrust Authority, European Court of Auditors
- ▶ Ambition - Code of Conduct for the Ministers – focus groups and research interviews with former and potential members of the Cabinet

Conclusions

- ▶ Measuring public integrity is an ongoing road, where the next day brings another sights and possibilities on the horizon
- ▶ In our case, it proved beneficial to walk the road with three hats – one of a researcher, one of a practitioner, and one of the teacher, as each of these hats provide the opportunities to walk further with the other hats
- ▶ It was also a blessing to meet and be inspired by the fellow travelers, particularly from other countries