

RESEARCHING THE RELEVANCE OF MANAGEMENT TOOLS ELABORATED TO IMPROVE QUALITY MANAGEMENT AT THE LEVEL OF A CENTRAL PUBLIC AUTHORITY

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Abstract: The specialized literature makes available to those interested, including researchers, different management tools that any organization should consider to ensure, at least from a methodological point of view, managerial success. Once tools, such as the SWOT Analysis and the Process Map, are developed, it is recommended to analyze, using data that can be verified, if the respective tools are effective, bring the intended benefits, and the final beneficiaries of these tools perceive the managerial effort as a positive one. In this context, we consider it very useful to apply a questionnaire, which tests the usefulness of the implementation of management tools that provide the management team with a form of feedback on the decisions implemented at the level of a central public authority.

Keywords: convenience sampling, management tools, management for central public administration, communication

1 INTRODUCTION

When considering investigations, it can be helpful to think of them as taking place in the following stages: formulation of research questions, or occasionally hypotheses; search for pertinent data, which frequently leads to the design and implementation of investigations to gather appropriate data; analysis of data; and interpretation of the results, which is the

translation of findings into a subject-matter context or into some appropriate decision. (Cox & Donnelly, 2011)

A convenience sample is a type of nonprobability sampling method where individuals are chosen based on their easy accessibility as data sources for researchers. (Cox & Donnelly, 2011)

Nonprobability sampling, including convenience sampling, is susceptible to selection

biases because not all eligible respondents have an equal chance of being included in the sample. (Battaglia, 2008)

Convenience sampling finds frequent application in qualitative and medical research investigations. Within medical research, convenience sampling typically entails the selection of clinical cases or participants available within a specific location (e.g., a hospital) or a medical records database.

As for qualitative research, convenience sampling is commonly employed in social sciences and education, where pre-existing groups, such as students, are readily accessible and convenient for research purposes. (Julia Simkus, 2023)

Unlike population-based sampling strategies, convenience sampling is a nonprobability sampling approach that relies on selecting participants based on their easy accessibility and/or proximity to the research site. (Bornstein, Jager & Putnick, 2013)

A prevalent instance of convenience sampling in developmental research involves the utilization of student volunteers as study participants. (Yassin, 2021)

2 CONDUCTING AND INTERPRETING OF A QUESTIONNAIRE

The reasons behind this scientific paper were caused by the identification of solutions for the problems related to the inefficiency of public services, which constantly appear both in the mass media and in the notifications received at the ministry level. In essence, citizens demand efficient public services, in particular, obtaining approvals in the shortest possible time and the possibility to access financing and approvals by using a digitized document transmission system.

Another objective considered was to test the effectiveness of own contributions that were disseminated in several scientific papers, namely if the SWOT analysis, Process Map and mathematical modelling are perceived as

important elements for a central public authority and whether the result of the implementation of these contributions can respond, finally, to the expectations of the beneficiaries of public services.

At the same time, to obtain a maximum result from this tool used in the opinion poll, the people questioned were mainly employees of the ministry, civil servants working in the approval commissions, DPC leaders, internal public auditors and public managers who know very well the processes within the institution.

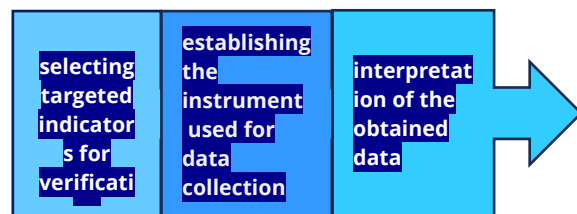


Figure 1. Structuring the stages carried out in order to use the questionnaire

The structuring of the steps taken to use the questionnaire to confirm the implementation of various management tools involved several steps, as described in Figure 1 and presented in the following.

2.1 *Establishing the instrument used for data collection*

The instrument used for data collection was the questionnaire, which consisted of a set of twelve closed questions. Most of the questions were designed with a single-answer option, and only one question offered the opportunity to select more than one answer option.

This questionnaire design strategy was to reduce the completion time, as we considered that a respondent's disinterest in answering a questionnaire increases in direct proportion to the time they allocate to it.

Thus, the questions were concise, explicit and included, as appropriate, certain explanations to provide the respondents with all the necessary information.

Also, the questionnaire was designed to include a wide range of response options for respondents.

Table 1. Age segments for respondents

<i>Between 20-25 years old</i>	<i>Between 25-30 years old</i>	<i>Between 30-45 years old</i>	<i>Over 45 years old</i>

For the questionnaire we used a convenience sample, applied between June 1 and June 30. The age segments for the respondents are shown in Table 1, and the range is from 20 to over 45 years.

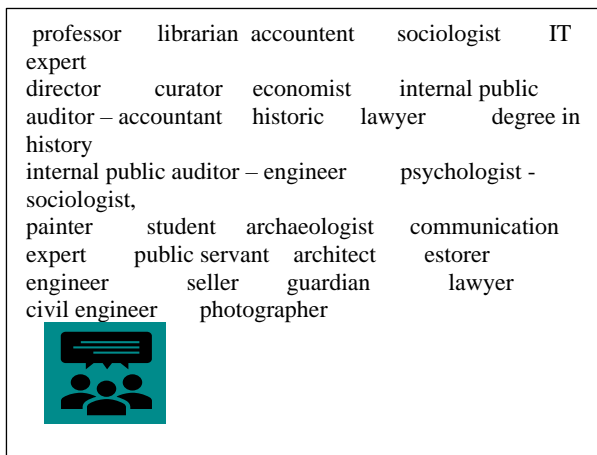


Figure 2. Respondents' professions

The professional status of the respondents was varied, as also results from Figure 2, with the mention of the fact that half of the respondents were employees of the ministry, and a significant part of those interviewed were citizens who were present in the National Libraries of Romania, since they were targeted, in particular, people who use public cultural services.

The questionnaire included instructions for completing each question, and the technique used to administer the questionnaires was "face-to-face".

2.2 Interpretation of the data obtained as a result of the application of the questionnaire

As a result of the application of the questionnaire entitled "Improving the management of communication and information technology at the level of the Ministry of Culture" significant data were collected for the research carried out, data that had the role to validate aspects that have were stated within the doctoral research theme. The results of the questionnaire were as follows:

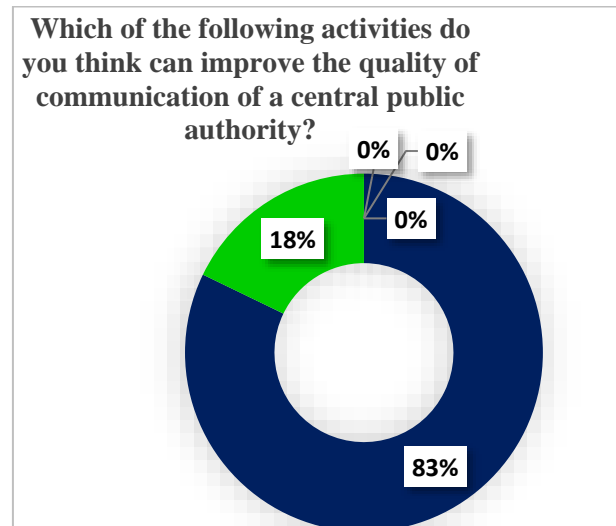


Figure 3. Activities that can influence the quality of communication of a public institution

Regarding the activities that could influence the improvement of the quality of communication of a central public authority, the respondents of the questionnaire appreciated, in a proportion of 83%, that this can be achieved by increasing the efficiency and effectiveness of the authority's activity, by providing public services in a short term.

For 18% of the respondents, an improvement in the quality of communication can be achieved by publishing information relevant to the activity of the central public authority, as shown in Figure 3. This result

reiterates the main idea of the doctoral research topic, the fact that there is a large impact of the efficiency and effectiveness of the activities carried out by an institution on its public image.

In other words, you can have good communication unless you have, also an effective and efficient activity.

We believe that the basis of the quality of communication for a public institution resides in the way it manages to fulfil its specific duties, as well and quickly as it can.

For example, the term in which a request is solved is essential because opportunities pass, and for citizens failing a contract to sell a building classified as a historical monument implies the loss of amounts received in advance.

Although the institution issued an opinion within an extended period, material damages may be caused to the citizen. Even if the institution could justify the extended term, the citizen's discontentment and damage remain, so the image of the institution will be negative. In this context, even if the number of press releases will multiply.

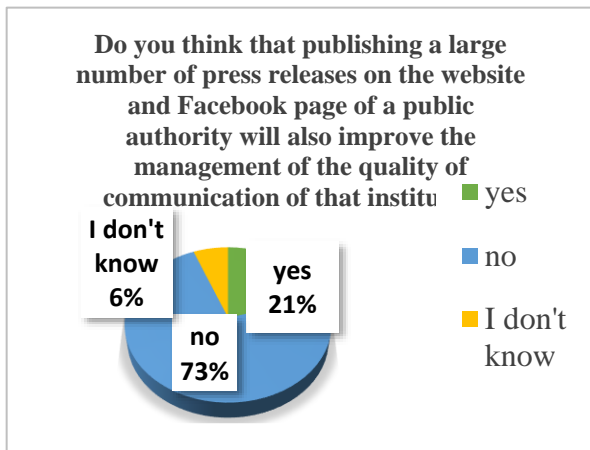


Figure 4. The influence of the number of press releases

We believe that they will not have a positive impact on the image of a central public authority for citizens who were not satisfied by public services provided by the institution.

Also related to the management of the quality of communication of a public institution, 73% of the people surveyed appreciated the fact that improvements can't be made by increasing the number of press releases published on the Facebook page and the website of a ministry, and 6 % of the respondents declared that they do not know, while 21% of the interviewees considered that it can be a method to positively influence the management of the quality of communication, as can be seen from Figure 4.

In this context, the result of this question confirms the above-mentioned hypothesis, which implies that the dissemination of a very large number of press releases cant be a viable solution for increasing the quality of the communication process.

We believe that countless press releases and other forms of news irrelevant to the target audience may induce the loss of subscribers or followers.

That is why it is important to decide at the top management level, after analyzing specific data, which information is pertinent for each type of communication channel, for social media networks and the website of a public authority central.

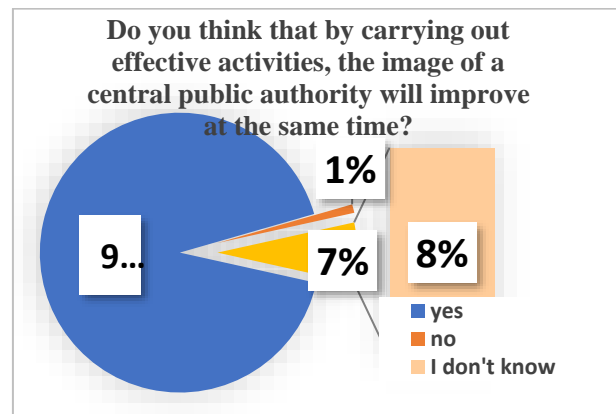


Figure 5. The influence of effective activities on the positive images of a central public authority

Regarding the possibility that the positive image of a central public authority can be

obtained, as a result of its effective activity, 92% of citizens stated that there is an interdependent relationship.

For 1% of the respondents, there is no connection between efficiency and positive image, and 7% of those interviewed declared that they do not know this aspect, as the information appears presented in Figure 5.

In the conditions of the above-mentioned, We consider it a new confirmation of the hypothesis through which the fact that an efficient activity generates, simultaneously, a positive image for any central public authority is supported.

The high value of the percentage, 92%, which resulted from the application of the questionnaire reveals, once again, the fact that a positive image cannot be obtained only through "cosmetic" information played in the public space, in the sense of disseminating some communicate carefully designed and written in a form that outlines an agreeable story for any reader, but rather, managers of central public authorities should be more involved in checking how activities are carried out and identifying solutions to make them more efficient.

We believe that the presentation of results regarding the efficiency of public services, compared with how they were carried out previously, will lead to an increase in the confidence of citizens that the management of the public institution pays special attention to citizens while also obtaining a positive or better image of the institution.

Another important aspect identified following the application of the questionnaire was related to the positive impact that the implementation of an IT platform for submitting documentation can have on the management of a public institution to obtain authorization issued by a central public authority.

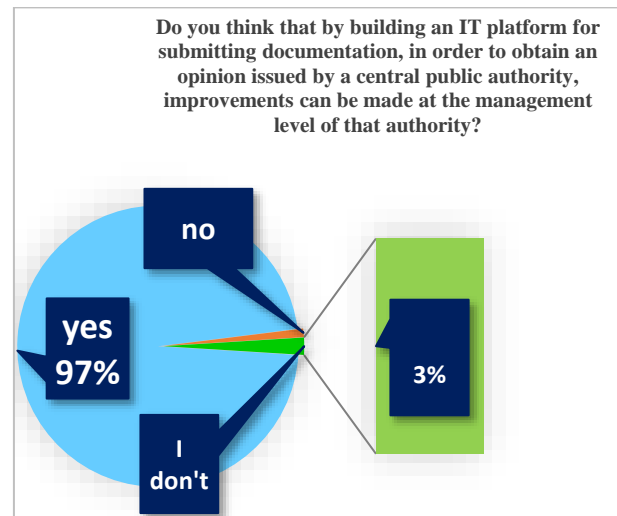


Figure 6. The impact on the management by use of an IT platform

As shown in Figure 6, for 97% of the respondents it is a good decision to build such a platform, for 2% it is not a good solution, while 1% considered that they do not know if it is a good measure or an ineffective one. We believe that the digitization process at the level of central public authorities should bring improvements in the way citizens can obtain public services.

Currently, most citizens own and use personal computers, and the costs related to connecting to the Internet are low, so the citizen can access public services in the online system, and through information technology platforms can be built that can facilitate the process of obtaining approvals from the level of central public authorities.

We also consider that any public service that involves a minimum effort on the part of citizens, such as saving the time allocated for travel to the headquarters of an institution or the elimination of postal fees that are remunerated for the transmission of documents, along with trips to post offices, is a step towards normality, of adaptation to the new realities and should become a constant practice at the level of the central public administration.

Currently, certain ministries have created virtual spaces, such as the National Fiscal Administration Agency within the Ministry of Finance, through which citizens can submit, for example, their income declarations, and the State Office for Inventions and Trademarks offers the possibility to legal entities and legal entities to submit, online, their inventions, trademarks, designs and models or to make payments for various fees related to the public services that are requested.

In the context of the above, it can be concluded that at the national level, there are real concerns regarding the implementation of a digitization system, and the central public authorities should update their strategies according to the new needs that have arisen at the level of society.

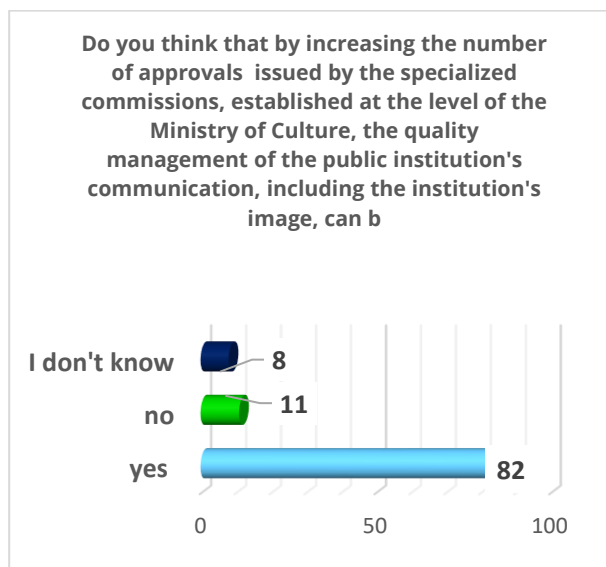


Figure 7. Way of increasing the quality management

To the question regarding the positive impact on the image of a public institution, namely the improvement of the management of the quality of communication of a central public authority, by increasing the number of opinions issued by the specialized commissions established at the level of a ministry, 82% of the total respondents appreciated that being a viable

measure, 11% considered that this solution was not suitable, while 8% did not express a point of view, as shown in Figure 7.

We believe that, currently, a problem that we have identified at the level of public institutions is related to the issuance of notices, in the sense that the time that elapses from the submission of documentation to the actual receipt of the authorisation or approval is long, and another aspect it is related to the fact that documents are not issued with an optimal cyclicity.

We specify the fact that "n" factors intervene in the approval process, such as non-compliant documentation, submission of incomplete documentation, lack of committee quorum (especially during vacation periods), delays caused by appeals, lack of specialized staff to manage the documentation, delays in signing the approvals by all the approvers, etc.

We believe that causes, which block the approval system, can only be removed if the approval process will be made more efficient, and this can only be achieved through a process of analyzing multiple data, beginning with the correct identification of the factors that make it difficult to issue of an opinion and finishing with the verification of the total number of approvals reached to the beneficiaries, of course, by legislation in force.

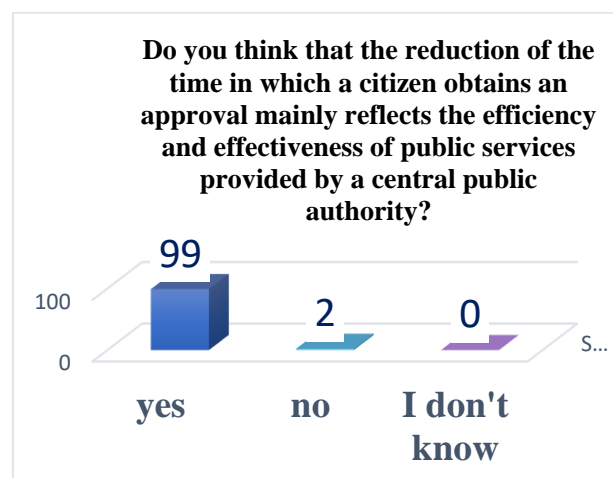


Figure 8. Way of achieving the efficiency and effectiveness of public services

Regarding the perception of the interviewed citizens regarding the achievement of the efficiency and effectiveness of public services provided by a central public authority by reducing the time in which a citizen obtains approvals, the answers, shown in Figure 8, were as follows: 2% of respondents appreciated that this desired goal cannot be achieved, and a majority of 98% considered it a plausible solution.

The very high percentage obtained of 98% indicates that the efficiency of a process, such as the approval process, is also ensured by the time factor from the perspective of the majority surveyed. We believe that reducing the time for obtaining approval must represent a top priority for the management of central public authorities.

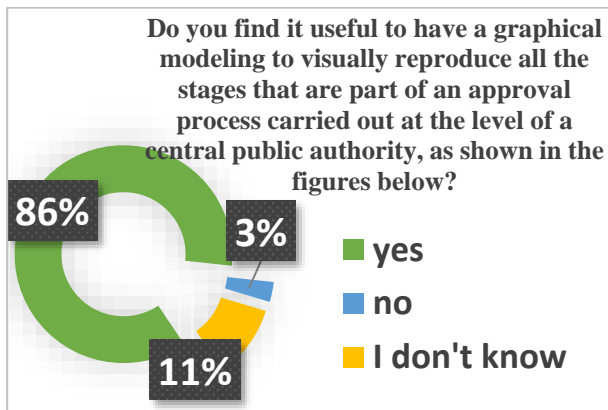


Figure 9. The importance of using a graphic modeling

Regarding the importance of using graphic modelling for the processes carried out by a central public authority, the answers centralized were reproduced in Figure 9. Thus, for 86% of the respondents, this graphic modelling is important, for 3% of respondents the graphic modelling is not useful, and the remaining 11% of the interviewees haven't expressed any point of view.

We mention that the majority who answered "I don't know", they motivated verbally

by the fact that they had never seen such a graphic before, so they did not understand how it can be used, and also the fact that they do not have information about this type of representation. This aspect we consider to be explainable, since graphic modelling, through the IDEF0 methodology, is not used in the specific current activity for a public official, a student, an artist, a videographer, a historian, a communication specialist, a jurist, an economist etc.

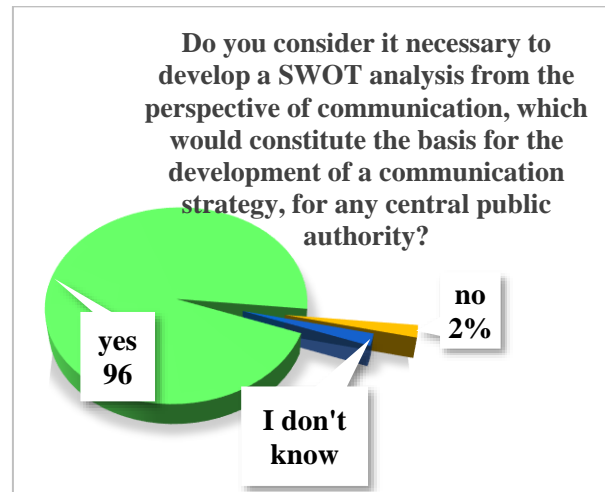


Figure 10. The need to develop a SWOT analysis from the perspective of communication

Regarding the corresponding percentage of those who appreciated that graphic modelling is useful, namely 86%, emphasised the fact that the graphic modelling, carried out using the IDEF0 methodology, for the approval process for the establishment of museums and public collections was a very good solution. We specify the fact that this graphic modelling can become a tool that can be used for any type of process carried out at the level of a central public authority.

Regarding the need to develop a SWOT analysis from the perspective of communication, which is the basis for developing a communication strategy for a central public authority, for 96% of the people surveyed a

SWOT analysis could be helpful, for 2% of it is not useful, and for 2% they do not have information on this aspect, as it's shown in Figure 10.

In conclusion, the SWOT analysis that we developed for the Ministry of Culture is useful even from the perspective of those interviewed, and it should, according to the specialized literature, be reviewed whenever important changes occur within the institutions.

We believe that the SWOT analysis should be modified at least with the installation of a new minister, since each dignitary has his vision regarding how the process of communication with the target audience and the mass media will be carried out.

From experience, We found that most dignitaries are more focused on the communication component because they want a lot of media appearances, a constant presence on social media pages, or want to give interviews and participate in as many important events as possible to be visible, probably because they need notoriety to be subsequently voted in the parliamentary elections.

We also find the process of communication very difficult, although, in theory, it seems to be the easiest activity. In reality, communication involves a complex analysis and decision process, which includes the ability to have a broader vision from several perspectives, such

as economic, legal and specialized (architecture, mobile cultural heritage, theatre, music, film, dance, intangible heritage, librarianship, etc.), which is in line with the communication strategy of the government, of the ruling political parties, and which, at the same time, meets the requirements imposed by the target audience. The difficulty of the communication process is evident, especially when certain dignitaries are dismissed from their positions due to their inability to communicate adequately.

Moreover, there have also been governments that fell, due to uninspired communications disseminated in the public space. Political parties win or lose elections due to or because of the messages within the communication processes. In conclusion, the leadership of a country is assigned by the citizens mainly to those who are more ingenious and have the best mastership in the art of communication.

Respondents were also asked if they believe that a Process Map can be useful, i.e. if it can benefit the management of a central public authority.

The answers, represented in Figure 11, were as follows: 81% of the citizens considered it very useful, 17% appreciated it as beneficial, 2% were convinced that it was a little suitable, and none of the interviewees considered it irrelevant.

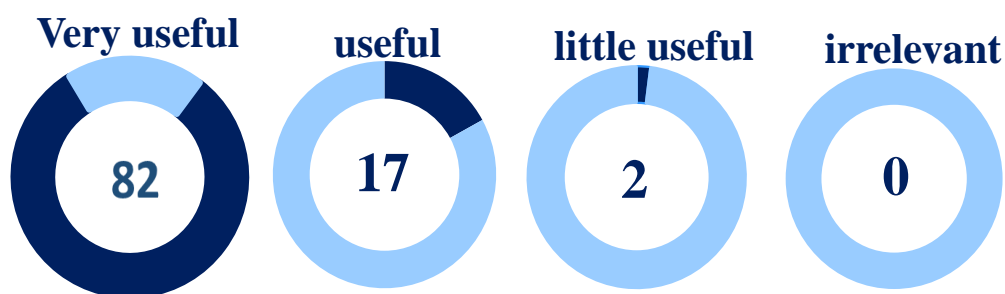


Figure 11. The utility of developing a Process Map for a central public authority

In this context, we consider the fact that the Process Map, which we created for the Ministry of Culture, can become very useful for the

institution's top management, as it represents a tool that can help establish collaborative relationships between the specialized structures

within the ministry. Thus, by visualizing all processes in a concise, clear and coherent layout, improvements can be made in terms of the process of understanding and interaction between all parties that together make up a ministry. Better interaction can improve the performance of a ministry, may optimize processes and achieve better results by saving time and resources.

3 CONCLUSIONS

Following the analysis of the results obtained as a result of the application of the questionnaire, it was found that the managerial tools that we developed for the central public authority concerned were appreciated both by the employees of the ministry and by the beneficiaries of public services in the field of culture. Thus, the high percentages that emerged, which are represented in the figures above, have certified, once again, the fact that a manager needs specific management analyses, such as SWOT analysis, needs a Process Map, must request specialists from within the specialized structures, points of view on their field of competence, so that they have the opportunity to make the best decisions, which will lead, without fail, to the achievement of the objectives established together with the

management team and, finally, the organization's activity on that coordinates it will be lasting and will also achieve its effectiveness criteria.

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