

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.63332/joph.v5i10.3573>

The Effect of Reforms and Satisfaction on Corruption Perception

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Abstract

This study examines the impact of reform and satisfaction with government efforts on overall perceptions of corruption on Qatari citizens' perceptions of corruption. Using a structured questionnaire, this study measured three main scales: corruption perceptions (42 items), satisfaction with government effort (10 items), and demographic information from a sample of 238 (116 men and 117 women, mean age = 32). The face validity (97%) and construct validity of the questionnaire were found to be high with a significant correlation ($r = .276, p = .000$). Evidence for reliability was provided with Cronbach's alpha coefficients of .90 for all scales. The optimization results show that the satisfaction level for the whole government performance and public sector is higher than other evaluated features, meaning that people are more satisfied with these items. In contrast, satisfaction with the private sector and the administrative control and transparency authority was significantly lower. The multiple correlation coefficient ($R = .30$) reflects a medium relationship when both reforms and satisfaction explain 9% of the variance in perception with corruption, emphasizing their effect at the will of public opinion. Results Regression analysis showed that the effect of reform and satisfaction on corruption perception was significant ($F = 4.478, \alpha = .014$), highlighting the significance of reform strategy and transparency efforts to improve trust perceptions and decrease corruption perception in Qatar. The results highlight the need to focus on satisfying public corruption perceptions in order to improve government anti-corruption programs in view of Qatar.

Keywords: Satisfaction, Corruption Perception, Qatar.

Introduction

Corruption presents a significant obstacle to good governance and economic development, and corruption remains the most daunting challenge to good governance, economic stability, and public confidence in many countries of the world today. Governments have used a variety of methods to combat corruption, including enacting new laws, utilizing technology, and reforming institutions. Public perceptions about corruption influence, among other things, citizens' trust in government and political participation (Andersson & Heywood, 2018). Corruption is a severe challenge for several Middle Eastern nations, just like Qatar. Transparency reform and anti-corruption measures have been emphasized by the Amir of Qatar, Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani, as critical to national development and good governance (Al-Thani, 2018). The State of Qatar has taken several steps in the past few years to curb corruption by passing a variety of laws and providing increased scrutiny over public bodies. However, there have been testimonies, and as recently as 2019 the government of Qatar has received corruption allegations against some of its officials and businessmen to show that it is serious about unacceptable behavior (Qatar News Agency, 2019). However, the low public perception of corruption has not been solved despite

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the progress made, so it is necessary to keep working on accountability and institutions.

The small but affluent Gulf state of Qatar has boomed economically at a breakneck pace, fueled primarily by oil and gas sales. This affluence has already justified fears about corruption, including public procurement, nepotism, and money laundering. While the authorities give statements on their transparency and anti-corruption commitment, research into how well those efforts work is strongly contradicted within academia, as well as involved interests from international organizations. Doing quite well on the CPI—i.e., having a pretty low perception of corruption compared to some other countries—Qatar isn't without its transparency challenges. By May 2022, Qatar scored 59 out of 100 and was ranked 42nd among the 180 nations recorded. (Transparency International, 2022)

Research on Corruption in Qatar

Williams and Touran (2021) analyze the regional function of corruption in Qatar, including governance, economic diversification, and legal compliance. A reminder of the way rapid development can produce openings for graft. Qatar also established institutions like the Central Inspection Bureau and the Public Prosecution Office to combat corruption. But, critics argue, enforcement remains inconsistent. Through the Qatar National Vision 2030, governance and transparency are highlighted as two fundamental pillars for sustainable development. One early theory of anticorruption presumes that strong institutions and laws are all that are needed to compete effectively with corruption (Klitgaard 1988). Klitgaard's (1988) succinctly summarized the conditions for controlling corruption as raising transparency and reducing discretion in order to improve public administration. Building on this, Rothstein and Uslaner (2005) suggested that institutions—specifically those in which he found a strong rule of law based on equality—played a role in whether corruption was low and public trust high. These legal and institutional reforms form the basis for much of anti-corruption work. These legal and institutional changes are the foundation of a great deal of anti-corruption activity.

In research by Mehawesh and Al-bhadayneh (2025), they examine Qataris' perception of corruption and the effect on their satisfaction with government effectiveness to combat corruption. Through interviews with 238 participants (both genders almost equally represented (48.6% males and 49.2% females) averaging 32 years in age), it was found that perceptions of corruption and government performance accounted for approximately 22% of the variation observed on citizen satisfaction, including significant effects of funding ($F=19,854$, $\alpha=. \alpha=. \alpha=.000$). Conclusions are drawn from both descriptive and inferential analyses.

The role of technology in the battle with corruption is now slowly being recognized. On their part, Bertot, Jaeger, and Grimes (2010) observed that through government projects transparency is facilitated, as it tends to restrict human discretion in administration where corruption initiatives could emanate from. Digital governance initiatives, such as those in Estonia and Singapore, have led to significant increases in transparency and reductions in corruption within public service delivery (Moore, 2014). The point here is that you must have legal instruments for enforcement. Rose-Ackerman (1999) has demonstrated that when a judiciary works with ACC law, corruption is kept at bay. However, the threshold at which legal sanctions can be imposed based on these variables varies by political and institutional context.

Perceptions of Corruption and Their Impacts

Perceptions of corruption can be different than the reality; either way, they matter. The index that is used, Transparency International's Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI), has been established as a prominent measure of the corruption situation that is widely used for international comparisons (Transparency International, 2024). Anderson and Tverdova (2003) showed that citizens' perception is the main factor influencing trust in government and political participation. Lagging public perception will spiral, and faith in democracy will collapse. Svensson (2005) emphasized that the overall perception of crime is influenced by factors such as mass media reportage, political propaganda, and socio-economic conditions. For instance, Schmidt (2010) observed that in Latin America a strong negative effect of media might be interpreted as if the corruption levels are high when indeed they are moderate and is found to have an impact on citizens' trust and governance outcomes.

Notwithstanding these perceptual inconsistencies, perceptions of corruption can sustain a self-reinforcing loop in which unfavorable perceptions result in diminished compliance and heightened corrupt activities. Consequently, addressing perceptions is essential. Recommended techniques to enhance public trust and positively shift attitudes include transparency initiatives, civic education, and media participation (Klaus & Oehlers, 2011). This study consolidates information from significant studies examining the efficacy of anti-corruption policies and the determinants influencing perceptions of corruption (Andersson & Heywood, 2018).

Methodology

A questionnaire was developed by Al-Badayneh (2010) for investigating corruption perception based on this positivism philosophical approach used in a study by Al-Hassan (2012) about the Jordanian popular movement and by Al-Shammari (2014) in the context of Saudi society regarding public sector and private sector corruptive behavior. The instrument has demographic information embedded within it and assesses perceptions using the Corruption Perceptions Scale (42 items, divided into three corruption subscales: bribery, use of personal connections, and misuse of public funds). It also assesses government effectiveness via a scale of participant satisfaction with government institutions. Ratings range from 0 to 10. Validity was established through face validity (97% agreement among 5 evaluators) and construct validity, showing a correlation ($r=.276$, $\alpha=.000$) between satisfaction and corruption perceptions. Reliability was confirmed with Cronbach's alpha coefficients: satisfaction scale (.910), corruption perception scale (.94), and government effectiveness scale (.90).

Sample. The study involved 238 participants, including 116 men (48.7%) and 117 women (49.2%), with an average age of 32 years (standard deviation: 8.8).

Findings

Table 1 shows that Qataris' average satisfaction with overall government performance and the public sector was the highest among other aspects of satisfaction. The lowest average of Qatari's satisfaction was with private sector and administrative control and transparency

authority

Table 1 Satisfaction with the government efforts in combating corruption

Satisfaction with:	mean	sd
Overall Government Performance	7.2	2.5
Public Sector	6.7	2.4
Private Sector	5.8	2.5
Security Sector	7.4	2.4
Police Sector	7.2	2.6
Political Sector	6.9	2.5
Services Sector	6.3	2.5
Regulatory Institutions	6.2	2.6
Administrative Control and Transparency Authority	5.7	2.82
Human Rights	5.8	3.2

Table 1 shows the regression analysis of Citizens' Satisfaction on reforms, and corruption perception. The multiple correlation was ($R = .30$) and the reforms and satisfaction accounted 9% of the variance on the corruption perception. A significant effect of reforms and satisfaction on corruption perception ($F = 4.478$, $\alpha = 0.014$).

Table 1: Regression Analysis of Corruption Perception and Government Effectiveness in Combating Corruption on Citizens' Satisfaction

Source of Variance	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	12926.276	2	6463.138	4.478	.014
Residual	131334.458	91	1443.236		
Total	144260.734	93			

a. Dependent Variable: corruption Perception

b. Predictors: (Constant), Satisfaction, reforms

Table 2 Coefficients

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	α
	B	Sd	Beta		
(Constant)	169.787	16.349		10.385	.000
reforms	-19.082	13.478	-.143	-1.416	.160
Corruption Perception	.123	.044	.286	2.824	.006

Conclusion

Findings from this analysis offer critical insights into how people in Qatar think about governance and corruption. Given that the general satisfaction (i.e., overall satisfaction with government performance and the public sector in general) is very satisfactory, it implies that Qatari citizens

seem to have agreed on focusing on the aspects of improvement efforts of the government over those areas because well-governed public sectors can affect trust toward governmental institutions (Kaufmann et al., 2009). On the other hand, lower satisfaction with the private sector and administrative control & transparency authority may be a signal of areas where performance or transparency increases are necessary. This is in accordance with studies by Mauro (1995) and Rose-Ackerman (1999), which found that accountability and transparency are key to lowering the level of corruption, together with enhancing a citizen's satisfaction.

The moderate degree of multiple correlation ($R = .30$) and the finding that reforms and satisfaction explain 9% of perceived corruption variance emphasize the complex connection between general contentment and perceived corruption. Of note, although satisfaction with reforms was not at a significant level ($p = .160$), perceptions of corruption negatively associated with citizens' satisfaction were statistically significant ($\beta = .286$, $p = .006$). The results are consistent with previous work that has emphasized the importance of government transparency and effective anticorruption efforts to build trust between citizens and their governments and reduce reported levels of corruption (Anderson & Tverdova, 2003; Svensson, 2005). Consequently, enhancing individuals' perceptions via successful reforms and transparent governance is crucial for cultivating social trust and advancing good governance. These findings align with Treisman's (2000) studies, which underscore the significance of institutional reforms in influencing perceptions of corruption. Reform and satisfaction's effect on perception of corruption The results of the regression analysis indicate a significant effect of reforms and satisfaction across the three dimensions on perceptions of corruption ($F = 4.478$, $p = .014$), highlighting the necessity for institutional reform and increased efforts toward transparency. Indeed, evidence from various settings suggests that successful reforms can lead to large declines in perceived corruption and increased public confidence (Olken & Pande, 2012).

In sum, it appears that additional reforms and greater open-government implementation are necessary to bolster perceptions of government trustworthiness and reduce perceived levels of corruption. To differentiate private red tape and public transparency, and their positive versus negative effects, for exploratory versus targeted reform should be the subject of future research.

The literature resounds with the trinity of institutional reform, technological innovation, and legal teeth as crucial for anticorruption efforts. But, for me, this only adds a layer of cloudiness to the perceptions of corruption. Yet to grow further, governments must prioritize transparency and engagement that solicits input from minorities on the design of outreach strategies, as well as robust enforcement—all while keeping public attitudes in mind that build trust and promote participation.

Despite a variety of ways that the country has established to fight corruption, impediments remain abounding, notably when it comes to issues related to transparency and law enforcement. To address these challenges, we urgently need more reforms and robust institutions.

Challenges And Future Directions

The paper indicates the problematic scope for further research in understanding and curbing

corruption. The big problem is that the transparency and enforcement issues persist, particularly in the private sector and administrative agencies. Although Qatar has shown progress in promoting transparency and combating corruption, aspects are vulnerable to encroachment upon trust and engagement of the public. This study is, moreover, consistent with the findings of Anderson and Tverdova (2003) and Svensson (2005), which find that if governance is not transparent or enforcement is weak, perceptions of corruption may stubbornly remain unchanged in most cases or even worsen.

And the degree of corruption is largely a product of what people want it to be, and this has far more to do with individuals' desires and media pandering, which often undermines government efforts. As Olken and Pande (2012) note, a reform's effectiveness is determined by its implications and how people perceive and accept it. Thus, following Treisman (2000), the next steps involve activities to increase public participation and societal information about the size of government reform effects.

It merits further consideration as to how these concerns can be co-optimized in the institutional reform process of Qatar for a transparent, accountable, and trusting setting. We need to consider still more the ways culture and media influence perceptions of corruption as a means of advancing reform or subverting it.

Thus, counteracting these challenges will require a holistic approach in which strong law enforcement coalesces with community participation and further initiative to develop reformed strategies. Qatar may demonstrate commitment to fight corruption in the country and enhance public trust by encouraging a transparent national dialogue within society along with clear communication and implementation of institutional measures.

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