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PUBLIC MANAGER'S ROLE IN FIGHTING CORRUPTION

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PUBLIC MANAGER'S ROLE IN FIGHTING CORRUPTION

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Summary

The involvement of public officials in corrupt practices is highly detrimental to public management, as resources that should be allocated to social development are diverted, the efficiency of public services is compromised, and market competition is distorted. Preventing and combating corruption are imperative not only to protect public coffers, but also to ensure political stability and sustainable economic development through state action. Society's intolerance to ethically reprehensible behavior can go beyond public administration, recognizing acts that involve only private individuals as corrupt, and it is important to reflect on strategies that aim to mitigate the effects of this endemic evil, which is corruption. The research achieved its objectives by identifying the challenges faced by public managers, highlighting the need for integrated approaches aimed at public management in order to achieve effective actions regarding the performance of public managers in the face of corruption. The role of public managers in combating corruption is a subject of great importance for public administration and civil society. The general objective was to evaluate the performance of these managers, investigating the strategies, challenges and contributions to preventing and confronting corruption. The methodology used for data collection was bibliographic research, based on the theoretical framework of the literature review, selecting and analyzing articles published between 2020 and 2024, using databases that included academic platforms such as *PubMed*, *Scopus*, *Web of Science* and *Google Scholar*. The analysis of the articles revealed a variety of topics, including debates on legislation, governance practices, compliance, transparency, accountability, among others. The results highlight the complexity of the topic and the need for integrated and effective approaches to combat corruption in the public sector.

Keywords: Transparency. Governance. Corruption.

Abstract

The involvement of public officials in corrupt practices is highly detrimental to public management, as resources that should be allocated to social development are diverted, the efficiency of public services is compromised, and market competition is distorted. Preventing and combating corruption are imperative not only to protect public coffers, but also to ensure

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political stability and sustainable economic development through state action. Society's intolerance to ethically reprehensible behavior can go beyond public administration, recognizing acts that involve only private individuals as corrupt, and it is important to reflect on strategies that aim to mitigate the effects of this endemic evil, which is corruption. The research achieved its objectives by identifying the challenges faced by public managers, highlighting the need for integrated approaches aimed at public management in order to achieve effective actions regarding the performance of public managers in the face of corruption. The role of public managers in combating corruption is a subject of great importance for public administration and civil society. The overall objective was to evaluate the performance of these managers, investigating the strategies, challenges and contributions to preventing and combating corruption. The methodology used for data collection was bibliographic research, based on the theoretical framework of literature review, selecting and analyzing articles published between 2020 and 2024, using databases that included academic platforms such as PubMed, Scopus, Web of Science and Google Scholar. The analysis of the articles revealed a variety of topics, including debates on legislation, governance practices, compliance, transparency, accountability, among others. The results highlight the complexity of the topic and the need for integrated and effective approaches to combat corruption in the public sector.

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INTRODUCTION

Preventing and combating corruption among public officials attracts the attention of scholars around the world, even though the behaviors considered corrupt and the State's responses vary with the actions of the supervisory bodies. Corruption weakens democracy, perpetuates political groups in power, overloads public coffers, discourages new entrepreneurs and harms honest companies, eliminating jobs (LIMA, 2022). The weakening of democracy hinders State action, weakening various sectors of society and compromising institutions.

It is in this scenario that the analysis and performance of public managers in the fight against corruption becomes essential, as they play an active role in the implementation of public policies. In this context, the research has the general objective of evaluating the performance of these managers, investigating the strategies, challenges and contributions to the prevention and confrontation of corruption. Its specific objectives were to address public administration, governance in the public sector and the focus on public managers in the fight against corruption.

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Therefore, Brazil may eventually consider regulating corruption in the private sector (MELO et al., 2022). Thus, the perception that corruption is a problem exclusive to the public sector is limited and insufficient to deal with the complexity of the phenomenon. This broadening of the understanding of corruption is essential for policies

combat measures are effective in all areas.

Corruption negatively impacts a country, unbalancing the economy by diverting resources that should benefit everyone to achieve personal goals. In addition, it drives away investors, as it conveys a negative image abroad. Aware of this and seeking to better understand the impacts of corruption in the public sphere, this study aims to analyze the performance of public agents in municipal management in combating corruption (LIMA, 2022). It is a global phenomenon that seriously affects public administration, eroding the foundations of democracy.

2 CONCEPT OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

Public Administration can be understood as the set of institutions, policies, processes and agents whose main function is to manage the resources and collective interests of the State for the benefit of society. It encompasses both the bodies and entities directly subordinate to the government and the autonomous agencies that perform functions of regulation, supervision and execution of public policies. Its performance is guided by the principles of legality, impartiality, morality, publicity and efficiency, as provided for in the Federal Constitution. Public Administration is not limited to the execution of public services, but also to the planning, formulation and implementation of policies that aim to promote social well-being and ensure sustainable development.

According to Conrado (2024), the division in public administration is divided into two large branches: Direct Administration and Indirect Administration. Direct Administration is composed of the bodies that make up the structure of the State, such as ministries, secretariats and departments, and is directly linked to the central government. Indirect Administration is composed of entities that have greater administrative and financial autonomy, such as autonomous agencies, public foundations, public companies and mixed-economy companies.

These entities, although they have greater operational freedom, are subject to government control and supervision and must act in accordance with the objectives and guidelines established by the public authorities. (CONRADO, 2024)

According to Conrado (2024), recent analyses of the role of the State in society in several countries have changed the definitions of political-administrative relationships in the public sector, resulting in a greater demand for governments to be held accountable.

According to Sales et al. (2020, p. 77) "Public governance is based on the principles

of private governance, introducing into public administration precepts of management of private entities, seeking greater efficiency in management, thus promoting a more effective return to citizen". Rodrigues et al. (2020) highlight that these public sector stakeholders have legitimate interests in public entities.

According to Silva and Arroyo (2023), standards of conduct related to the exercise of leadership are essential to establish values, standards of behavior, and organizational culture. They also mention processes and organizational structure related to how senior management is appointed, how responsibilities are defined, and how the organization becomes trustworthy. Control involves the implementation of controls to support the achievement of the entity's objectives, the efficiency and effectiveness of operations, the reliability of reports, and compliance with applicable laws and regulations. External reports demonstrate senior management's accountability for the management of public finances and performance in the use of resources.

In Brazil, the concept of corporate governance is familiar to professionals in the business field. However, for those dedicated to public law or who work in the area, the concern with supervision mechanisms, rational and justified action, the obligation to render accounts and the prevention of conflicts of interest are aligned with the principles of unavailability of the public interest, morality, efficiency and impartiality (CRUZ, NETO, 2020).

In this context, the OECD itself, before releasing documents on governance, had already enacted the Convention on Combating Bribery of Foreign Public Officials in International Business Transactions in 1997, approved in Brazil by Decree No. 3,678/2000. In implementing this Convention, the country included in the Penal Code criminal types related to international corruption and defined what constitutes a foreign public official for the purposes of criminal legislation, in accordance with Law No. 10,467/2002 (WEANIS 2023, p. 12).

2.1 The public manager in the fight against corruption

The role of public managers in combating corruption is crucial to strengthening democratic institutions and promoting the socioeconomic development of a country. In a society where corruption is common, it is up to public managers to act with integrity, transparency, and efficiency to prevent and combat this evil that weakens citizens' trust in government institutions and harms collective well-being (MOTA, 2021).

First, it is important that public managers are committed to principles of ethics and administrative probity. This means implementing concrete measures to prevent conflicts of interest, avoid nepotism and ensure impartiality in decisions. In addition, it is essential to cultivate an organizational culture that values transparency and accountability, allowing society to monitor and oversee government actions.

Another relevant aspect is the implementation of effective internal and external control mechanisms. Public managers must promote the professionalization of control bodies, providing them with adequate resources and sufficient autonomy to investigate reports of irregularities and punish those responsible. In addition, it is important to foster collaboration between the different control bodies, such as the Public Prosecutor's Office, the Comptroller General's Office and the Courts of Auditors, for more integrated and efficient action (OLIVEIRA; SAQUETTO, 2024, p. 12).

It is necessary to encourage citizen participation in monitoring public policies and social control, through strategic tools such as public hearings, popular consultations and the use of digital technologies. By doing so, public managers not only repress corruption, but also create an environment that discourages corrupt practices and strengthens trust in government institutions.

Public managers play an active role in combating corruption and must act ethically, transparently and efficiently to prevent, detect and punish misconduct. To this end, it is essential that the government implements strict policies and laws, strengthens oversight institutions, promotes transparency and accountability, invests in education and awareness-raising on ethics and integrity and encourages the active participation of civil society in monitoring public policies (LIMA, 2022). Only through a joint effort between the government, civil society and oversight institutions will it be possible to build a more just, honest and prosperous country for all citizens.

Oliveira and Saquetto (2024) highlight the importance of public managers becoming professionals with oversight bodies, ensuring they have sufficient knowledge, resources and autonomy to investigate and punish irregularities. Furthermore, collaboration between oversight bodies such as the Public Prosecutor's Office, the Comptroller General's Office and the Courts of Auditors strengthens the fight against corruption. The implementation of effective internal and external control mechanisms is crucial to ensuring integrity in public management.

Araújo and Ferreira (2022) review the literature on the implementation of compliance in the Brazilian public sector, emphasizing the need for standards and procedures that guarantee

integrity and reduce corruption. They point out that public managers play important roles in adopting and implementing compliance programs, establishing an organizational culture focused on ethics and compliance, preventing irregularities and promoting responsibility among public servants.

Law No. 10,467 of June 11, 2002, provides an essential legal framework to regulate actions and accountability in the public sector, serving as a basis for anti-corruption practices. This legislation highlights the role of public managers in applying oversight and punishment mechanisms, ensuring that their actions are aligned with the principles of legality and transparency. In addition, the law encourages the active participation of public managers in promoting a more democratic environment that is less susceptible to corrupt practices, holding them accountable for the integrity of their actions (BRASIL, 2002).

Conrado (2024) presents consequentialism in sanctioning law as a way to protect public managers, promoting innovation and ensuring that decisions are made based on their practical consequences. According to the author, public managers must balance the need to punish unlawful acts with the protection of those who act in good faith and implement innovative policies for the public good.

3 METHODOLOGY

In order to conduct a literature review on the role of public managers in combating corruption, it was necessary to establish a bibliographic research where the data collection of this methodology allowed the selection and adequate analysis of 15 articles published between 2020 and 2024. First, defining the search criteria that were authentic articles that addressed the theme of this research. In this case, it was established that the articles should specifically address the theme of corruption in the scope of public management, addressing both the consequences of this phenomenon and the strategies and initiatives to combat it.

Then, the databases and search terms to be used were selected. The databases included academic platforms such as *PubMed*, *Scopus*, *Web of Science* and *Google Scholar*, in addition to government databases. The search terms included were keywords such as "public manager", "corruption", "ethics", "transparency", "internal control", "corruption prevention", among others.

Based on the established criteria, a search was carried out in the selected databases, using the defined search terms. The articles resulting from the search were then evaluated as to their relevance to the research topic, by reading the titles,

abstracts and, when necessary, full texts.

Once the relevant articles were selected, a critical analysis of the content was carried out, identifying the main contributions of each study to understanding the role of public managers in combating corruption. Finally, the results of the literature review were summarized in a document that presented an overview of the current state of knowledge on the topic, highlighting the main conclusions and recommendations for future research and for the formulation of public policies. It included the preparation of a table to facilitate the understanding and interpretation of the results.

Thus, the proposed methodology allowed us to carry out a comprehensive and rigorous literature review on the role of public managers in combating corruption, contributing to the advancement of knowledge in this area and to the development of more effective strategies for preventing and controlling corruption in the public sector.

4 RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Below are listed the materials found on the research topic with a focus on public managers and the fight against corruption. Several articles were located, of which a total of 15 were selected to be presented in this research, considering their relevance.

Table 1 –List of articles found in the search:

Name	Periodicals	Title	Year
LIMA, Maria Ana Freitas from	Magazine of Administration Public	Misconduct Law Administrative, regulation and accountability of actions or omissions of public managers in Brazil	2022
MELO, Camila Lemos et al.	Interfaces Scientific-Law	Compliance and governance in public management: integrity programs as an improvement in municipal public management	2022
WORLD, Guilherme Abdallah	Ibero Magazine American of	'Pen blackout': public manager, control and media	2020

	Humanities, Sciences and Education		
CONRAD, Marcio Macedo	Scientia Magazine Alpha	Consequentialism in sanctioning law as an instrument of protection for public managers and innovation in the public sector in light of the LINDB	2024
RODRIGUES, Daniele Silva et al.	Magazine of Administration Public	Corruption and mismanagement in education spending: factors socioeconomic and political	2020
BRITO, Halison Silva; COSTA, Ana Carla Oliveira.	Technical Magazine of the Courts of Accounts	CORRUPTION IN TIMES COVID-19: the role of External Control in the challenges caused by the current pandemic scenario	2021
SILVA, Leticia Apollinaris; ARROYO, Mary Bethany nobleman	Ibero Magazine American of Humanities, Sciences and Education	Compliance and performance in public management: risk reduction and optimization of processes and resources	2023
CROSS, Bruna Angelica Barbosa	Technical notebooks from CGU	Access to Information Act as a mechanism for social control over public policies and combating corruption	2022
ARAÚJO, Marcia Germana Alves; FERREIRA, Marcelo Benetele	Ibero Magazine American of Humanities, Sciences and Education	Implementation of compliance in the Brazilian public sector: a literature review	2022
SAMUEL, Ingrid	Scientia Magazine	Control and efficiency in	2023

da Silva;	Alpha	federal public administration	
GRANDCHILD, Announcement	Magazine of Administration Public	Transparency as National Defense instrument for combating corruption: an analysis of the use of the Access to Information Act	2020
FONSECA, Thiago Birth.	Ibero Magazine American of Humanities, Sciences and Education	Does institutional independence guarantee impartial action in the fight against corruption? Evidence of the control exercised by the TCU over the municipalities	2020
WANIS, Rodrigo Octavio Mazieiro;	Magazine of Public Prosecutor's Office of the State of Rio de Janeiro	The role of the Public Prosecutor's Office in defending the right to access public information as anti-corruption instrument	2023
MOTA, Mirlane of Queiroz;	Magazine of Administration Public	Compliance as a public policy instrument	2021
OLIVEIRA, Camila; SACHETTO, Peter Henry Meiros.	Scientia Magazine Alpha	Comptrollership applied to the public sector	2024

Source: Authors themselves (2024)

4.1 The role of public managers in implementing anti-corruption policies

The analysis of the selected articles reveals a wide range of themes and important contributions to the understanding of the role of public managers in combating corruption. Lima (2022) offers a detailed view of the Administrative Misconduct Law, highlighting how

regulation can significantly impact the actions of public managers in Brazil. The strict regulation imposed by this law aims to ensure that managers act ethically and responsibly, preventing acts of administrative impropriety and promoting transparency and accountability.

On the other hand, Melo et al. (2022) focus on the role of compliance and governance in municipal public management, highlighting the importance of these practices for improving management and combating corruption. They argue that the effective implementation of compliance programs and the adoption of good governance practices are essential to strengthen the integrity of public institutions and increase the population's trust in managers.

However, it is necessary to criticize the approach adopted by some of the articles analyzed. Although legislation and compliance programs are essential, their effectiveness depends, to a large extent, on the ability of public managers to implement these measures in a practical and continuous manner. Often, lack of resources, resistance to change and organizational culture can represent significant obstacles.

Furthermore, it is important to consider that corruption is a complex and multifaceted phenomenon that cannot be combated solely through regulatory and compliance measures. A continuous and coordinated effort is required that involves the active participation of all of society, including civic education, the strengthening of democratic institutions and the promotion of a culture of integrity and transparency.

4.2 Transparency, accountability and innovations in combating corruption in public administration

Mundim (2020) highlights the crucial importance of oversight and the media in public administration, emphasizing that transparency and accountability are essential to mitigate corruption. The media plays a vital role in exposing irregularities and pushing for greater accountability of public managers. However, the effectiveness of this approach may be limited if transparency is not accompanied by concrete oversight and punishment actions.

Rodrigues et al. (2020) investigate the socioeconomic and political factors that contribute to corruption in education spending, highlighting the complexity of the problem and the need for effective and targeted public policies. The analysis is pertinent, but it may be limited if it does not consider regional and contextual variations, which also significantly influence corruption levels.

Silva and Arroyo (2023) offer a perspective on compliance in public management, demonstrating how this practice can reduce risks and improve process efficiency.

Although compliance is a powerful tool, its effective implementation depends on the organizational culture and the commitment of public managers to ethics and transparency. A lack of training and adequate resources can limit the positive impact of these initiatives.

Samuel (2023) investigates control and efficiency in federal public administration, providing evidence on how to improve governance and prevent corruption. It suggests that effective governance depends on robust internal control systems, combined with a culture of accountability and transparency. However, implementation of these recommendations may face resistance within public institutions themselves, where structural and cultural changes may be difficult to achieve.

Wanis (2023) examines the role of the Public Prosecutor's Office in defending access to public information as an anti-corruption tool, highlighting the crucial role of this institution in promoting transparency and accountability. He suggests that the Public Prosecutor's Office can act as a guardian of public integrity, ensuring that information is accessible to the public and that public officials are held accountable for their actions. However, the effectiveness of this role depends on the Public Prosecutor's Office's ability to operate independently and with adequate resources to conduct comprehensive investigations.

Mota (2021) discusses compliance as an instrument of public policies for integrity and combating corruption in direct administration, highlighting the need for comprehensive strategies to address this challenge. He argues that compliance should be seen not only as a set of rules to be followed, but as an organizational culture that permeates all public administration activities. To this end, an ongoing commitment to training and raising awareness among public servants is necessary, in addition to robust support from monitoring and evaluation systems.

Oliveira and Saquetto (2024) address the application of comptrollership in the public sector, offering important data on how this practice can strengthen mechanisms for controlling and preventing corruption. They highlight that comptrollership, when well implemented, can act as a central nervous system for public administration, coordinating and integrating various internal control functions. This not only improves the detection and prevention of irregularities, but also promotes a culture of continuous improvement and results-oriented management.

5 FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

The study confirms that the actions of public managers are essential in combating

corruption, and it is necessary to act ethically, transparently and efficiently to prevent, detect and punish misconduct. The analysis of the articles revealed that the implementation of strict policies, the strengthening of oversight institutions, the promotion of transparency, education and awareness about ethics, as well as the active participation of civil society, are fundamental strategies to combat corruption in the public sector. These elements stand out as pillars of public management committed to integrity and public trust, essential for strengthening democracy and promoting sustainable socioeconomic development.

It has been found that integration between public authorities, civil society and oversight institutions is essential to building a fairer and more honest country. Engaging different sectors of society in the fight against corruption strengthens the legitimacy of oversight actions and promotes a culture of intolerance towards illicit practices. In achieving its objectives, this study not only assessed the strategies and challenges faced by public managers, but also highlighted the need for integrated and effective approaches that involve multiple stakeholders. The theoretical and practical contribution of this research is significant, as it not only identifies good governance and compliance practices, but also promotes the importance of an organizational culture that values transparency and accountability. The implementation of robust governance systems and the creation of effective compliance mechanisms are vital to preventing irregularities and building a more ethical and efficient work environment.

Furthermore, the study highlights that promoting transparency is not just a preventive measure, but an active strategy in the fight against corruption. Transparency builds trust, which is an essential element for effective governance. When the actions and decisions of public managers are transparent, it becomes more difficult for corruption to thrive. The participation of civil society, in turn, plays a crucial role in monitoring and demanding accountability from public managers. Creating channels of communication and participation that allow society to exercise effective social control is one of the most effective ways to strengthen public governance and ensure that institutions fulfill their role of protecting the public interest.

However, the study also acknowledges its limitations, which include the need for a broader analysis of different regional contexts and the inclusion of specific case studies to deepen the understanding of anti-corruption strategies. Corruption is a complex and multifaceted phenomenon that can vary significantly depending on the regional and cultural context.

Future research should also consider the application of quantitative methods.

to assess the effectiveness of anti-corruption policies implemented by public administrators. The use of specific metrics and indicators can provide a clearer understanding of which strategies are most effective and in which contexts. In addition, the analysis of empirical data can help identify patterns and trends that can inform the creation of more targeted and effective public policies. Finally, expanding the scope of research to include international comparisons can provide valuable insights into how different countries are approaching the fight against corruption and what lessons can be applied to the Brazilian context.

It is clear that public managers are not only policy executors, but also strategic actors in promoting integrity, transparency, and effectiveness in public administration. The implementation of compliance programs, as discussed by Araújo and Ferreira (2022), is essential to establish a culture of ethics and compliance in the public sector. These programs, when correctly implemented, can prevent irregularities and promote accountability among public servants, significantly reducing the risks of corruption.

Conrado (2024) presents consequentialism in sanctioning law as an innovative approach to protect public managers while promoting innovation in the public sector. This perspective highlights the importance of decisions based on practical consequences, balancing the need for punishment for unlawful acts with the protection of managers who act in good faith. Consequentialism can strengthen public trust in institutions by ensuring that sanctions are proportionate and fair, encouraging innovative and effective practices in public administration.

The above findings indicate several areas where future research may be valuable. First, there is an ongoing need for empirical studies that assess the effectiveness of compliance programs in the public sector. Research that examines different implementation models and their impact on reducing corruption could provide relevant information to improve these initiatives.

Research into the practical application of Law No. 10,467 and other anti-corruption legal frameworks is essential. Studies that examine specific cases of success and failure in the application of legislation can identify critical factors that influence the effectiveness of these laws. International comparisons can also provide valuable lessons on best practices and legislative innovations.

Finally, the consequentialist approach in sanctioning law should be considered as a complementary strategy to existing policies. Policies that encourage innovation and protect good-faith public managers can create an environment more conducive to efficiency and

integrity in public administration.

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