

## **FACTORS THAT IMPACT ON CITIZEN SATISFACTION AT THE LOCAL LEVEL – CASE STUDY ON IASI MUNICIPALITY**

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***Abstract:** Degree of citizens satisfaction can be considered as a measure of the performance of the administration, representing at the same time a method of stimulating public sector reform. The major goal of local public administration is to achieve better outcomes for citizens, improve decision-making processes of public authorities and strengthen the responsibility towards beneficiaries. In the present research paper we have tried to highlight and analyze citizen satisfaction with the work of organizing an entertainment event by local authorities using a case study. The study aimed to identify issues related to the degree of participation in the organization of cultural, humanitarian, commercial, sports and entertainment events, the degree of satisfaction with the organization, and the costs supported by the local budget and also the citizens' perception on the reasons for organizing this event by the local authorities and not the least inconvenience to citizens in terms of its organization by the local authorities.*

***Keywords:** citizen satisfaction, local budget, citizen participation, local public administration*

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### **INTRODUCTION**

Public administration has a major importance in the sphere of human activity and involves a set of activities of public authorities aim to achieve the objectives of social development. Public administration wants to satisfy the common interests but also the interest of individual citizen. At the same time, citizen must participate to the public life and to want to communicate with public authorities. So that, the experience of citizen participation in its various forms to local public administration differs from country to country. However there are a number of general factors (CDLR, 2000, pp. 12-13) that influence all member states of the European Union: the impact of new information and communication technologies, the impact of the global age on the local political system, the impact of changing patterns of employment and economic growth. These factors

suggest that all countries should keep the quality of local citizen participation in their country under review and develop appropriate programmes to meet challenges as they become pressing.

For Romania the transformation of public administration acquires new dimensions as a result of the decentralization process and the implementation of local autonomy. Thus, it requires the public administration to respond to new changes in the world economy, but equally to the new requirements of integration into EU structures. Public administration reform involves important changes in its major components, both at the local government and public services in general. On the other hand, the development of democracy requires the establishment of a new relationship between citizens and the administration, growth, strengthening the role and reconsidering partnership with civil society and local officials.

At the base of public administration reform process in Romania is the major objective of ensuring public services to households and motivate local authorities by giving decision-making powers aimed at promoting the interests of national social orientation as a means of achieving public sector performance. In Romania, the law on local public administration (Law no. 215/2001) provides for publication of any decisions taken. In Romania, more than that, over time, laws were adopted to support the involvement of citizens in public administration, as law on free access to information of public interest (Law no. 544/2001), law on decisional transparency in public administration (Law no. 52 /2003).

The operation of modern public administration, flexible and effective is a important condition for the structural transformation of Romanian society, to achieve a profound reform in all areas of social and economic life, to increase the role of citizens in decision-making process. This reform process is, however, one of an increased complexity, since implies major changes, on the background, in society life, in people's minds, being difficult to implement in terms of resistance to change still growing. Administrative reform in the public service plan primarily involves responsibility of local authorities in terms of improving public services according to economic achievement, effectiveness and efficiency. Principle public service efficiency involves achieving the optimal cost and the quantity and quality of services in terms of satisfying public needs. Also a complementary principle of the efficiency principle is the principle of quantifying which supports the promotion of public service reform by developing a culture of public service oriented to customer / client. The principle of public service effectiveness is the degree to which institution objectives are achieved regarding quality public services provided, and involves, on the one hand, the definition of a prior objective, and on the other hand, the measure (or at least estimate) outcome.

Local governments in the following period have as a priority the improvement of the quality of local service delivery, increase local incomes, supporting the development of the potential of local capacity and the implementation of measures to attract strategic investors in the area of jurisdiction, and for that purpose local governments are considered as the primary unit of local policy and decision making.

First we will stop on the relationship between citizens and public administration and public institutions in the city of Iasi. It is quite common discontent and distrust of the

population to the services provided by local public authorities. This is one of the main issues that make it difficult, being a weak point in any institution or government, both central and local. Therefore, in this study we try to highlight and analyze "The citizens' satisfaction with the work of organizing an event for entertainment by local authorities."

## **CASE STUDY**

Iasi Municipality organized every year by more than 100 cultural, humanitarian, commercial, sports and entertainment event which complete religious extensive program prepared by the Metropolitan of Moldavia and Bukovina. The total budget allocated by the municipality of events that marked the celebration of Saint Paraskeva was 1,000,000 RON in 2012.

## **THE PURPOSE OF THE STUDY**

The purpose of this study is to provide empirical support to the theoretical information presented above. Specifically we sought to determine how citizens perceive Iasi and not only organizing the event "Iasi Holidays" as the anniversary moment of Iasi Municipality, and the religious celebration Saint Paraskeva, through the attitude manifested by them in relation to the costs incurred by the local budget . To achieve this objective, the study aims to identify issues:

- Degree of participation in the organization of cultural, humanitarian, commercial, sports and entertainment event;
- Citizen satisfaction on the organization of the event;
- Degree of citizen satisfaction according to the final report of expenses incurred by the local budget;
- Perception of citizens regarding the reasons of this event;
- How this event could creates discomfort citizens.

## **DATA AND METHOD**

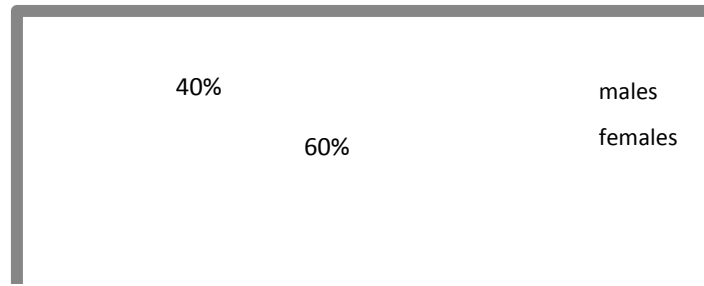
The method used in this study was the questionnaire method (see Annexes). The seven questions included in the questionnaire were closed, allowing a single or multiple choices. Some of the questions aimed at the classification of preferences.

The questionnaire focused on citizen satisfaction and impact on local budgets, with questions for each of them. At the beginning of the questionnaire we asked for personal data, sex, age, necessary for the processing and interpretation of relevant information.

## **SAMPLE DESCRIPTION**

For this study were interviewed 60 people aged over 18 years, being applied both females and the males. Data were collected in October 2012.

**Figure no.1 The percentage of persons included in the sample by gender**



Source: computed by authors

According to the figures, it can be seen that there is a greater openness to communication from males, with a share of 60%, compared to females who answered the questionnaire only 40%.

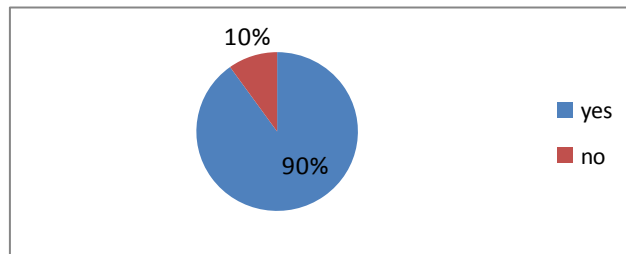
**Table no.1 Number and percentage of people on age groups**

Age groups	Number	Percentage
18-30	27	45%
30-50	15	25%
over 50	18	30%
Total	60	100%

Source: computed by authors

Regarding the age of the persons, age group with a higher availability was observed in the age group 18-30 years (45%), followed by age group over 50 years. The lowest percentage recorded in the age group 30-50 years (25%). Higher prevalence in the age group 18-30 years can be explained by major youth category at the local level, as Iasi Municipality as a university center.

**Figure no.2 The degree of participation to the event**



Source: computed by authors

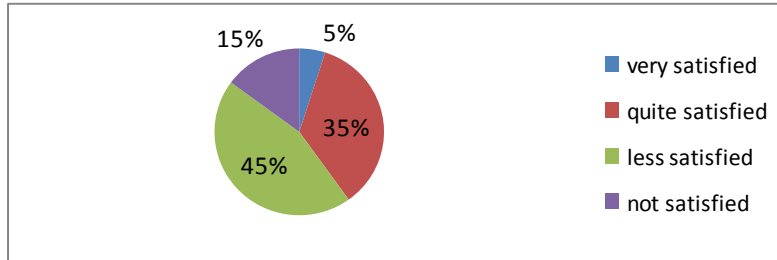
According to the figure we can find that the population of the city is open to events such as artistic, cultural, historical, religious, registering a high participation rate of 90%.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Impact on citizen satisfaction and implications for the local budget are based on the organization of the event and the expenditures from local budget approved by the municipality of Iasi for it. So the questionnaire respondents' attitudes focused on capturing them.

*Question: Are you satisfied with the organization of the event?*

**Figure no.3 The share of people who are satisfied with the organization of the event**

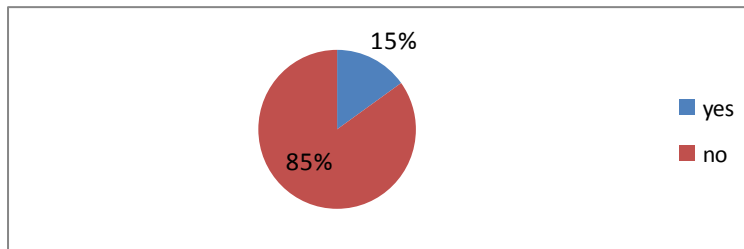


Source: computed by authors

Asked if they are satisfied with the organization only 5% were said to be very satisfied, 45% (27 of the 60 respondents) that are less satisfied, and 15% of them are not satisfied and do not consider to be useless such action by the public authorities, the remaining 35% being quite satisfied.

*Question: According to the final report of expenses incurred by the local budget for the organization of the XXI edition of the Days of the Iasi Municipality approved amount of 1 million RON, it seems a reasonable amount?*

**Figure no.4 The share of persons for which the approved amount seems reasonable**

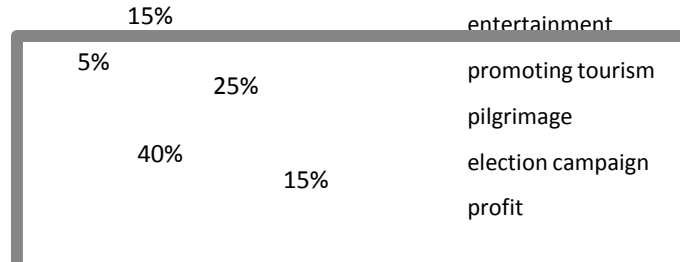


Source: computed by authors

According to budget execution on the organization of the XXI edition of the Days of Iasi Municipality approved 1 million RON, of which 976 299 RON were spent and the revenues amount were 1194360 RON. Although it appears that even the revenues are about 23% higher, much of this money being recovered from fees charged to merchants from all over the country to sell their products and also from applying sanctions for various illegal in places that carry cultural - artistic, religious and commercial, 85% (51

of the 60 respondents) answered that no, that amount is unreasonably high and not reasonable.

**Figure no.5 The share of people, depending on the reasons importance of the event**



Source: computed by authors

After processing and statistical interpretation of the answers given by respondents, we note that the majority of people surveyed (40%) consider that according to the importance of this event the reasons the underlying pilgrimage, followed by entertainment by 25%. However 15% of respondents consider to be the profit and 5% an electoral campaign (see fig. 5).

**Figure no.6 The share of people according discomfort caused for citizens**



Source: computed by authors

Regarding respondents' perceived discomfort caused to citizens, 30% consider that the main discomfort is the closed streets and traffic congestion, followed at a rate 25% of existing noise. A share of 20% of the respondents perceives the existence of chaos discomfort factor found in the mess created in the streets and possible crimes (eg. Theft pockets) caused by congestion enhanced. Also, this kind of events favors begging as a factor of discomfort (see Figure 6).

## RESEARCH LIMITATIONS

From our point of view, the respondents were sincere 95% and showed interest in these questions. The size and structure of the sample meet the representativeness requirement necessary to the correct interpretation of the data. However, some results are closely related to the number of people surveyed, so that some conclusions cannot be

generalized to the whole population. The problems were closely related to the good will of the citizens and their availability. The problems were limited to the refusal of citizens, explained by the lack of time, questionnaires uselessness and lack of confidence about the fact that they are able to generate a change in local government.

Another limitation of the research can be given by the lower degree of accuracy shown by some people in providing answers to questions requiring a classification of the reasons, in order of preference.

## **CONCLUSIONS**

Romanian society is in a process of change in which all the economic, social, political, civic elements have experienced a new dynamic in trying to adapt to present conditions. One of the most important dimensions of this transformation - open government and permanent - was enacted by Law 544/2001 on free access to public information and Law 52/2003 on transparency in public administration.

It can be appreciated citizen satisfaction as a measure of government performance, at the same time representing a method of stimulating public sector reform. We find that the results depend very much on one hand by the socio-economic development, but also cultural and religious diversity of the administrative unit. Thus, Iasi where cultural and religious diversity is obvious and striking perception of citizens is a good one.

Although the budget analysis found that revenues exceed expenditure on this event, thus respecting the principle of economy, efficiency and effectiveness in the use of public funds, however 85% of respondents refused the amounts involved. The attitudes of citizens to local government work is contradictory, found in citizen satisfaction is not at maximum. Avoiding such an attitude can be achieved bidirectional by a better communication of local authorities with citizens, while more open of citizens for information provided by the local authorities.

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### QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Have you taken part in the celebrations of Iasi?

Yes   
 No

2. Gender:

Female   
 Male

3. To which age group you belong?

18-30   
 30-50   
 >50

4. Are you satisfied with the organization of the event?

Very satisfied   
 Quite satisfied   
 Less satisfied   
 Not satisfied

5. According to the final report of expenses incurred by the local budget for the organization of the XXI edition of the Days of the Iasi Municipality approved amount of 1 million RON, it seems a reasonable amount?

Yes   
 No

6. On a scale of 1-5 ranked reasons importance of this event: (1- very important, 5-not important)

Aspects:	Marks
entertainment	
promoting tourism	
pilgrimage	
election campaign	
profit	

7. On a scale of 1-5 ordered by importance, discomfort caused for citizens:

Aspects:	Marks
noise	



closed streets, traffic jams	
high prices	
chaos, disorder and crime	
begging	