



Research Article

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## Psychological Aspects of Corruption in Public Administration: Case-Study of Ukraine

Olena V. Dragan<sup>1</sup>

Ganna S. Yermakova<sup>2</sup>

Andrii M. Chvaliuk<sup>3</sup>

Oleg G. Kurchin<sup>4\*</sup>

Oleg V. Karagodin<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup>State Fiscal Service University of Ukraine, Irpin, Ukraine

<sup>2</sup>Institute of Legislation of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine, Kyiv, Ukraine

<sup>3</sup>Department of the Special-Law Disciplines, Faculty of Law and Social Management,  
Donetsk State University of Management, Mariupol, Ukraine

<sup>4</sup>Department of Civil Law Disciplines,

The Bila Tserkva National Agrarian University, Bila Tserkva, Ukraine

<sup>5</sup>Department of Public Administration,

Educational-Scientific Institute of International Relations and Social Sciences,  
Interregional Academy of Personnel Management, Kyiv, Ukraine

\*Corresponding Author

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### Abstract

The purpose of this research was to explore the psychological aspects of corruption in public administration through a combination of methods such as the non-systematic review, a semi-structured interview, a survey questionnaire, and observations of the anti-corruption court hearings. The study employed a case research design using the exploratory research strategy. It relied on a combination of data collection methods. The study was designed as a flow of three basic stages such as identification of psychological factors of corruption, validation of factors, and assessment of relative importance of every factor using the Triangular Assessment Method. It provided first-hand evidence and cases for the course in "Psychological, Behavioural and Economic Triggers of Corruption." The IBM SPSS Statistics 25.0.0.1. Software was used to process the yielded data. The study found that civil servants' ambitions to get rich quick, their low self-esteem, psychological dependencies, community-accepted image, sense of impunity were the major psychological aspects pushing the people to corruption in Ukraine. It was also found that the sense of impunity could be considered to be the primary psychological impact factor stimulating corruption actions by the civil servants, specifically. The self-esteem could be regarded as a second important psychological factor of corruption in public administration, which is related to the persons' vision of their role in the community. The third important factor was ambitions driven by 'easy money' and status. The last two factors such as psychological dependencies, the community-accepted image were judged to be the least important ones. Further in-depth research is needed to identify the gender difference in the psychological aspects of corruption in public administration.

**Keywords:** social studies; corruption; public administration; psychological aspects; Ukraine

## 1. Introduction

Corruption in public administration in Ukraine is still a trending and sensitive research topic in Ukraine (Athanasouli, 2017; Pautov, 2019; Yarmolenko, 2019; Zvonar, 2013). The existing studies mostly focus on the economic and legal dimensions of this problem (Rose, 2015; Yemelyanov & Plekhanov, 2019). However, the social-psychological perspective of this phenomenon is under-addressed in Ukrainian and international research. This situation created the gap for the study.

The social and psychological literature argues that corruption is related a lot to the culture, distribution of power in society, and money rewards. Scholl and Schermuly (2020) claim that the steep distribution of power in the community is more likely to cause corruption in people as they seek more freedom and autonomy. The literature also discusses the corrupted behaviour as a result of the crowding out effect caused by the failure of incentives of the relevant authorities to cope with bribery and corrupted actions of people (Ahmed & Alamdar, 2018). Grant (2008) claims that the monetary motivation weakens pro-social intrinsic motivation. An and Kweon (2017), Navot, Reingewertz and Cohen (2016) tentatively imply that the employees of the public sector are traditionally more prone to the bribery than those working in the private sector as the wages of the former are lower than the wages of the latter and the employees working for the private sector are more focused on creating the public good than the civil servants.

It was found that though the problem of corruption and bribery in the public service is revealed, the literature provides the psychological aspects of corruption in a dispersed manner and does not provide an exhaustive account of those aspects of corruption in the public service sector.

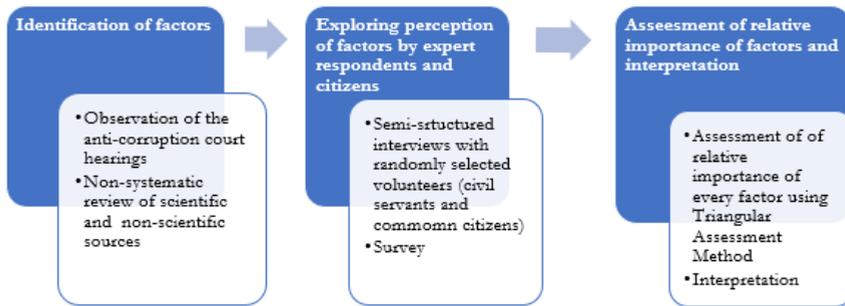
Therefore, the *purpose* of this research was to explore the psychological aspects of corruption in public administration through a combination of methods such as the non-systematic review, a semi-structured interview, a survey questionnaire, and observations of the anti-corruption court hearings. The research questions for the study were as follows: 1) to examine what psychological aspects of corruption in public administration were identified or discussed in different literature sources; 2) to explore which psychological factors of corruption drawn from the non-systematic review are perceived by expert respondents and citizen to specify those which are typical or highly relevant for Ukraine; 3) to identify what specified psychological aspects of corruption should be considered when shaping the anti-corruption policy (as a part of education as well), forming corruption-free society through launching preventive campaigns in Ukraine; 4) to collect evidence and cases for the course in "Psychological, Behavioural and Economic Triggers of Corruption."

## 2. Materials and methods

This research was initiated by the Department of Psychology and Sociology for the National University of the State Fiscal Service of Ukraine and it was jointly conducted with the Department of Criminal Law and Proceeding for Kyiv National Economic University. It was intended to collect evidence and cases to design a cross-disciplinary course in "Psychological, Behavioural and Economic Triggers of Corruption". The further presented research methodology and materials were approved by both departments before the intervention. To avoid research bias, three external experts in the social psychology of corruption, economic psychology, and legal psychology were involved to provide expertise when the results of the semi-structured interview and the survey questionnaire were processed and interpreted.

The study employed a case research design using the exploratory research strategy. It relied on a combination of data collection methods such as a semi-structured interview, a survey questionnaire, observations of the anti-corruption court hearings utilising a systemic observation model, and the non-systematic review of electronic and print scientific sources, 'grey literature' and non-scientific sources like issue-related blog posts, public access reports of the investigation journalists. The study was designed as a flow of three basic stages such as identification of psychological factors of corruption, validation of factors, and assessment of relative importance of every factor using the Triangular

Assessment Method (TAM) (Pérez-Rodríguez & Rojo-Alboreca, 2017). The raw data on the psychological aspects of corruption were obtained through the examination of the observation reports of the anti-corruption court hearings, and non-systematic review of the literature. The surveys were conducted through the mail and the interviews were performed by telephone. Both were used to validate the psychological factors drawn from the process used at the previous stage (Figure 1).



**Figure 1:** Flowchart of identification and experts' validation of psychological aspects of corruption

### 2.1 The outline of the procedure of the non-systematic review

The procedure of the non-systematic review of different literature sources relied on the issue-related keywords search strategy (Kugley *et. al.*, 2017). The list of key terms for an extensive web search and tracking combining was developed. The terms were grouped to successively cover four domains of the research such as legal, occupational, psychological, and regional-cultural. The key terms-based searching strategy is presented in Table 1.

**Table 1:** Key terms-based searching strategy

#	Key terms & combinations
1	corrupt* OR brib* AND psychological aspects AND public administration OR civil servants
2	(corrupt* OR brib* AND psychology*).tw.
3	(corrupt* OR brib* AND psychology* AND Ukraine).tw.
4	bribery AND psychological aspects OR motivators OR behavioural AND emotional reactions OR perceptions
5	bribery AND psychological aspects OR motivators OR behavioural AND emotional reactions OR perceptions
6	#4 AND public administration
7	#5 AND civil servants
8	#6 AND Ukraine
9	#6 AND developing countries
10	#6 AND Eastern Europe
11	#6 AND post-soviet countries
12	#7 AND Ukraine
13	#7 AND developing countries
14	#7 AND Eastern Europe
15	#7 AND post-soviet countries

The repeated search in English, Ukrainian, and Russian for the relevant sources lasted from October 2019 to the end of February 2020. The articles were accessed through Crossref Metadata Search (CRMDS) tool, Google Search, and in Google Scholar and APA PsycNet database. The search was narrowed by the application of the filters. Those filters (inclusion and exclusion criteria) were as follows: 1) the year of publication of the article should not be earlier than 10 years (optional); 2) the publication should be regionally relevant; 3) it should be either analytical (supported by some evidence

or facts) or scientific (based on the empirical research data); 3) the source should cross-disciplinary and cover legal, occupational, psychological and regional-cultural domains; 3) the literature source should provide the data explicitly. A Critical Appraisal Checklist (CAC) was designed and used to assess the relevance, quality, and validity of the articles. The developed CAC borrowed the structure and some questions from the JBI Critical Appraisal Checklist for Qualitative Research (Joanna Briggs Institute, 2017) and Critical Appraisal Checklists (Greenhalgh, Robert, Bate, Macfarlane & Kyriakidou, 2005). The five-grade scale was utilised in the evaluation procedure. The supposed score could range from 1 meaning “low relevance”, “low quality” and “low validity” to 5 meaning “high relevance”, “high quality” and “high validity”. Each article was assessed independently by two members of the research team who used coding sheets. This was followed by a consensus meeting to discuss and surmount any discrepancies to have occurred. The rest of the authors arbitrated if the mutual agreement could not be reached. The search strategy is visualised in Figure 2.

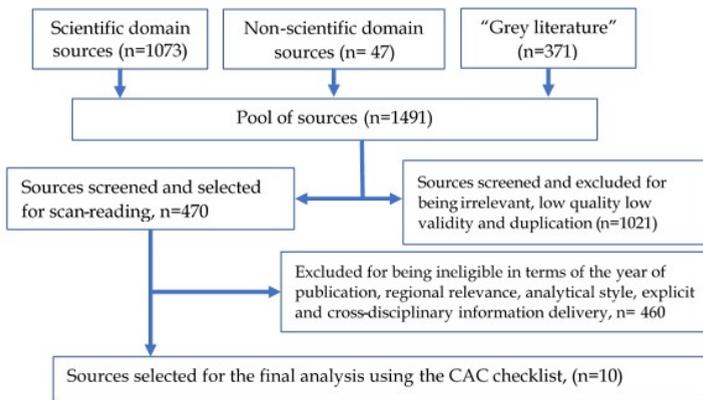


Figure 2: The visualised search strategy

### 2.2 Sampling

A convenience sample of 27 respondents was used to pre-test the semi-structured questionnaire and 21 respondents were involved to pre-test the survey questionnaire. The semi-structured interview was administered to 42 respondents in a field setting. The survey was administered through the Internet. The random sampling technique was used to hire 229 people from different regions of Ukraine for the interview and survey. The demographic characteristics of the interviewees and surveyed individuals are presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Demographic characteristics of the interviewees and surveyed individuals

		n =271	%	p value	
Gender	Males	167	61.62	p < 0.001	
	Females	104	38.38		
Age	Males	27-35	57	34.13	0.119
		36-45	51	30.53	
		46-55	48	28.74	
		55-65	11	6.6	
	Females	27-35	27	25.96	0.173
		36-45	31	29.80	
		46-55	39	37.50	
		55-65	7	6.74	

		n =271	%	p value
Employment	Civil Servant	129	47.60	0.781
	Self-employed	37	13.65	
	Employed	69	25.46	
	Other	36	13.29	
Field of expertise	Economy & Business	41	15.12	0.872
	Law	43	15.86	
	Sociology	22	8.11	
	Medicine	19	7.01	
	Public administration	129	47.60	
	Other	17	6.30	

### 2.3 Ethical considerations

The ethical considerations were addressed through obtaining from the participants an informed consent before the study. The respondents were informed about voluntary participation in the research. The respondents' privacy and anonymity were given paramount importance. When drafting the survey questionnaire, it was ensured that the use of any offensive or discriminatory formulations was avoided. The survey questionnaire contained a question intended to find out whether the respondents' views could contradict the position of their employer.

### 2.4 Instruments

The Critical Appraisal Checklist (CAC), the observation checklist, a semi-structured interview questionnaire, and the survey questionnaire were the instruments to obtain the qualitative data. The Triangular Assessment Method (TAM) and the IBM SPSS Statistics 25.0.0.1. Software was used to process the yielded data.

### 2.5 The description of the observation checklist

It was focused on behaviours and reactions manifested by the people who were accused of corruption. The trained observers were supposed to evaluate the person's voice pitch/ tone (a higher-pitched or moderately-pitched or low-pitched voice/monotonous, aggressive, arrogant, regretting), body language (fidgeting, slumping forward, reclining at ease, closed body language, confusion, protective reflexes), eye contact (direct, with eyes squinted, avoiding eye contact, the gaze), emotions (pride, ignorance, confusion or embarrassment, aggressiveness, guilt or shame), language (seeking understanding and compassion; appealing to sense of commonness or faith).

Both the semi-structured interview and survey questionnaire were used to identify the psychological factors of corruption drawn from the non-systematic review that were perceived as typical or highly relevant for Ukraine.

### 2.6 Semi-structured interview questionnaire

The interview questions were drafted, edited, pretested, and improved. After that, they were piloted with several intended interviewees. The content of the questionnaire was validated by the expert panel. The discourse analysis of the questionnaire was conducted by the research team to guarantee its validity and reliability. The interview used the approach that was borrowed from Adams (2015). The one suggested starting by more general questions followed by the core issue-related questions and finishing with the questions supposing that the respondents could express their judgements about the issue. Each interview lasted between 10 to 15 minutes, and it was recorded and transcribed. In some cases, several follow-up open-ended questions were asked to obtain additional explanation. The

thematic analysis of the words and sentence structures was conducted to extract the themes which were then assigned with the codes. The Raven's Eye (n./d.) software was used for coding and processing responses.

1. Different perceptions of the phenomenon of corruption lead to different visions of the magnitude of corruption. In your opinion, how widespread is corruption and bribery in Ukraine? Support your opinion with your own experiences or the experiences of people you know.
2. In your opinion, what proportion of those who are bribed can decline the bribe in Ukraine? What psychological motives can push a person to do it?
3. In your opinion, what proportion of those who are bribed can accept the bribe in Ukraine? What psychological motives can push a person to do it?
4. What proportion of the population of Ukraine is morally and psychologically able to report the law enforcement or other authorised bodies about the facts of extortion or other corrupt practices or situations? Why?
5. What state and public institutions are 'free of corruption'? Support your view with examples or experiences.
6. How effective (effective and real) are the activities of the bodies in charge of reinforcing anti-corruption measures? Support your view with examples or experiences.

### 2.7 Survey questionnaire

The survey questionnaire covered several dimensions such as 1) the respondents' perception of corruption and bribery, 2) the intrinsic psychological factors of corruption in representatives of public administration bodies as they viewed by the respondents, 4) the extrinsic factors as they viewed by the respondents, 4) the interpersonal factors as they viewed by the respondents. The above was proceeded by questions on demographics like gender, employment, field (sphere of employment), the area of their expertise. The questionnaire design is shown in Table 3.

**Table 3:** Survey questionnaire design

Dimension	Question
Perception of corruption and bribery (PCB)	1. I consider the situation when the pensioner gave the postman 20 hryvnias when she brought her a pension monthly allowance to be bribery. € Yes € No
	2. I consider the situation when the Minister of Health owns a network of pharmacies (drugstores) to corruption. € Yes € No
	3. I consider the situation when the patient paid the doctor personally on his initiative 5000 hryvnias after surgery to be bribery. € Yes € No
	4. I consider the situation when the father of the defendant enters into an agreement with a lawyer from a company founded and owned by the judge's son in which his son's case must be heard to be corruption. € Yes € No
	5. I consider the situation when the Math's teacher talking to her student's parents insistently hints them about the need for the extra-curriculum paid classes with their son to be corruption. € Yes € No

Dimension	Question		
The intrinsic psychological factors of corruption and bribery (IPFCB)	6. I think that the public administration representatives' ... <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>€ past experiences</li> <li>€ beliefs</li> <li>€ fraudulent thinking</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>€ a disposition toward deviant behaviour</li> <li>€ low self-esteem</li> </ul>	
	could be the intrinsic psychological factors of corruption and bribery.		
	7. I am sure that the public administration representatives' ... to be the intrinsic psychological factors of corruption and bribery.		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>€ perceptions of corruption as a risky but exciting game feeling themselves above the law</li> <li>€ desire to show themselves endowed with supreme authority</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>€ desire to project their status of a very important person</li> <li>€ ambition to gain dominance in the community</li> <li>€ sense of impunity</li> </ul>	
	8. I consider the public administration representatives' ... to be the intrinsic psychological factors of corruption and bribery.		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>€ ambitions to get rich paying no efforts</li> <li>€ psychological dependencies on power and money</li> <li>€ desire to seek satisfaction from the prospect of receiving unlawful benefits and privileges</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>€ capital psychosis,</li> <li>€ money mania</li> <li>€ desire to show up</li> </ul>	
	The extrinsic psychological factors of corruption and bribery (EPFCB)	9. I think that the extrinsic psychological factors of corruption and bribery are related to...	
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>€ the phenomenon of the post-soviet Ukrainian mentality</li> <li>€ liberalising corruption through government policy.</li> </ul>	
10. I believe that ... can be considered the extrinsic psychological factors of corruption and bribery.			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>€ the perceived activities of peers and other individuals,</li> <li>€ peers justifying the idea of 'taking a gift' for some 'help'</li> </ul>			
11. I am convinced that ... push the individuals to commit corruption-related wrongdoings.			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>€ the community and family pressure to become a respected member of the community</li> <li>€ a TV-imposed image of a 'bad guy', who is cool and negligent to the law</li> </ul>			
The interpersonal factors of corruption and bribery (IFCB)	12. I think that ... could be considered the interpersonal factors of corruption and bribery.		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>€ gregariousness ('herd instinct')</li> <li>€ a desire to follow the 'long-lasting tradition' of monetary compensation, peer pressure not be 'a black sheep'</li> </ul>		

The binary scale with 'Yes/No' values was used by the respondents to indicate their opinion on every item and sub-item. It means that the respondents were supposed to check off every box with either a tick or an X sign.

The questionnaire was reviewed and answered by five experts in sociology, psychology, and statistics individually. After that, they rated the clarity, worthiness, and precision of each item and sub-item using a 4-point scale with 1 meaning 'not clear' or 'not precise' or 'not worthy' up to 4 meaning 'totally clear' or 'absolutely precise' or 'really worthy.' The scale-level content validity index (S-CVI/Ave) of each item based on the average method was calculated utilising the rating scores (Rodrigues, Adachi, Beattie & MacDermid, 2017). The relevance rating score was recorded as 1 if the item was rated by the experts as 3 or 4. In case it was rated 1 or 2, the item was recorded 0. Having done that, the mean relevance score of 4.58 for the questionnaire was obtained which meant that it was valid. Following that, the coding was done by two members of the research team as recommended by Veal and Darcy (2017).

### 3. Results

Overall, the study found psychological aspects of corruption in public administration were identified or discussed in different literature sources. It explored the perceptions of psychological factors of corruption drawn from the non-systematic review by expert respondents and citizens and specified those which are typical or highly relevant for Ukraine. The study identified what specified psychological aspects of corruption should be considered when shaping the anti-corruption policy (as a part of education as well), forming a corruption-free society through launching preventive campaigns in Ukraine. It provided evidence and cases for the course in “Psychological, Behavioural and Economic Triggers of Corruption”.

The non-systematic review of different literature sources found three types of psychological aspects of corruption in public administration. Those were such factors as *intrinsic factors* that were related to perception, believes, experiences, self-efficacy; *extrinsic factors* that were based on people’s judgements about the actions of others, and *interpersonal factors* that were living and working environment-caused (see Table 4).

**Table 4:** Results of the non-systematic review of different literature sources

#	Author & year	Targeted region	Domain	Psychological factors of corruption expressed explicitly	Reviewers' mean scores
1	Dong, Dulleck And Torgler (2012)	Europe	Scientific	<i>intrinsic factors:</i> perception of the activities of others, past experiences; <i>extrinsic factors:</i> perceived activities of peers and other individuals; <i>interpersonal factors:</i> gregariousness ('herd instinct').	4.29
2	Schmidt-Pfister and Moroff (2012)	Eastern Europe	Scientific	<i>intrinsic factors:</i> past experiences, believes and perceptions, ambitions to get rich paying no efforts, fraudulent thinking, sense of impunity. <i>extrinsic factors:</i> perceived activities of peers and other individuals; <i>interpersonal factors:</i> gregariousness ('herd instinct'), peer pressure not be 'a black sheep'.	4.44
3	Zaloznaya (2014)	Non-Western	Scientific	<i>intrinsic factors:</i> perception of corruption (bribery) as a part of the local culture, sense of impunity, a way to display power; <i>extrinsic factors:</i> corruption liberalising government policy; <i>interpersonal factors:</i> gregariousness ('herd instinct').	3.95
4	Sereda (2015)	Ukraine	Non-scientific	<i>intrinsic factors:</i> low self-esteem, perception of corruption as a risky but exciting game, feeling themselves above the law, endowed with supreme authority; <i>extrinsic factors:</i> the phenomenon of the post-soviet Ukrainian mentality; <i>interpersonal factors:</i> gregariousness ('herd instinct'), peer pressure not be 'a black sheep'.	4.68
5	Dhillon, Nicolò And Xu (2017)	n./d.	Scientific	<i>intrinsic factors:</i> ambitions to get rich quick, projecting the status of a very important person. <i>extrinsic factors:</i> peers justifying the idea of 'taking a gift' for some 'help'; <i>interpersonal factors:</i> a desire to 'support' (follow) the long-lasting tradition of monetary compensation.	3.49
6	Cheloukhine (2017)	Russia	Scientific	<i>intrinsic factors:</i> overestimating their personality, ambitions to play the key role in the local community; <i>extrinsic factors:</i> community and family pressure to become a respected member of the community, a TV-imposed image of a 'bad guy', who is cool and negligent to the law. <i>interpersonal factors:</i> a desire to follow the long-lasting tradition of monetary compensation.	4.39
7	Lozynsky (2018)	Ukraine	Scientific	<i>intrinsic factors:</i> ambitions to get rich at whatever the cost, to gain respect in the local community, perceptions, and believes. <i>extrinsic factors:</i> perception of the corrupted activities of peers and other individuals as normal; <i>interpersonal factors:</i> a desire to follow the long-lasting tradition of monetary compensation, gregariousness ('herd instinct'), peer pressure not be 'a black sheep'.	3.84

#	Author & year	Targeted region	Domain	Psychological factors of corruption expressed explicitly	Reviewers' mean scores
8	Seriogin, Petrenko and Sokolovskiy (2019)	Ukraine	Scientific	<i>intrinsic factors:</i> psychological dependencies on power and money, seeking satisfaction from the prospect of receiving unlawful benefits and privileges, feeling above the law. <i>extrinsic factors:</i> perception of the corrupted activities of peers and other individuals as normal; <i>interpersonal factors:</i> gregariousness ('herd instinct'), peer pressure not be 'a black sheep'.	3.71
9	Kudermyna, Kazmirenko, Androsyuk, Martynenko and Fodchuk (2019)	Ukraine	'Grey literature'	<i>intrinsic factors:</i> capital psychosis, money mania, showing up, ambition to gain dominance in the community. <i>extrinsic factors:</i> community and family pressure to become a respected member of the community, a TV-imposed image of a 'bad guy', who is cool and negligent to the law; <i>interpersonal factors:</i> a desire to 'support' the long-lasting tradition of monetary compensation.	3.64
10	Saefudin and Sonjaya (2020)	n./d.	Scientific	<i>intrinsic factors:</i> disposition toward deviant behavior. seeking public recognition of one's authority; <i>extrinsic factors:</i> peers justifying the idea of 'taking a gift' for some 'help'; <i>interpersonal factors:</i> a desire to 'support' the long-lasting tradition of monetary compensation.	4.11

### 3.1 Results of observations of behaviours and reactions the people who were accused of corruption in the anti-corruption court hearings

Seventeen court hearings on the research related crimes were observed. The observed behaviours and reactions manifested by the people who were accused of corruption in the court hearings were mostly as follows: peoples' higher-pitched, aggressive, arrogant voice pitch. Peoples' body language was featured with closed body language and protective reflexes. The eye contact of the defendants was indirect, and quite often with their eyes squinted. The most common emotions were ignorance and aggressiveness. Concerning the language, the accused people often appealed to a sense of commonness or fairness. The above suggested that the observed behaviours and reactions correlated well with the findings drawn from the non-systematic literature review. The frequency of occurrence of the manifested behaviours and reactions like aggressiveness, arrogance, seeking fairness are presented in Figure 3.

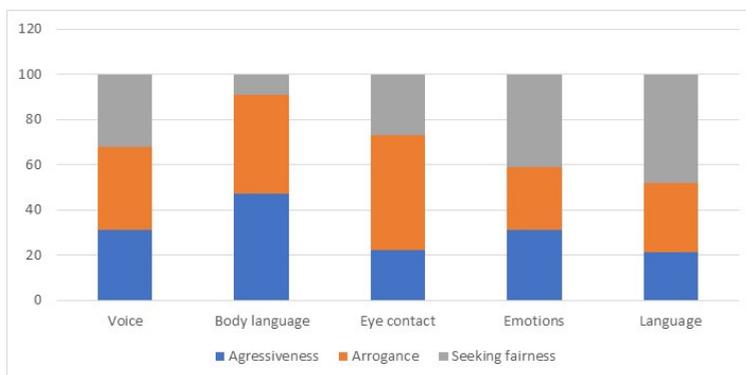


Figure 3: The frequencies of the most common behaviours and reactions

The above proved that corruption behaviour makes a person a hero but the accused in the cultural and mental environment of Ukraine. The accused person tended to unaccept the situation when he or she was found a lawbreaker.

3.2 Results of the interview (n = 42)

**Question 1.** The majority (39 people) of the interviewed people responded that bribery and corruption are too common, especially in the governmental authorities. Just 3 people stated that it is not a problem. The typical respondents' examples/experiences were about gift giving or some money compensation at schools, universities, municipal bodies.

**Question 2.** Half of the respondents (22 people) claimed that 60-65% of those who are aged between 30 and 40 and are bribed can decline the bribe for the reasons like their 'new' mentality, unacceptance of corruption traditions, emerging of a more introverted society relationships model. The second half of the interviewed stated that 40-45% of people (older generation) would not decline the bribe. Their reasons could be formulated like: "My father took it and I will take it. OR It is not for me but for my children. OR Accept what you are given, run away from what is harmful!"

**Question 3.** Thirty-five volunteers responded that between 35 to 50% of those who were at power could request (directly or indirectly) the money compensation for their 'help' for the reason being that it raised their status and significance in the community. Seven respondents suggested that between 50 and 60% of those who are bribed would accept it because they could be disrespected by their colleagues or friends or relatives or those who know them if they declined it.

**Question 4.** All interviewed stated that just few people could report the police about the situation when they were requested the bribe because such action is taken negatively in Ukrainian society.

**Question 5.** Forty people mentioned such free of corruption institutions as the patrol police, administrative service centres, and pension fund. Additionally, two more people mentioned some state-owned universities.

**Question 6.** Twenty people claimed that about 10% of the bodies in charge of reinforcing anti-corruption measures are effective. Fifteen people stated that 60% of those institutions are quite effective. Seven people were not aware of the effectiveness of those organisations.

Thus the results of the interview correlated with findings obtained from a non-systematic review and court hearing observations. The above helped to extract the psychological aspects of corruption in public administration and design the survey questionnaire. It was administered to 229 people and its purpose was to validate the previous findings. The survey results were also suggestive. As the mean values indicate, the intrinsic and extrinsic factors like the corrupted people's ambitions, their self-esteem, psychological dependencies, community-accepted image, sense of impunity dominated in the responses (Table 5).

**Table 5:** Results of the survey

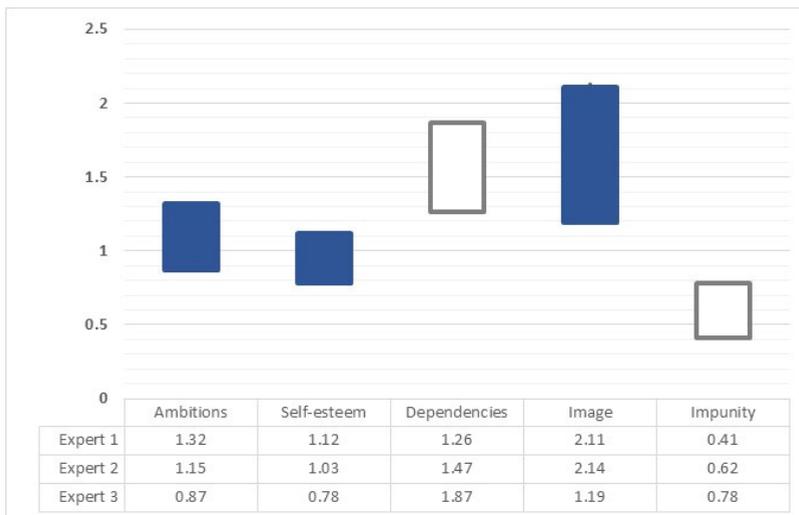
Dimension	Item	n = 271		Binary scale		M	SD	df
		Gender	Yes	No				
PCB	PCB 1	Male	46	121	0.4127	.50243	6	
		Female	61	43				
	PCB 2	Male	161	6	0.8193	1.14476	5	
		Female	96	8				
	PCB 3	Male	30	137	0.2215	.29183	8	
		Female	2	102				
	PCB 4	Male	54	113	0.2619	.22191	6	
		Female	36	68				
	PCB 5	Male	15	152	0.1792	1.10134	5	
		Female	19	85				
IPFCB	IPFCB 6	Male	155	12	0.7143	.09923	3	
		Female	92	12				
	IPFCB 7	Male	87	80	0.5184	1.77721	4	
		Female	71	33				
	IPFCB 8	Male	77	90	0.4912	.07164	7	
		Female	86	18				

Dimension	Item	n = 271		Binary scale		M	SD	df
		Gender		Yes	No			
EPFCB	EPFCB 9	Male		143	24	0.1372	.83163	6
		Female		97	7			
	EPFCB 10	Male		111	56	0.6914	.29543	4
		Female		83	21			
EPFCB 11	Male		73	94	0.4819	.16735	6	
	Female		78	26				
IFCB	IFCB 12	Male		127	40	0.7916	.83516	5
		Female		79	25			

**Note:** PCB – Perception of corruption and bribery; IPFCB – the intrinsic psychological factors of corruption and bribery; EPFCB – the extrinsic psychological factors of corruption and bribery; IFCB – the interpersonal factors of corruption and bribery.

It implies that the psychological aspects of corruption in public administration are mostly related to personality and community vision of what corruption is rather than the law enforcement standards.

The relative importance of every psychological aspect such as ambitions of people who are vulnerable to corruption, their self-esteem, psychological dependencies, community-accepted image, sense of impunity was assessed by the experts (3 people) in the social psychology of corruption, economic psychology, and legal psychology using the Triangular Assessment Method. The method relies on the principle stating that the closer the value for the judgement to zero, the more confident the experts are in their decision. The results of the assessment are presented in Figure 4. As can be seen in the diagram, the experts were unanimous in their judgments concerning the crucial significance of the sense of impunity as it is the primary psychological impact factor stimulating corruption actions by the civil servants, specifically. The second important psychological factor of corruption in public administration appeared to be self-esteem, which is related to the persons' vision of their role in the community. The third important factor was ambitions driven by 'easy money' and status. The last two factors such as psychological dependencies, community-accepted image were judged by the experts as the least important ones.



**Figure 4:** Relative importance of every psychological aspect as they assessed by the experts using the Triangular Assessment Method.

The study collected plentiful evidence and 10 cases for the course in “Psychological, Behavioural and Economic Triggers of Corruption.”

### 3.3 *Limitations of the study*

The sampling techniques might be considered to be the limitation of this study.

## 4. Discussion

The novelty of the study is exhibited in the convergent approach to using such interferences as the semi-structured interview, the survey, the observations of the behaviour of the defendants in anti-corruption court hearings, and the non-systematic review of the relevant literature sources to answer the research questions.

The study found that ambitions, self-esteem, psychological dependencies, community-accepted image, sense of impunity were the major psychological aspects making the people vulnerable to corruption in Ukraine. It was also found that the sense of impunity could be considered to be the primary psychological impact factor stimulating corruption actions by the civil servants, specifically. The second important psychological factor of corruption in public administration could be regarded as self-esteem, which is related to the persons' vision of their role in the community. The third important factor was ambitions driven by 'easy money' and status. The last two factors such as psychological dependencies, the community-accepted image could be judged to be the least important ones.

The results of the study were suggestive in terms of shaping the state anti-corruption policy that should be mostly aimed at increasing the effectiveness of the anti-corruption measures taken by the reinforcement bodies. The study implies that the policy should be focused on the increased digitalisation of public services so that people avoided direct contact with the human public service providers. It should be based on information campaigns persuading people to get rid of giving and taking gifts or money. The study also suggests that educational institutions should interfere through educational campaigns to influence the attitudes of young people to bribery and corruption. Further to the above, this study indirectly accessed peoples' experiences and provided 10 cases for the course in “Psychological, Behavioural and Economic Triggers of Corruption.”

The above findings agree with the relevant literature. They go in line with Zaliznaya (2014) who claims that corruption is a complex theoretical (social and psychological) phenomenon that is under-represented in the psychological literature because of the inefficient use of the analytical tools and the culturally sensitive nature of the corruption making utilising these tools impractical. The study supports the view of Santiso (2019) emphasising the need for the digital transformation of public service provision to reduce bribery in public administration bodies. The insights from the study comply with and contribute to the anti-corruption policy reinforcement results in Ukraine (Lough & Dubrovskiy, 2018; Marusov, 2016) reporting that corruption preventive campaigns are effective interventions in this regard.

The study found the educational interventions in the university like the course in “Psychological, Behavioural and Economic Triggers of Corruption” that is aimed at informing the students about the economic and societal consequences of the bribery and corruption to be worthwhile because these interventions foster generic competencies, attitudes and values in the young citizens making them more or less “corruption resistant” (Denisova-Schmidt & Prytula, 2017; Kravchuk, 2017).

The study results elaborate on the findings and conclusions of Desta (2019) revealing the types of corrupt practices, ethical violations, economic and societal causes of corruption in the civil service of developing countries. The research provides a different perspective on the problem analysis than it was used by Athanasouli (2017) comparing the situation with corruption in governance in Ukraine to that in post-soviet countries like Georgia, Kazakhstan, Poland, Romania, and Russia.

It contributes to the theory and practice of anti-corruption in Ukraine addressed by Zvonar (2013), Athanasouli (2017), Pautov (2019), Yarmolenko (2019).

## 5. Conclusion

The study found that civil servants' ambitions to get rich quick, their low self-esteem, psychological dependencies, community-accepted image, sense of impunity were the major psychological aspects pushing the people to corruption in Ukraine. It was also found that the sense of impunity could be considered to be the primary psychological impact factor stimulating corruption actions by the civil servants, specifically. The self-esteem could be regarded as a second important psychological factor of corruption in public administration, which is related to the persons' vision of their role in the community. The third important factor was ambitions driven by 'easy money' and status. The last two factors such as psychological dependencies, the community-accepted image were judged to be the least important ones. It implied that the psychological aspects of corruption in public administration are mostly related to personality and community vision of what corruption is rather than the law enforcement standards. The research indirectly accessed peoples' experiences and provided 10 cases for the course in "Psychological, Behavioural and Economic Triggers of Corruption." Further in-depth research is needed to identify the gender difference in the psychological aspects of corruption in public administration.

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