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Summary

Abstract

The aim of this study is to find out how aware the employees of the University of Palermo and the Miguel Hernández University of Elche are of the corruption prevention measures adopted by their respective institutions, and to hypothesize an organizational change activity with respect to these measures or the implementation of new ones. Specifically, the selected administrative employees of both universities were asked: whether they consider the measures implemented by the university to be effective; whether they have found them useful in the exercise of their activities; whether the training activities have been effective or whether they think more training is needed; whether they are aware of the complaints channel and how protected they feel by the system in place; whether these measures make the procedures slower and less effective; whether they think that a change in this sense can only come through an appropriate organizational culture.

For this purpose, a questionnaire was administered to a sample of administrative managers of both universities. To ensure that the answers were honestly and reliably expressed, the administration was carried out anonymously. The main factors to take into account are, firstly, that although the University of Palermo tended to obtain positive results, the responses are approximately one third of those provided by the University of Miguel Hernández. In the latter case, a strong willingness to engage in a change activity emerged, as well as a number of leads for possible new support activities. The results are a particularly important starting point and emphasize the need for a different approach. In particular, two different models of organizational change were proposed, with reference to the models suggested by Schein and Kotter, as well as ways of dealing with possible resistance to change.

Key words: Compliance, Corruption, Organizational change

Resumen

El objetivo de este estudio es conocer en qué medida los empleados de la Universidad de Palermo y de la Universidad Miguel Hernández de Elche conocen las medidas de prevención de la corrupción adoptadas por sus respectivas instituciones, y plantear la hipótesis de una actividad de cambio organizativo respecto a las mismas o a la implantación de nuevas medidas. En concreto, se preguntó al personal administrativo seleccionado de ambas universidades: si consideran eficaces las medidas puestas en marcha por la universidad; si les han sido útiles en el ejercicio de sus actividades; si las actividades formativas han sido eficaces o si creen necesaria más formación; si conocen el canal de denuncias y cómo de protegidos se sienten por el sistema previsto; si estas medidas hacen que los procedimientos sean más lentos y menos eficaces, y si creen que un cambio en este sentido sólo puede producirse a través de una cultura organizativa adecuada.

Para ello se administró un cuestionario a una muestra de gestores administrativos de ambas universidades. Para garantizar que las respuestas se expresaban de forma honesta y fiable, la administración se llevó a cabo de forma anónima. Los principales factores a tener en cuenta son, en primer lugar, que aunque la Universidad de Palermo tendió a obtener resultados positivos, las respuestas son aproximadamente un tercio de las proporcionadas por la Universidad Miguel Hernández. En este último caso, surgió una fuerte voluntad de participar en una actividad de cambio, así como varias pistas para posibles nuevas actividades de apoyo Los resultados constituyen un punto de partida especialmente importante y ponen de relieve la necesidad de adoptar un enfoque diferente. En concreto, se plantearon dos modelos diferentes de cambio organizativo, en referencia a los modelos planteados por Schein y Kotter, así como formas de abordar la posible resistencia al cambio.

Palabras clave: Cumplimento, Corrupción, Cambio organizacional

1. Theoretical framework

Nowadays, public and private administrations must deal with several phenomena that affect the whole world. National and European institutions have the task of governing all these risks: it means that every organization should be prepared by implementing, managing, evaluating, and monitoring every single prevention measure and all the processes needed to enforce them. In order to make these operations effective, an organization should not be seen as a fixed, stable, and unconditionally predisposed to change entity. In particular, organizational change refers to the actions in which a company o business alters a major component of its organization, such as its culture, the underlying technologies or infrastructures it uses to operate, or its internal processes.

An organization is composed of people, of course, and as such it changes, adapts, can be slave to habits and is not always easy to understand. However, the purpose of any organization is to deploy its resources as efficiently as possible, be they human or material. This analysis is focused on the perception that University's employers have about corruption prevention measures adopted and how could it be related to organizational culture.

According to OECD (2017), corruption is one of most corrosive issues of our times: it squanders public resources, increases economic and social inequality, fuels discontent and political polarization, and diminishes trust in institutions. It perpetuates inequality and poverty, affecting well-being and income distribution, and undermining opportunities for equal participations in social, economic and political life. The aim of this paper is to analyze two case studies, one Italian and one Spanish, respectively the University of Palermo and the Miguel Hernandez University of Elche, analyzing the perceived efficiency of university employees with regard to the corruption prevention measures adopted. In particular, an analysis will seek to understand how organizational culture and resistance to change could impact on trust in the organization and on the observance and adoption of these measures. This objective is pursued by the administration of a questionnaire to a sample of administrative employees of both universities.

In order to achieve this aim, the following hypotheses have been put forward:

H1. The University takes enough measures to deal with and prevent possible corrupt episodes

H2. The documentation produced by the University on anti-corruption has been useful to me in carrying out my professional activities

H3. The corruption prevention measures adopted by the University contribute significantly to improve organizational performance

H4. The university communicates the various anti-corruption measures to its employees in a timely and appropriate manner (Code of Conduct, Transparency, Whistleblowing)

H5. It would be useful for the university to adopt new measures aimed at combating corruption or o strengthen existing ones

H6. Sometimes the corruption prevention measures adopted by the University make organizational procedures slower and less efficient

H7. The University involves its employees in training activities on anti-corruption issues

H8. If I became aware of a corrupt practice, I would know exactly what procedures to take to report it

H9. The measures to prevent and fight corruption adopted by the University will only be translated into concrete procedures if the organizational culture accompanies this important process of change

H10. The University verifies that all anti-corruption procedures are correctly implemented

H11. If I became aware of a corrupt practice I would feel very comforted by the safeguards system adopted by the University to support whistleblowers

H12. I would find it useful to implement new anti-corruption training activities or to enhance existing ones

2. Empirical framework

2.1 Partecipants

A total of 39 administrative officers participated to this study: 10 from the University of Palermo and 29 (74,4%) from the Universidad Miguel Hernandez of Elche. These participants were selected through their respective university pages, from the various offices and departments. The age of the participants ranges from 36 to 65, with seniority ranging from zero to over twenty-five years and with a total of 16 men (41,03%), 21 women (53,84%) and two abstainers (5,13%). It is also necessary to underline that the answers were given totally on an anonymous way.

2.2 Variables and instruments

The questions of the questionnaire administered were defined by me with the help of my two tutor professors and then revised by the heads of the internal control office of the Miguel Hernández University of Elche and the heads of the anti-corruption office of the University of Palermo. The variables adopted serve three basic functions: a) four statements aimed at understanding employees' perceptions of how active the university is in the fight against corruption; b) four others aimed at understanding employees' perceptions of the issue; and c) four others the impact these measures may have on business development.

The questionnaire was submitted via the Google Form platform, explaining in advance the reasons for the survey.

2.3 Procedure

During the course of this project in Elche, it was discussed with the professors of both universities how useful would it be to have the direct participation of the administrative officers. The decision was to administrate a questionnaire, so the first step was to define the objective to be achieved and the questions to submit. Afterwards, they both supervised the questions to be submitted and indicated the direction to be taken. With the aim of understanding the feasibility of this study, I was put in touch with the professors respectively by the heads of the internal control office of the University Miguel Hernández of Elche and the head of the anti-corruption unit of the University of Palermo. Their support was necessary both for understanding the recipients of the questionnaire and for its administration. Afterwards, the administrative officers of the various departments and internal offices were identified through the respective University channels.

The questions were submitted in Italian and Spanish respectively, and the questionnaire was sent by email to all selected participants. In particular, the purpose of the survey was emphasized first of all in the email and, given the complexity and delicacy of the subject, it was underlined that it was necessary to guarantee anonymity in order to ensure the maximum accuracy and reliability of the answers.

2.4 Statistical analysis

This statistical analysis is descriptive. A Likert scale was used. In this case, participants expressed their agreement with the statements on an increasing scale:
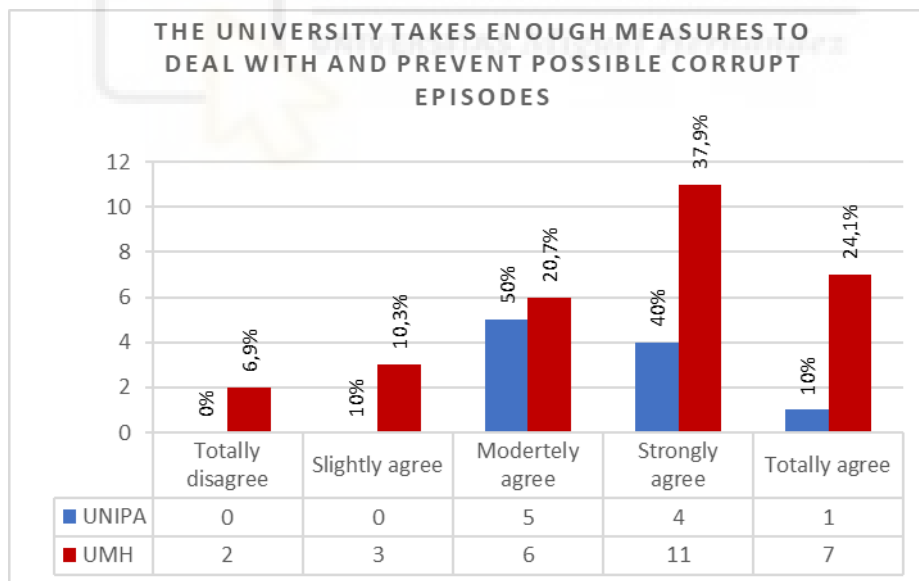
1=Totally disagree, 2=Slightly agree, 3=Moderately agree, 4=Strongly agree, 5=Totally agree.

The study also wanted to include two variables, which are the age of the participants and how long have they been doing their job, as they could be significant in understanding a potential different perception.

3. Results

Below are the differentiated results for the two organizations:

Figure 1: Perception of the effectiveness of anti-corruption and prevention measures

THE UNIVERSITY TAKES ENOUGH MEASURES TO DEAL WITH AND PREVENT POSSIBLE CORRUPT EPISODES

	Totally disagree	Slightly agree	Modertely agree	Strongly agree	Totally agree
UNIPA	0	0	5	4	1
UMH	2	3	6	11	7

The majority of participants in both universities agreed on the effectiveness of the measures taken based on their perceptions, although five participants from the University of Elche slightly agreed or totally disagreed.

Figure 2: Usefulness of documents produced by the University on anti-corruption
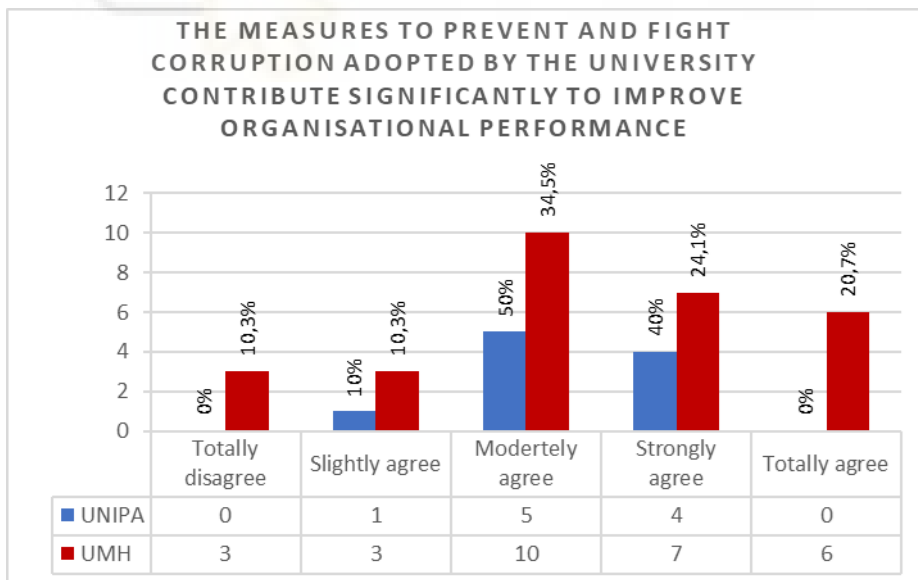

THE DOCUMENTATION PRODUCED BY THE UNIVERSITY ON ANTI-CORRUPTION HAS BEEN USEFUL TO ME IN CARRYING OUT MY PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES

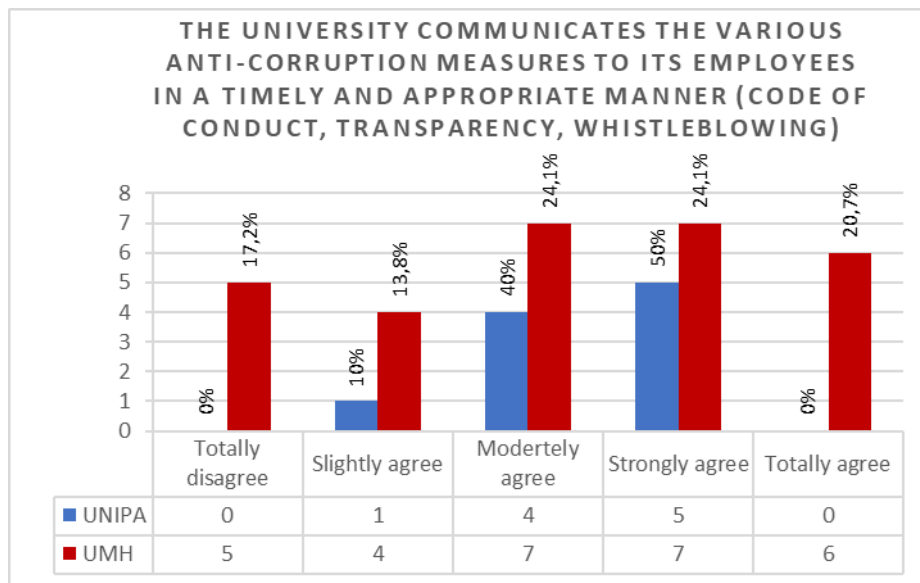|	Totally disagree	Slightly agree	Modertely agree	Strongly agree	Totally agree
UNIPA	0	1	4	3	2
UMH	3	4	8	9	5
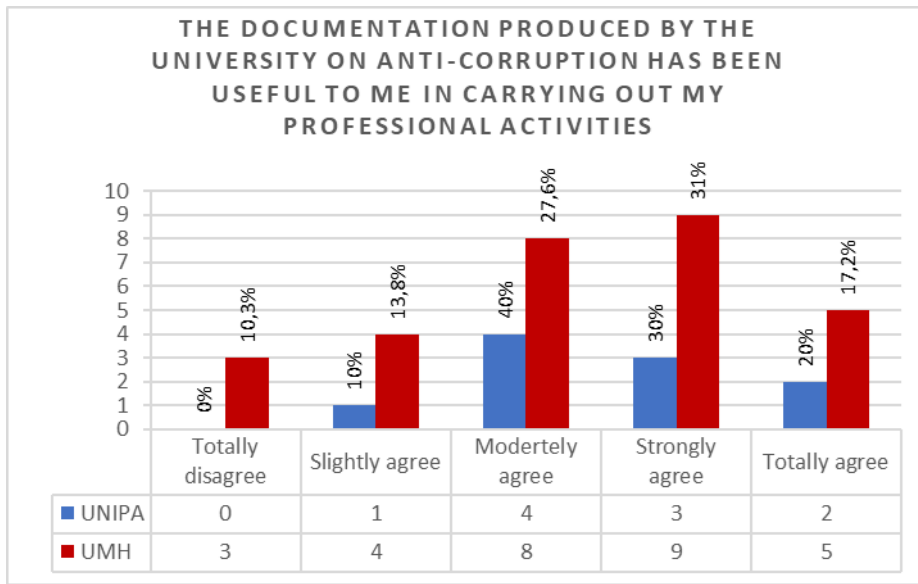
Almost all of the participants from the University of Palermo found the tools provided useful in carrying out their professional activities. The participants from the University of Elche tended to agree with their Italian colleagues, although slightly more than 20% slightly agreed or totally disagreed.

Figure 3: Correlation between corruption prevention measures and organizational performance

THE MEASURES TO PREVENT AND FIGHT CORRUPTION ADOPTED BY THE UNIVERSITY CONTRIBUTE SIGNIFICANTLY TO IMPROVE ORGANISATIONAL PERFORMANCE

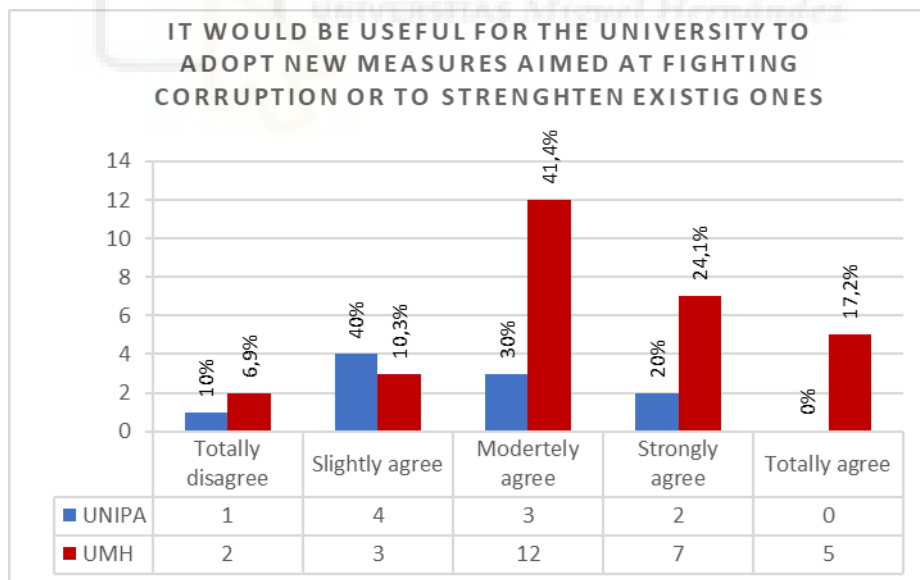|	Totally disagree	Slightly agree	Modertely agree	Strongly agree	Totally agree
UNIPA	0	1	5	4	0
UMH	3	3	10	7	6

The administrative officers of the University of Palermo tended to agree with this statement in the totality of their answers. Also, in this case, nearly the 20% of participants from the University of Elche strongly disagreed or slightly agreed.

Figure 4: Efficiency of the communication of corruption prevention measures

THE UNIVERSITY COMMUNICATES THE VARIOUS ANTI-CORRUPTION MEASURES TO ITS EMPLOYEES IN A TIMELY AND APPROPRIATE MANNER (CODE OF CONDUCT, TRANSPARENCY, WHISTLEBLOWING)

	Totally disagree	Slightly agree	Modertely agree	Strongly agree	Totally agree
UNIPA	0	1	4	5	0
UMH	5	4	7	7	6

UNIPA percentages: 0%, 10%, 40%, 50%, 0%
UMH percentages: 17,2%, 13,8%, 24,1%, 24,1%, 20,7%

Also, in this case, the employees of the University of Palermo tended to agree. With regard to the employees of the University of Elche, nearly the 30% of the participants strongly disagreed or slightly agreed with the time and the manner the measures are communicated.

Figure 5: Adoption or enhancement of corruption prevention measures

IT WOULD BE USEFUL FOR THE UNIVERSITY TO ADOPT NEW MEASURES AIMED AT FIGHTING CORRUPTION OR TO STRENGHTEN EXISTIG ONES

	Totally disagree	Slightly agree	Modertely agree	Strongly agree	Totally agree
UNIPA	1	4	3	2	0
UMH	2	3	12	7	5

UNIPA percentages: 10%, 40%, 30%, 20%, 0%
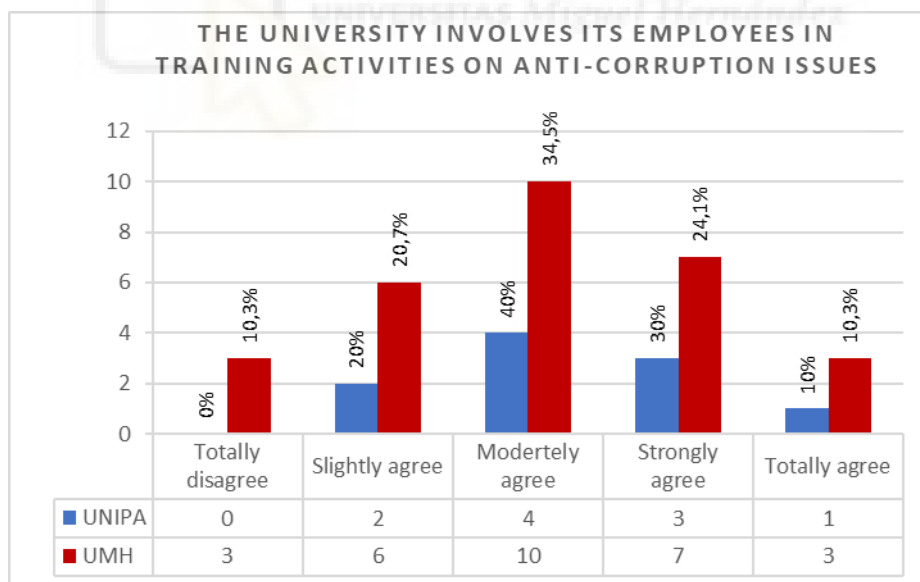UMH percentages: 6,9%, 10,3%, 41,4%, 24,1%, 17,2%

Half of the participants from the University of Palermo slightly agree or strongly disagree with this statement. Some of the participants from the University of Elche agree with these Italian colleagues, but in this case, they constitute only a small part of the participants (less than 20%).

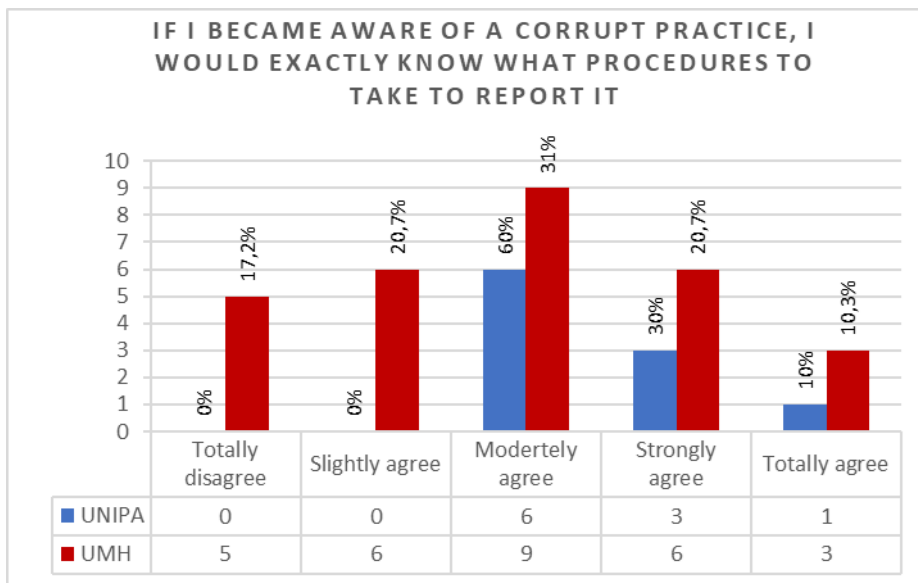Figure 6: Correlation between corruption prevention measures and the efficiency of internal procedures
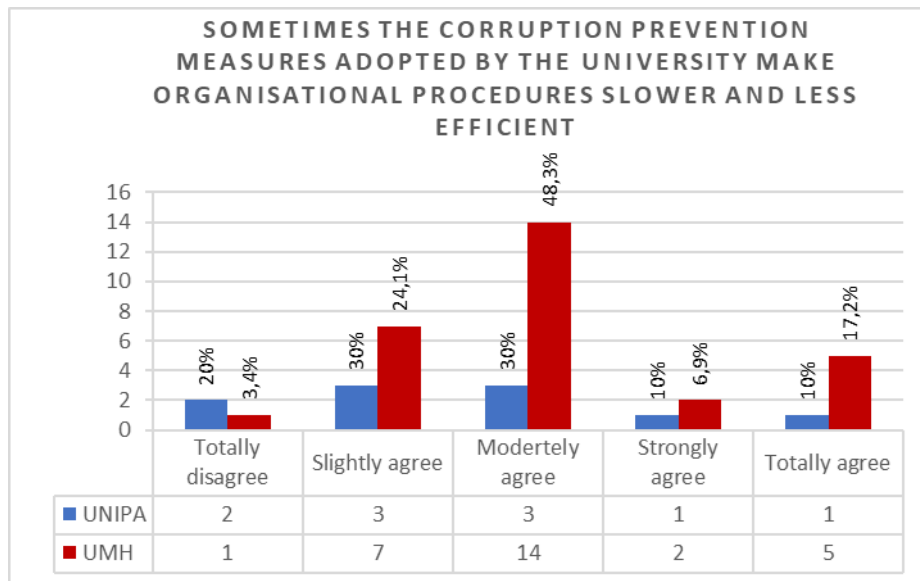
In both universities, opinions differed on this statement. The majority moderately agree on the necessity to streamline procedures.

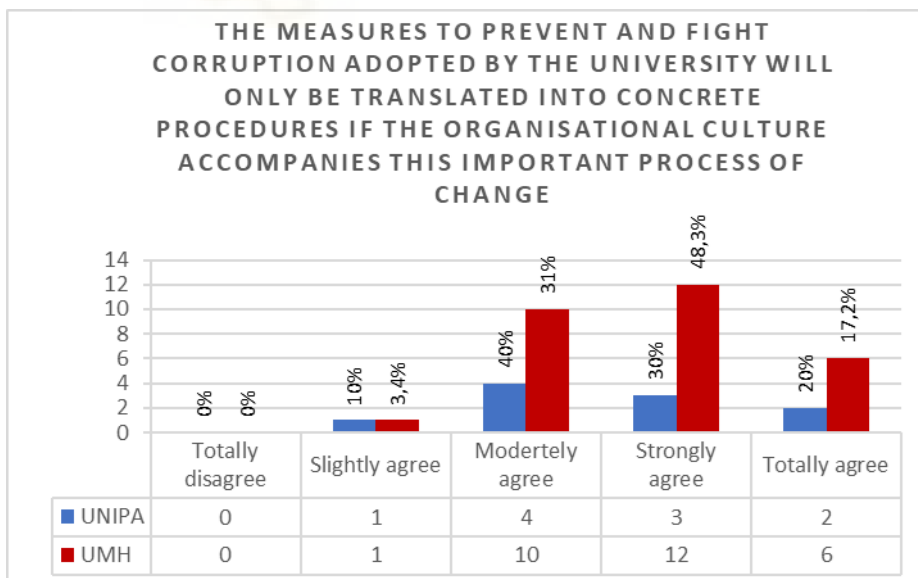Figure 7: Training activities on anti-corruption issues

The participants from the University of Palermo tend to consider themselves involved in the training activities implemented on these topics. The majority of participants from the University of Elche agree with their Italian colleagues, but a significant minority slightly agree or strongly disagree (31%).

Figure 8: Perception of reporting procedures

IF I BECAME AWARE OF A CORRUPT PRACTICE, I WOULD EXACTLY KNOW WHAT PROCEDURES TO TAKE TO REPORT IT

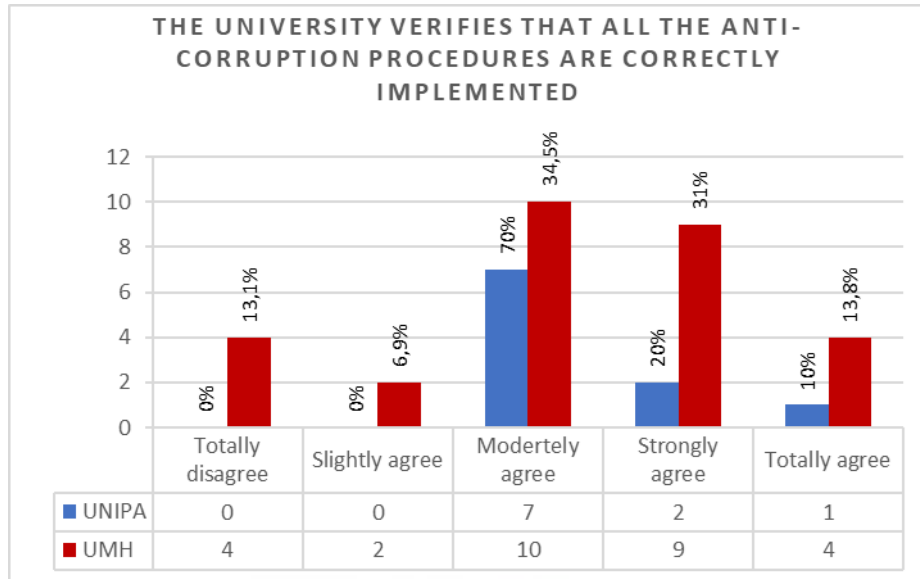|	Totally disagree	Slightly agree	Modertely agree	Strongly agree	Totally agree
UNIPA	0	0	6	3	1
UMH	5	6	9	6	3

The responses of the participants from the University of Palermo showed that they all consider themselves aware of the procedures for reporting corrupt conduct. Otherwise, a significant data concerns the University of Elche, where a few less than 40% of participants considered themselves completely uninformed or slightly informed about these issues.

Figure 9: The correlation between organizational culture and the effectiveness of corruption prevention measures

THE MEASURES TO PREVENT AND FIGHT CORRUPTION ADOPTED BY THE UNIVERSITY WILL ONLY BE TRANSLATED INTO CONCRETE PROCEDURES IF THE ORGANISATIONAL CULTURE ACCOMPANIES THIS IMPORTANT PROCESS OF CHANGE

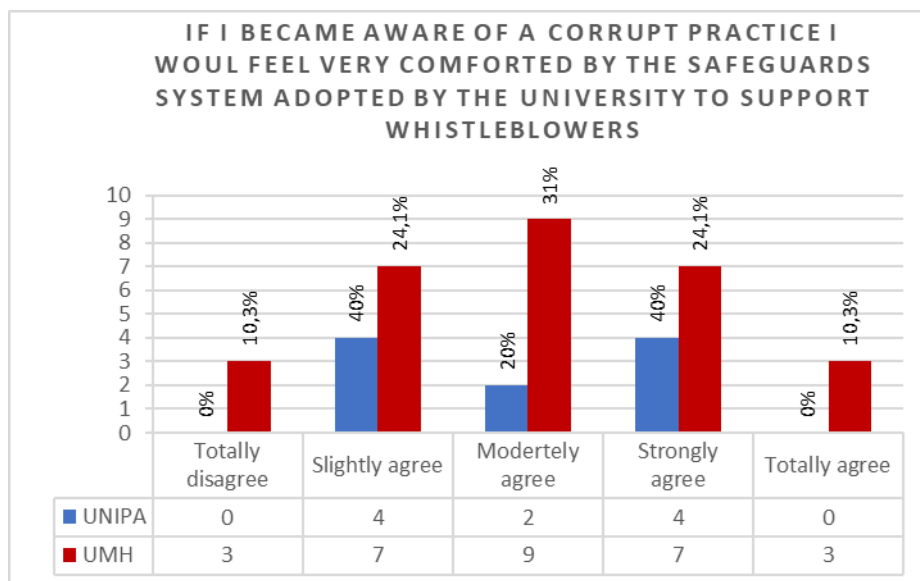|	Totally disagree	Slightly agree	Modertely agree	Strongly agree	Totally agree
UNIPA	0	1	4	3	2
UMH	0	1	10	12	6

All participants from both universities tended to agree on the necessity of having a healthy organizational culture to ensure the effectiveness of corruption prevention measures.

Figure 10: Perception regarding the checks carried out on the correct implementation of procedures

THE UNIVERSITY VERIFIES THAT ALL THE ANTI-CORRUPTION PROCEDURES ARE CORRECTLY IMPLEMENTED

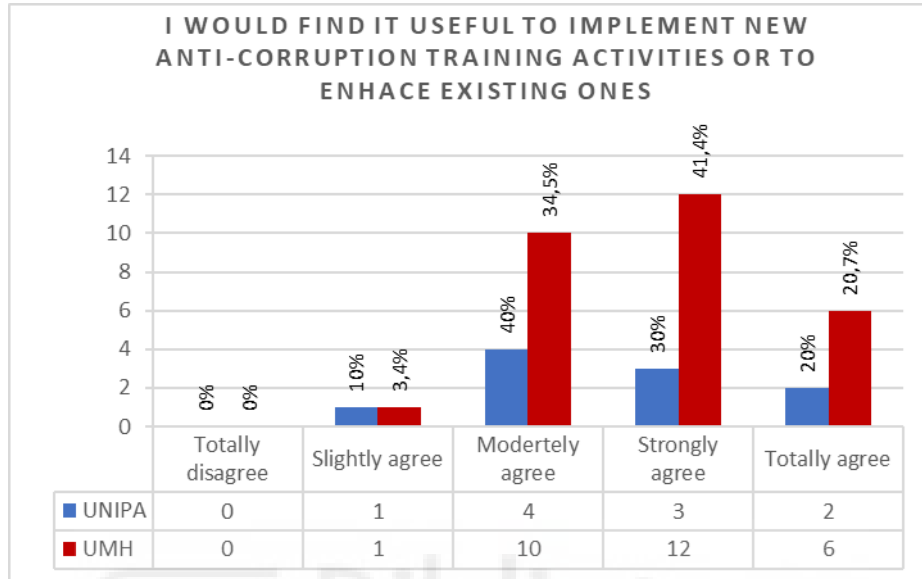|	Totally disagree	Slightly agree	Modertely agree	Strongly agree	Totally agree
UNIPA	0	0	7	2	1
UMH	4	2	10	9	4

The perception of the participants of the University of Palermo on the verifications carried out on the correct implementation of the procedures is positive in the totality of the answers provided. The participants from the University of Elche tended to agree with their Italian colleagues, but it has to be underlined that the 20% of participants totally disagreed or slightly agreed.

Figure 11: Perception of the Safeguard System adopted to support whistleblowers

IF I BECAME AWARE OF A CORRUPT PRACTICE I WOUL FEEL VERY COMFORTED BY THE SAFEGUARDS SYSTEM ADOPTED BY THE UNIVERSITY TO SUPPORT WHISTLEBLOWERS

|	Totally disagree	Slightly agree	Modertely agree	Strongly agree	Totally agree
UNIPA	0	4	2	4	0
UMH	3	7	9	7	3

In both organizations, there are data to be noted. 40% of the participants at the University of Palermo slightly agreed or totally disagreed with this statement. Almost a third of the participants from the University of Elche agreed with what was just expressed by their Italian colleagues.

Figure 12: Implementation or enhancement of training activities on anti-corruption issues

I WOULD FIND IT USEFUL TO IMPLEMENT NEW ANTI-CORRUPTION TRAINING ACTIVITIES OR TO ENHACE EXISTING ONES

|	Totally disagree	Slightly agree	Modertely agree	Strongly agree	Totally agree
UNIPA	0	1	4	3	2
UMH	0	1	10	12	6

Almost all participants from both universities would find it useful to implement new training activities or enhance existing ones.

Figure 13: Age of partecipants

AGE (YEARS)

	18-25	26-35	36-45	46-55	56-65	More than 65
UNIPA	0	0	0	8	2	0
UMH	0	0	3	17	9	0
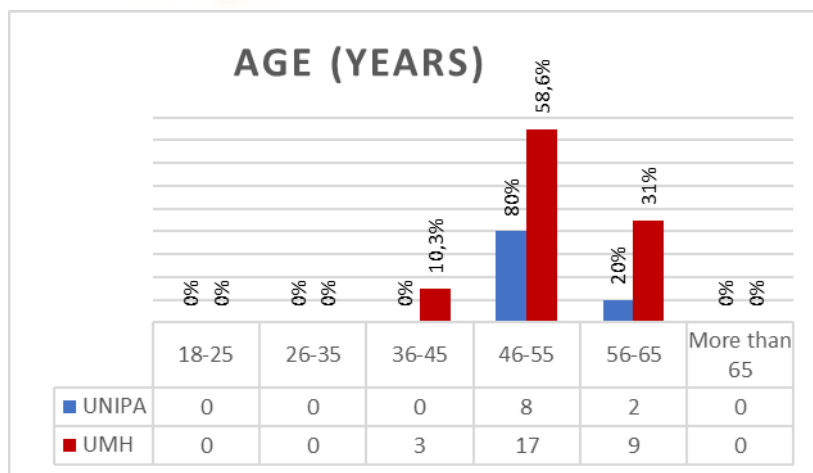
The administrative employees of both universities who participated in the questionnaire are aged between 36 and 65. The age group with the most participants in both cases is 46 to 55.

Figure 14: Length of Service

LENGHT OF SERVICE (YEARS)

	0-5	5-10	10-15	15-20	20-25	More than 25
■ UNIPA	0	0	0	1	1	8
■ UMH	2	1	2	4	7	13
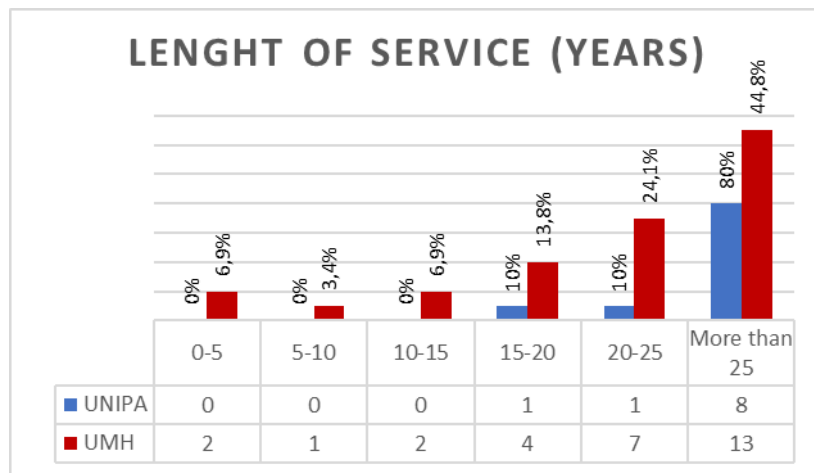
80% of the participants at the University of Palermo have a length of service of more than 25 years, and none of them less than 15. On the other hand, the University of Elche, where the participants have a length of service ranging from zero to more than 25 years, is a factor to be taken into account. The last variable characterises around 45% of the Spanish participants.

4. Discussion

Considering the results of this study, it is possible to make different considerations with regard to a potential organizational change program as a result of the implementation of new prevention measures or the strengthening of previous ones. In this regard, from my point of view, the two organizations should adopt two different approaches:

- In the University of Palermo, the lower number of responses could be related to a lack of willingness to expose themselves to issues of this type, as well as being a symptom of an organizational culture that does not sufficiently involve administrative employees. With that being said, it is necessary to emphasize three data that emerged from the questionnaire submitted:
- 90% of the participants would be in favour of implementing new anti-corruption measures or of enhancing existing ones
- 40% of the participants would feel uncomfortable by the protection system adopted for whistleblowers
- 90% of the participants would consider it useful to implement new training activities or to enhance existing ones

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The variables considered can not be attributed to a lack of work experience, as all respondents have been working in this field for at least 15 years and 8 out of 10 for more than 25 years. In this regard, it is necessary to take a different perspective, assuming the approach to be taken when implementing new anti-corruption measures or enhancing existing ones. After this first analysis, it is now possible to assume a potential organizational change program to adopt, referring to Schein's model and implementing the following steps:

1. Unfreeze: considering the degree of abstentionism detected, a first objective should certainly be to instil a new motivation and willingness to be more receptive to these issues. The first step is retraction, a phase that aims to make employees realize that expectations have been disregarded, as well as the establishment of a sense of guilt or anxiety to help them grasp the importance of the problem, and determine a certain psychological security to implement actions to remedy it.

2. Change: this second phase aims to recreate the way these factors are perceived. In particular, it will be necessary to identify a vision to be transmitted, also giving space to new concepts and ideas. In this phase, it is also necessary that all the employees involved have already acquired a certain disposition to change.

3. Refreeze: this part of the process incorporates the new precepts gained both inside and outside the organization. In particular, it will be necessary for these concepts to be incorporated by each individual in order for these attitudes to persist over time.

An organizational change program, in this case, should be manifested through the definition of various actions to be implemented, that should be:

- Planned: by gradually organizing the actions to be implemented to achieve predefined goals
- Continuous: to allow employees to internalize the change and strengthen their trust in the organization
- Evolutive: not altering the principles of the organization but allowing a gradual strengthening of the channels adopted.

Considering the results of the study, it is necessary to keep in mind that this type of activity could generate resistance to change. A possible solution to adopt could be the implementation of an organizational development model, by using a tactic centred on training and communication activities: the goal is to remove obstacles and uncertainty about these issues. Using this technique, internal and external change agents can advise members of the organization on how will change impact on them and try to reduce their worries about it. In this phase, some practices proposed by

management may be questioned and, in these circumstances, they should be prepared to question their reasons.

This objective should also be pursued by an intergroup training technique, which would involve the managers of the various offices in group activities, to ensure a greater awareness of the measures adopted and to provide input for the implementation of new measures.

- The results that emerged from the Miguel Hernandez University of Elche have more factors to bear in mind, due to an almost threefold increase in the number of participants compared to their Italian colleagues. This factor showed that there is a strong interest in these topics and it is an excellent starting point for a more accurate analysis. In particular, it should be noted that:
- 31% disagree that the university adequately communicates anti-corruption measures
- 82.7% agree that the University should implement new anti-corruption measures or enhance existing ones
- 72.4% think that corruption prevention measures make proceedings slower and less efficient
- 31% do not feel involved in training activities on these issues
- 37.9% do not feel sufficiently aware of how to report a corrupt conduct
- 34.4% would not feel protected by the protection system provided for whistleblowers
- 96.6% would find it useful to implement new training activities or strengthen existing ones

All participants are between 36 and 55 years old (more than half are between 46 and 55 years old), while length of service varies greatly. It must be considered that some of the participants have been working for University for less than 5 years.

A model of organizational change to be adopted will be hypothesized below, referring to that theorized by John Kotter:

1. Create urgency: the high rate of participation in the questionnaire may be a sign of a willingness to create the preconditions for change. In particular, it will be important to involve employees in this process by starting an honest discussion and giving dynamic and convincing reasons to get people talking and thinking. Another important factor is identifying potential threats and developing scenarios showing what could happen in the future if no action is taken.

2. Form a powerful coalition: it will be crucial to start a dialogue with employees, emphasizing the importance of the opinion given. It will be necessary to check for weak areas and ensure that there is a good mix of people from different departments and different levels within the University.

3. Create a vision for change: The weak areas highlighted above are the starting point for determining the future state to be pursued. In this phase it is necessary to determine the values

that are central to change and create a strategy to execute that vision (e.g. review internal procedures).

4. Communicate the vision: Once the goals to be pursued have been identified, it is equally important to communicate them. Ineffective communication may perceive a lack of attention to the problem and a difficulty in understanding the direction to be taken. A key function will be to talk often about the change vision, address people's concerns and anxieties, openly and honestly, and apply it to all aspects of operations (from training to performance reviews).

5. Remove obstacles: in a team there will not always be those who are really open to change, and for this reason it is relevant to understand their possible motivations and create the conditions to quickly remove barriers (human or otherwise). An empathic and rewarding approach could therefore ensure cohesion and higher productivity.

6. Create short-term wins: to keep employees' motivation high and achieve tangible results, it will be useful for the team to create steps to be achieved gradually.

7. Build on the change: once the first steps have been taken, it will be necessary to understand which areas have achieved positive results and which have not. In this regard, it will be relevant to analyze what went right and what needs improving, to create the right conditions for Kaizen, continuous improvement.

8. Anchor the changes in corporate culture: In order to ensure the effectiveness of the implemented activities, it will be important to always keep the results in mind and to train the new employees appropriately. This technique aims to support and supervise the new procedures adopted to ensure that employees do not have the propensity to revert to their original state.

Although the results differ from their Italian colleagues, there are also some aspects in common. The extent of change, in fact, given the need for a change but not an overhaul of the organizational culture, should be:

- Planned: through the implementation of new training activities
- Continuous: to ensure a gradual increase in knowledge with respect to these issues and to adapt them to ongoing changes in the field
- Evolutionary: gradual and strictly focused on these issues.

Another point to be noted is the perceived low level of involvement by participants and the lack of knowledge of how to report a corrupt conduct and trust the protection system for whistleblowers.

In my opinion, in order to ensure the effectiveness of training activities and reduce organizational resistance, it would be useful to implement a participation and empowerment activity. This would

enable employees to participate in the change process and educate them to be more aware of these issues.

- In order to obtain a more accurate study, it might be useful, in the future, to first propose the same study to other universities and other countries. In this way, it would be possible to obtain a national, European and international perspective, comparing the various results in order to understand potential correlations between the perception with respect to these measures and the cultural factors of the different territories that influence it. Beyond this, it would be useful to expand this type of study to all university employees, independently of how much they have to deal with these issues, in order to understand their perceptions. Afterwards, it might be useful to initiate a study of the same kind by investigating other topics and extending it to other public administrations, in order to understand the differences and implement possible activities to remedy them

- Some other factors to be taken into account are the limitations of this study, in other words, the factors for which the answers received does not have to be considerate as absolute. A first one, is the administration of the questionnaire to only two administrative units, those most in contact with these issues. Another factor is that the administrative managers who are in charge of the management and implementation of these measures, may also have answered the questionnaire, partially altering the purpose of the study. Another limitation, is that of not having extended the scope to professors and other administrative employees who, even indirectly, may have to deal with these measures.

5. Conclusions

The study showed that the organizational culture of a company is comparable to the state of health of a human being. Despite the relevance of complying with normative requirements, the effectiveness of certain measures can only be achieved if all employees are fully aware of the importance of these issues and if they are committed to remove organizational obstacles that may arise in the process of change.

The purpose of this questionnaire is also to bring to everyone's attention on how organizational resistance can extend from individual to organizational, which would represent a silent decline for the organization.

This study is only the starting point for greater awareness and sensitivity to these issues, and for this reason both organizations will receive the results of the questionnaire in order to draw their own conclusions.

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