



South African Citizens'
Bribery Survey
2015



**Ethics Institute
of South Africa** NPC
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Sponsored by:

Massmart + Walmart 

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South African Citizens' Bribery Survey 2015
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A survey of **Bribery** in South Africa

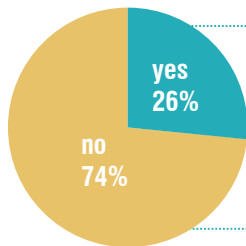
As experienced and perceived by **ordinary citizens**



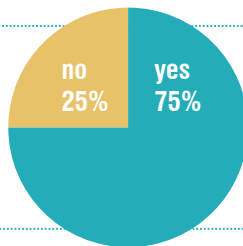
Participants = 6380

Across 4 urban centres and all income levels

Do you personally know someone who was asked to pay a bribe in the last year?



Did they end up paying the bribe?

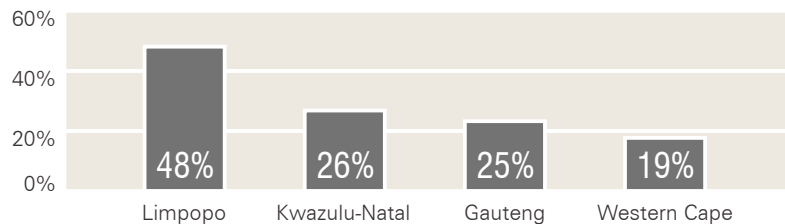


This means:

Most people who are asked for a bribe end up paying it



Provincial distribution
% asked for a bribe

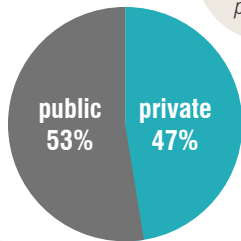


Median bribe amount **R1 000**

Most frequently paid bribe amount **R 100**

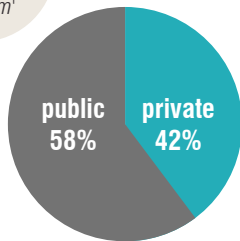
top 5 reasons for bribing

bribes for jobs



It's not 'just a government problem'

bribes for tenders



- 1 Avoiding traffic offences **34%**
- 2 Getting jobs **17%**
- 3 Getting drivers' licences **13%**
- 4 Getting tenders **7%**
- 5 Getting illicit discounts from businesses, or stealing from businesses **4%**

The private sector is also targeted

78% of people believe it is **not possible** to get through life without paying a bribe

yet

only 20% know someone who has **paid a bribe** in the last year

quotes

examples of everyday bribery

Crime

- To get away with a murder case
- To avoid being arrested for selling illegal drugs
- Possession of an illegal firearm
- To avoid jail time for having stolen something
- When someone was murdered and police were paid to miss the docket

Traffic

- I always get speeding tickets
- Drunk driving
- His car lights failed to function

Services

- To get electricity to not be cut off
- To get assistance at the hospital
- To have water from the municipal truck
- To get a RDP house

Education

- My friend was asked to put money inside the application form when submitting at the enrolment centre at a university
- Moved up on the waiting list for her child to get into public high school
- My son was facing expulsion from his school
- To get a question paper with memo in order to get a Diploma
- For a matric certificate

Documents

- To speed up application and delivery of an unabridged birth certificate
- Citizenship documents
- To get a birth certificate

Business

- To get sound systems
- I work in a factory so we always get offers to release goods for people
- A customer wanting to score a deal and paying for something over the counter
- Getting goods at a much reduced price
- For a cell-phone deal
- I work as a manager for a wholesaler, so we get offers all the time
- To get a tender for transporting cargo
- I operate in the transport business so it's normal that one has to bribe to secure more rights to operate in more routes
- I run a business. I cannot afford to fall behind on any of my commitments so bribery allows me to work myself around things. Such includes bribes for traffic fines, shipping goods
- To get a contract to transport students to school

Jobs

- I work in HR so such offers are common
- To be a police commander
- To be a teacher
- To be a nurse
- To get a job in a mine

Grants

- Get child grant
- Get early old age grant
- I had to pay for my pension grant

Other

- To adopt a child
- When queuing in crowded places
- Our home-based care-group had to bribe to receive extra funding
- I am a tourist guide. We usually get asked every time we go across the border.
- When my children took drivers licenses there was always an additional fee for success

A Introduction

1. Why did we conduct this survey?

“Bribery is a big problem in South Africa.”

We often hear that sentiment, but there is very little research to back it up. Our discussions are largely anecdotal. There is limited data available on the types of bribery challenges that South Africans face on a daily basis.

We therefore wanted to get a clearer picture of the extent of bribery in South Africa as experienced by ordinary citizens. At the same time we also wanted to get an indication of South Africans' beliefs about bribery.

2. What is the survey about?

There are a number of different forms of corruption, but we decided to focus specifically on bribery.

Bribery is when one person gives another person something of value (usually money) for that person to abuse the powers with which they have been entrusted.

We also decided to get a sense of ordinary citizens' experiences of bribery. In other words, we did not specifically target business people or government officials. We tried to get the views of a good cross section of the population.

The survey asked questions such as:

- How frequently are people asked for bribes?
- What are these bribes for?
- How much do people pay for bribes?
- How likely are people to pay bribes?
- How acceptable is it to pay a bribe?
- How concerned are people about bribery?
- How willing are they to do something about bribery?

The full questionnaire is attached as Annexure A.

B Methodology

1. How did we conduct the survey?

The survey was conducted in a wide range of Massmart's stores in 4 urban centres in South Africa:

- Johannesburg / Pretoria,
- Cape Town,
- Durban, and
- Polokwane.

The stores we targeted serve people from a wide socio-economic range as can be seen in the demographic data.

We made use of field researchers who were equipped with electronic tablets that had the survey loaded in digital format. Each researcher also had a t-shirt with both EthicsSA's and Massmart-Walmart's logos to give them credibility.

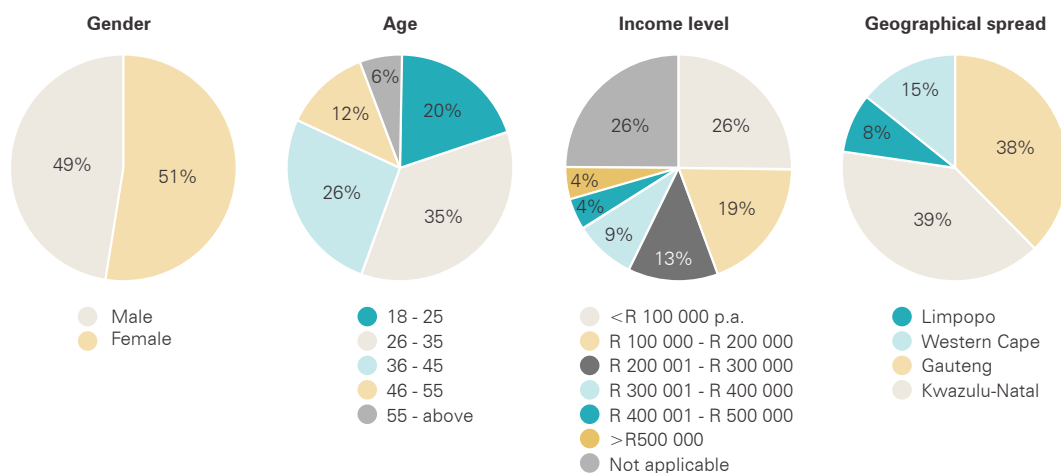
They approached people in the stores to ask them to participate in a 5 minute survey. The respondents were interviewed by the field researchers who then captured their responses on the tablets.

The survey was conducted over two weekends (including Fridays):

- 23 to 25 October 2015
- 30 October to 1 November 2015

2. Who participated? (Demographics)

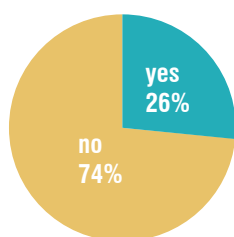
- Total number of respondents = 6380



C Results

1. Experiences of bribery

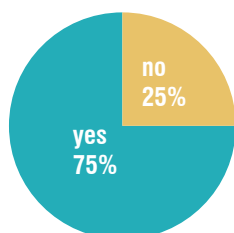
“Do you personally know someone who was asked to pay a bribe in the last year?”



Comment:

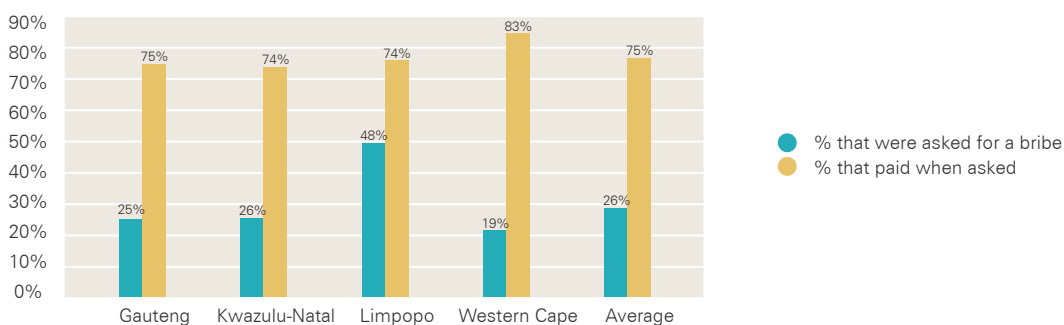
- Note that we did not directly ask whether people themselves were asked to pay bribes, because we also ask whether the bribes were paid. Respondents might be tempted to give answers that do not put them in a bad light. By asking them whether they know someone else who paid a bribe we tried to avoid this 'social desirability response bias'.
- Just over 1 in 4 people reported that they know someone who was asked to pay a bribe.

“Did they end up paying the bribe?”



Comment:

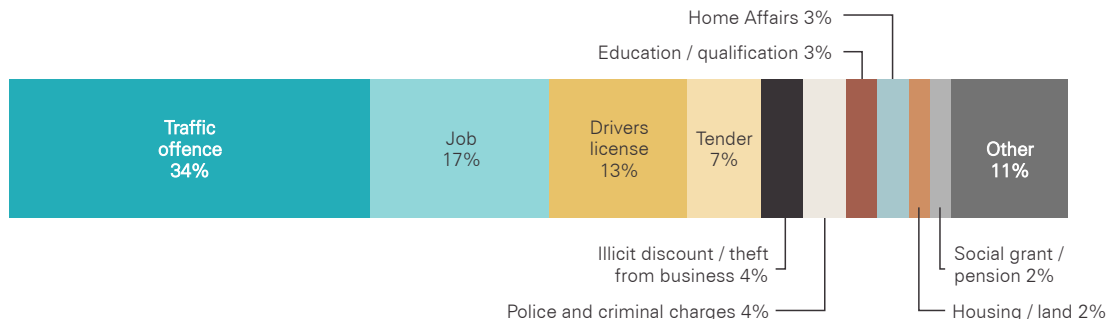
- Of the 26% of respondents who said that they knew someone who was asked to pay a bribe, 75% said that the bribe was paid.
- This shows that the resilience against bribery is not very high. Most people who are approached for a bribe end up paying it.
- It also shows that almost 1 in 5 respondents know someone who paid a bribe in the last year.



Comment:

- Almost twice as many people were approached for a bribe in Limpopo as compared to the other provinces. In Limpopo 48% of respondents indicated that they knew someone who was approached for a bribe, compared to 19% in the Western Cape, 25% in Gauteng, and 26% in Kwazulu-Natal.
- This also means that a larger proportion of the population paid a bribe in Limpopo (36% compared to between 16% and 19% for the other provinces).
- Respondents from the Western Cape were asked less frequently, but were more inclined to pay if asked.

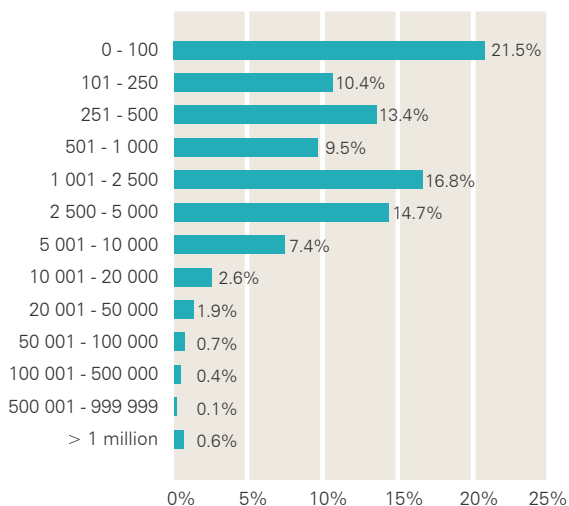
“What was it for?”



Comment:

- This question was asked of all 26% of respondents who said that they know someone who was asked to pay a bribe.
- It was an open question, meaning that we did not give any categories, but allowed people to give verbatim answers. We then categorised all the answers afterwards. This means that we could get answers that we may not have expected.
- Most bribes (34%) are reportedly asked to avoid traffic offences.
- The next highest incidence is for jobs (17%). This is predominantly for getting a job, but there were also a few mentions of bribes to get a promotion, or to avoid disciplinary action.
- Driver's licenses is the third highest at 13%. This includes learner's licenses, but to a much lesser extent.
- The fourth highest is for tenders (7%). There is no real indication which sectors are involved, although we do get an indication of sectors on page 10.
- The surprise finding is for illicit discounts / theft from businesses. (Although only 4% of respondents mentioned it, it represents 71 responses. This puts it above police bribery and bribes for education.) This occurs when cashiers or other business employees are approached to give reduced prices, or even goods for free in exchange for a bribe. This was reported in buying anything from groceries to cars. There is often a perception that corruption only affects the public sector, but here is evidence that the private sector is also targeted.

“Do you know how much it was? (The value of the bribe?)”



Comment:

- Respondents who indicated that the bribe was paid were also asked: “Do you know how much it was? (The value of the bribe?)”
- This was also an open question where respondents could give actual amounts. In other words there were no categories to choose from.
- The most frequently mentioned bribe amount was R100.
- 21.5% of bribes are for values of R100 or lower.
- The median bribe amount is R1 000. (Median is the midpoint on the list of all the amounts mentioned.)
- The average bribe amount mentioned was R2 005. (This average excludes the top 5% and the bottom 5% of bribes.)
- 55% of bribes were reported to be below R1000.
- 94% of bribes were reported to be below R10 000.

Average value of a bribe per category

Category	Average value	Number of respondents indicating a bribe value
Tender	R 103 288	57
Housing / land	R 7 585	24
Social grant / pension	R 3 435	24
Job	R 3 282	201
Home Affairs	R 2 932	34
Driver's licence	R 2 174	160
Police & criminal charges	R 2 062	46
Reduced prices / theft from businesses	R 1 854	37
Education / qualification	R 1 800	47
Traffic offence	R 219	386

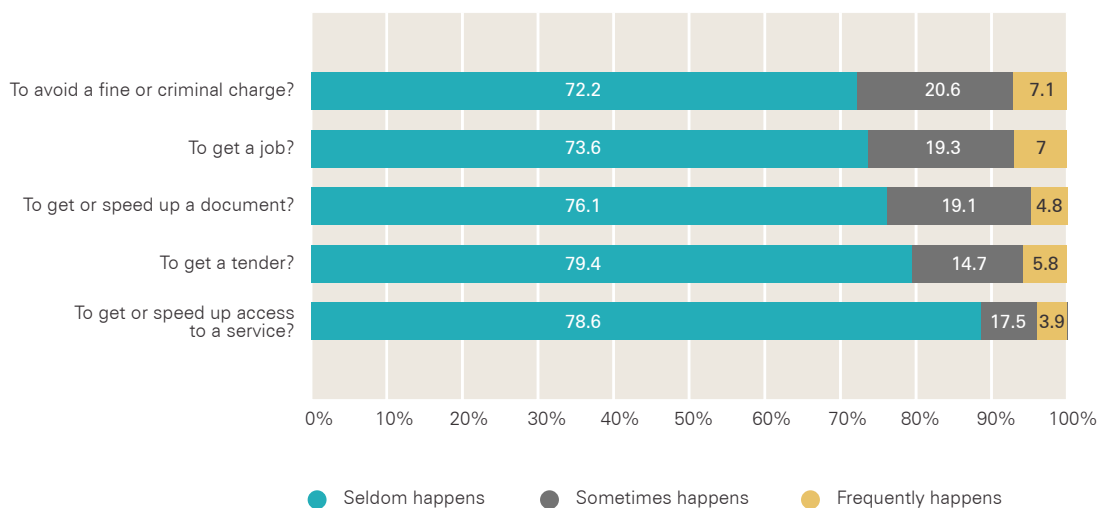
Comment:

- The contents of the above table was calculated by cross tabulating the information for the question “*What was it for?*” and the question “*Do you know how much it was? (The value of the bribe?)*”
- To ensure that the average value is not overly skewed by outlier values we have excluded the top 5% and the bottom 5% of bribe values per category from our calculation.

2. Likelihood of paying a bribe

We asked the following question on a scale from 1 to 6.

“Based on your experience, how common is it for your family and friends to pay a bribe in the following situations?”



Comment:

- The majority of respondents indicated that it is unlikely that their family or friends would pay a bribe, irrespective of what it is for.
- It does however seem to happen slightly more frequently for avoiding a fine or criminal charges, or getting a job.
- This data does show a loose correlation with the fact that 20% of respondents indicated that they know someone who has paid a bribe.
- Although likelihood to pay a bribe is consistently quite low, statistical analysis also shows the following statistically significant differences:
 - Men believe it is more common to pay bribes than women.
 - The sample was divided in the following age groups:

18-25	26-35	36-45	46-55	55<
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- > Those above 55 think it is least common to pay bribes, followed by those who are 18 to 25. It is interesting that the youngest and the oldest groups share similar views on this.
- > The group that thinks it is most common to pay bribes is 46 to 55 year olds.

“In which industry or sector?”

People who indicated that it happens at least sometimes (4 to 6 on the Likert scale) were also asked follow-up questions. For bribes to get a job, and bribes to get a tender we asked open questions to indicate in which sector or industry it was.

To get a job

Sector	Number of responses
Public sector	358
Private sector	321

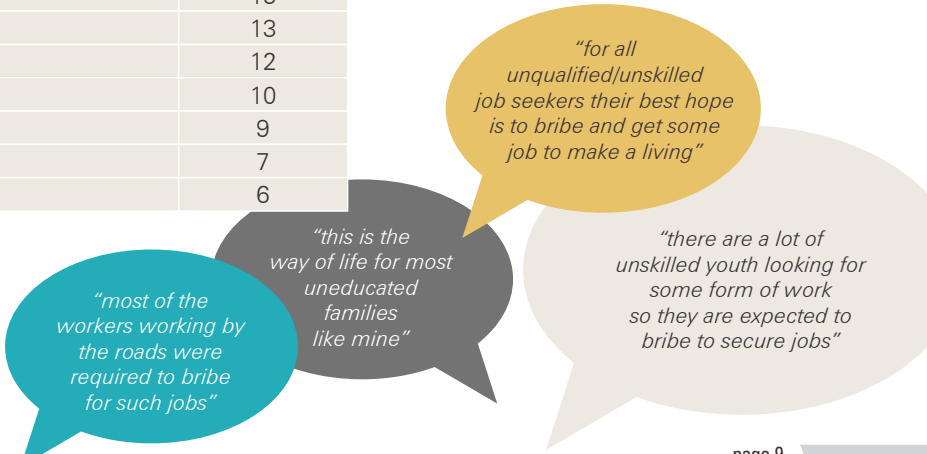
Comment:

Although public sector is mentioned the most there is almost an equal amount of mentions for the private sector. Bribes for jobs is clearly prevalent in both the private and public sectors.

Industry	Number of responses
Other	40
Local government	35
Industrial / manufacturing / mechanical	25
Education	22
Transport & taxi	18
Construction	18
Retail	16
Mining	15
Police & Metro Police	13
Security	12
Health	10
Agriculture and fishing	9
Finance	7
Hospitality	6

Comment:

When reading through the responses one gets a very clear sense that unskilled and semi-skilled labourers are most vulnerable to being exploited to pay bribes for jobs. There almost seems to be a belief among them that there is no choice but to pay a bribe if you want a job. Note that many of the industries represented in the list employ such labourers.



To get a contract or tender

Sector	Number of responses
Public sector	278
Private sector	205

Comment:

There are somewhat more mentions of tender bribery in the public sector, but it is clearly also prevalent in the private sector. Tender bribery is not a public or private sector phenomenon. It occurs everywhere.

Industry	Number of responses
Construction	61
Transport and logistics	16
Local Government	10
Mining	8
Engineering and mechanical	6
Education	5
Housing	5

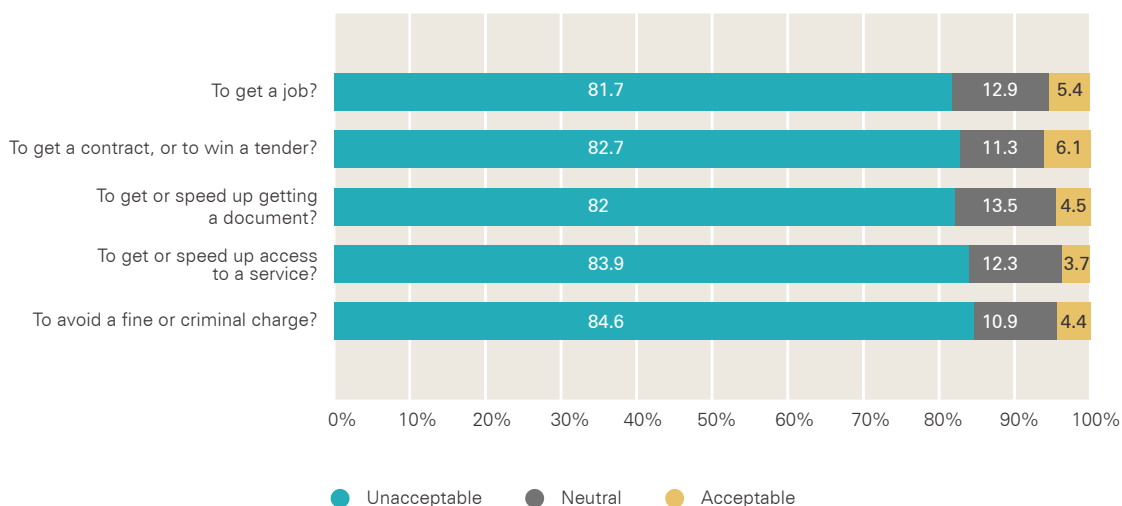
Comment:

The construction industry was singled out among industries as the one with most tender bribery. It is not clear from the data whether the industry or sectors mentioned are payers or recipients of bribes. It is most likely from the way the question is phrased that people pay bribes to get contracts and tenders in those sectors and industries.

3. Social acceptability of paying a bribe

This question was also asked using a scale from 1 to 6.

“Based on your experience, how unacceptable or acceptable would your family and friends think it is to pay a bribe in the following situations?”



Comment:

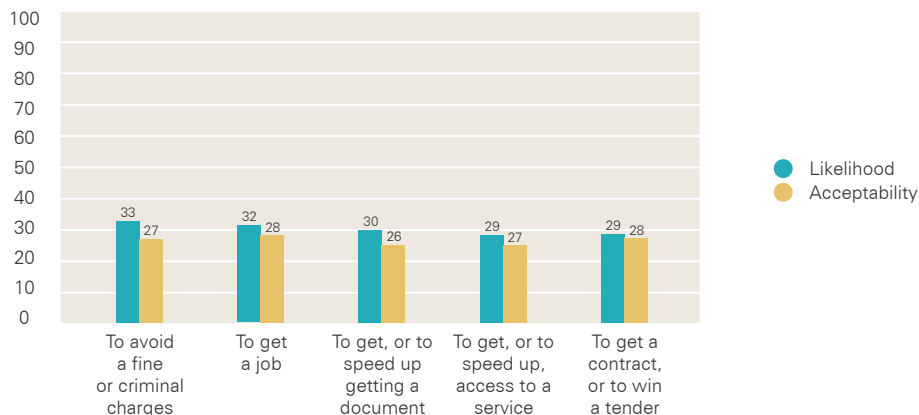
- There is not much to distinguish the potential bribery areas from each other.
- The majority of people think that bribe paying would be frowned upon by their family and friends, irrespective of what it is for.
- While quite low, there seems to be some level of social acceptability for paying bribes.
- Although social acceptability is consistently quite low, statistical analysis shows the following statistically significant differences:
 - Men believe it is more socially acceptable to pay bribes than do women.
 - Those above 55 believe it is less socially acceptable to pay bribes than all the other age groups.
 - The sample was divided in the following income groupings:

< R100 000	R100 000 to R200 000
R200 001 to R300 000	R300 001 to R400 000
R400 001 to R500 000	> R500 000

- > Those who earn between R100 000 and R200 000 believe bribing is the least socially acceptable.
 - > Those who earn between R300 000 and R400 000 believe it is the most socially acceptable.
- Keep in mind that this is relative to the low levels of social acceptability reported throughout.

4. Likelihood compared with acceptability of bribery

To see whether there is a disconnect between people's beliefs about the social acceptability of paying a bribe and their likelihood of paying such bribes nonetheless, we compared the results from the above two questions.



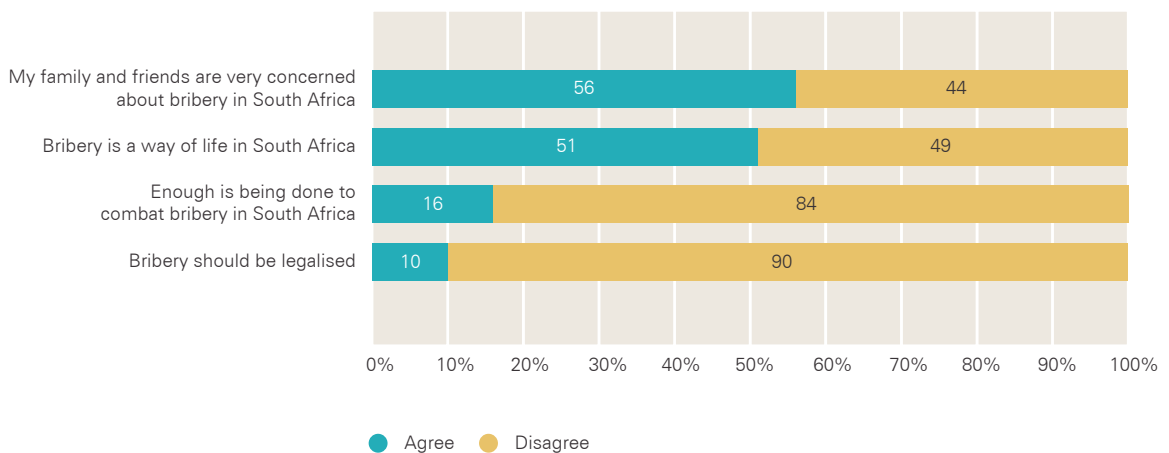
Comment:

- The likelihood of paying a bribe is rated slightly higher than the social acceptability of paying a bribe, even if by a small margin across the board. We can deduce that a small group of people may likely pay bribes even though they view it as socially unacceptable.
- We can see from this that there is some disconnect between the social acceptability of paying a bribe and the likelihood of paying it.

5. Levels of concern

We wanted to get a sense of whether South Africans are concerned about bribery. We asked respondents to what extent they agree with the following four statements:

- “My family and friends are very concerned about bribery in South Africa”
- “Bribery is a way of life in South Africa”
- “Enough is being done to combat bribery in South Africa”
- “Bribery should be legalised”



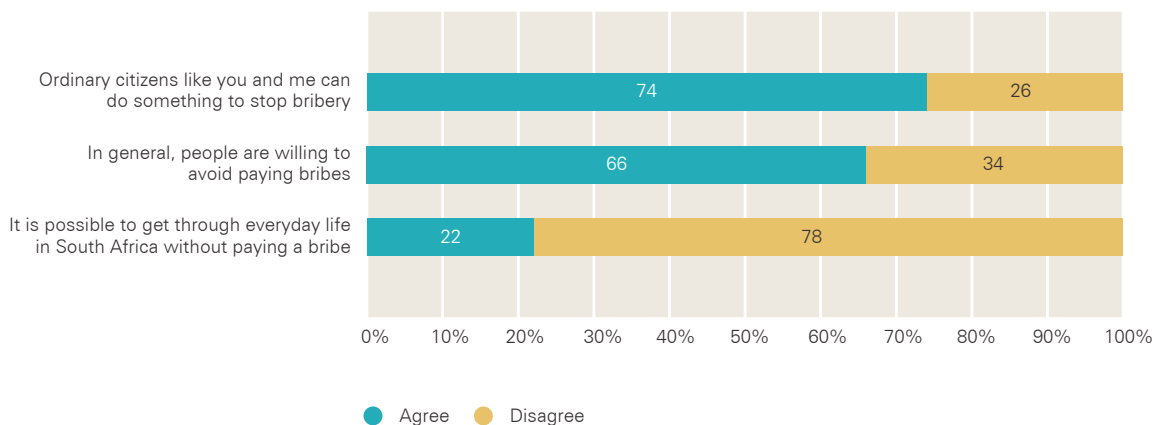
Comment:

- There are slightly more respondents who believe their family and friends are concerned about bribery in South Africa than those who don't. While there is concern by a slight majority it is clearly not overwhelming.
- The opinion is quite evenly split about whether bribery has become a way of life in South Africa.
- 84% of respondents do not believe that enough is being done to combat bribery. This could also be interpreted as concern about current levels of bribery.
- It is positive that 9 out of 10 respondents do not think that bribery should be legalised. Only 10% of respondents thought it would be a good idea to legalise bribery. These are arguably people for whom bribery has become entrenched in their lives.
- Statistical analysis shows that those in the lowest income group (earning less than R100 000 per year) are most concerned about bribery compared to the other groups.

6. Willingness to do something about bribery

To balance people's concern about bribery we also wanted to see whether they were willing to do something about it and whether they felt empowered to do so. We asked respondents to what extent they agree with the following three statements:

- "Ordinary citizens like you and me can do something to stop bribery"
- "In general, people are willing to avoid paying bribes"
- "It is possible to get through everyday life in South Africa without paying a bribe"



Comment:

- Almost three quarters (74%) of respondents agree that citizens can do something to stop bribery. This suggests that the majority of people's spirit to combat bribery has not been broken and that they have not given up.
- 66% of respondents agree that people are willing to avoid paying bribes. This also paints a reasonably positive picture of people being committed to fight bribery.
- However, almost 8 out of 10 people (78%) do not believe it is possible to get through everyday life in South Africa without paying a bribe. Only 22% think it is possible. This tells a different, more negative story than the previous two points.
- On a whole it seems that respondents would like to do something, but at the same time they think it is very difficult in reality. This belief does not align with people's reported experiences of bribery, as only 1 in 5 people reported knowing someone who paid a bribe.

What can you do?

Respondents were posed the following open question:

“Lastly, thinking about yourself, what would you say is the one thing you can do to help stop bribery in South Africa?”

Responses can be categorised into four main approaches:

1) Integrity	2) Despondency	3) If you can't beat them, join them
<p>These respondents indicated that they will not have anything to do with bribery, often for moral reasons.</p> <p>Quotes: <i>“What I would do is to be a loyal citizen, do the right thing, never bribe, and tell others to do the same. Never bribe because it against the law.”</i></p> <p><i>“Walking in a righteous path.”</i></p> <p><i>“Starts with the individual being honest and truthful. Then we can be honest and truthful at our workplaces.”</i></p>	<p>These respondents indicated that bribery is a way of life in South Africa. They are frustrated by it, but there is very little that they are able to do to change it. Many are concerned about political leadership.</p> <p>Quotes: <i>“There is nothing much we can do because we as ordinary citizen are powerless as compared to those in authority.”</i></p> <p><i>“Honestly, if I knew, I would probably be the richest person on earth. I have no clue where to start.”</i></p> <p><i>“Bribery makes me sick, people like the easy way out and unfortunately I cannot do much as it's way beyond my control.”</i></p>	<p>This group of respondents indicated that the only option is to accept bribery as a way of life and join in. Some are reluctant, but others see no problem with it.</p> <p>Quotes: <i>“What can I do. I need it for my business. We need to clamp down on police intimidation.”</i></p> <p><i>“Things are tough, generally. So, bribes make lives easier. I do not believe they can end.”</i></p> <p><i>“I enjoy doing it, so nothing.”</i></p>
<p>4) Action</p> <p>This group of respondents want some action. Some make recommendations while others display anger and frustration and want change.</p> <p>These comments have been divided into the following sub-categories:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Moral education - Change in political leadership - Reporting and accountability 	<p>Change in political leadership</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · <i>“Vote non-corrupt government.”</i> · <i>“Government must change attitude and obviously President must be removed.”</i> · <i>“We need to change the morale of people leading the country. It all comes from the top. Either they change their ways or everyone gets fired.”</i> 	<p>Moral education</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · <i>“Teach the youth.”</i> · <i>“We need to encourage a generation of accountable citizens, not sure how. I was taught all my values from home, churches and schools.”</i> · <i>“Change our attitude and educate people about the dangers of bribery.”</i> <p>Reporting and accountability</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · <i>“Those who want bribes must be reported and banished here in South Africa.”</i> · <i>“By reporting this wrongful act.”</i> · <i>“Certainty of being exposed, prosecuted and punishment that fits the crime. Remember, it takes two to tango, so both individuals should be exposed and prosecuted, without doubt.”</i>

D Reflections on the findings

This research gives a more holistic view of everyday experiences of bribery in South Africa than has previously been available. Some findings are as expected, but others challenge our common perceptions and put things in a new light.

The finding of the prevalence of bribery for jobs is a case in point. While it is not unknown that there is sometimes payment for getting employment, it is the scale of the phenomenon that is surprising. Second only to bribes for avoiding traffic offences, it seems to be quite a commonplace occurrence. And while there are examples of more senior positions 'for sale', it is the pervasiveness of bribery for unskilled labour that is most poignant. These are not people bribing out of greed, but out of the need for very basic jobs. It is a reflection of the desperation of many in our society and an uncomfortable reminder that the adage 'bread first, morals later' might hold true.

The other surprise finding is how much business is targeted in bribery. It seems a remarkably prevalent practice that people bribe businesses' employees (such as cashiers and clerks) to give them discounts or even goods for free. This is more pervasive than bribery in the Police, Home Affairs, or for social grants, and should incentivise businesses to do more in terms of internal corruption prevention programmes.

The research also gives a view on the ever present discussion of whether bribery is a public or a private sector phenomenon. The not too surprising truth is that people bribe for tenders in the public sector and they bribe for tenders in the private sector. The same applies for jobs. It is clearly a societal problem that affects sectors quite equally.

While some bribe for survival this is not the case for most. Bribery for traffic offences and driver's licenses collectively makes up 47% of bribes. Imagine the impact on our national psyche if we can take these bribes out of the equation. Knowing the scale of the problem there must surely be effective ways of targeting perpetrators both on the giving and receiving end of these transactions. Some countries have reported huge successes with undercover integrity testing (also called 'sting operations'). One way of changing these ingrained behaviours is if perpetrators know that they may be caught. This will be a worthwhile investment not only in terms of reducing corruption, but likely also in reducing the massive annual death-toll on our roads.

Perhaps the most worrying finding is that almost 8 out of 10 people believe that you can't get through everyday life without paying a bribe. It is concerning because people start behaving according to their beliefs. If we think that 'everybody is doing it' it becomes easier for people to justify bribery to themselves. It is important to point out that in reality 8 out of 10 people don't pay bribes. (Imagine how much more positive that figure becomes if we can remove bribes related to traffic offences.) The truth is that the majority of South Africans still do get through everyday life without bribing.

There is a need to change the South African narrative on bribery, and we hope these findings can promote and provoke that much needed conversation.

Annexure A – Quantitative questionnaire

Citizens' Bribery Survey

Demographic Data

1. Your gender

- Male
- Female

2. Your age

- 18 to 25
- 26 to 35
- 36 to 45
- 46 to 55
- Above 55

3. Monthly income

- Less than R100k p.a
- Between 100k and 200k p.a
- Between 201k and 300k p.a
- Between 301k and 400k p.a
- Between 401k and 500k p.a
- More than 500k p.a
- Not applicable

4. Store: _____

Experience of bribery

1. Do you personally know someone who was asked to pay a bribe in the last year?

- Yes
- No

2. If yes, what was it for? _____

3. Did they end up paying the bribe?

- Yes
- No
- I don't know

IF YES do you know how much it was? (The value of the bribe?) _____

Likelihood to pay a bribe

4. Based on your experience, how common is it for your family and friends to pay a bribe in the following situations?

	IT NEVER HAPPENS			IT HAPPENS ALL THE TIME		
	1	2	3	4	5	6
To avoid a fine or criminal charges	1	2	3	4	5	6
<i>Can you give an example?</i>						No
To get, or to speed up, access to a service	1	2	3	4	5	6
<i>Can you give an example?</i>						No
To get, or to speed up getting a document	1	2	3	4	5	6
<i>Can you give an example?</i>						No
To get a job.	1	2	3	4	5	6
<i>In which industry or sector?</i>						Don't know
To get a contract, or to win a tender.	1	2	3	4	5	6
<i>In which industry or sector?</i>						Don't know

Willingness to do something

5. To what extent do you agree with the following statements?

	STRONGLY AGREE			STRONGLY DISAGREE		
It is possible to get through everyday life in South Africa without paying a bribe	1	2	3	4	5	6
Ordinary citizens like you and me can do something to stop bribery	1	2	3	4	5	6
In general, people are willing to avoid paying bribes	1	2	3	4	5	6

Is it a matter for concern? Is it serious?

6. Based on your experience, how unacceptable / how acceptable would your family and friends think it is to pay a bribe in the following situations?

	VERY UNACCEPTABLE			VERY ACCEPTABLE		
To avoid a fine or criminal charges	1	2	3	4	5	6
To get, or to speed up, access to a service	1	2	3	4	5	6
To get, or to speed up getting a document	1	2	3	4	5	6
To get a job	1	2	3	4	5	6
To get a contract, or to win a tender	1	2	3	4	5	6

7. To what extent do you agree with the following statements?

	STRONGLY AGREE			STRONGLY DISAGREE		
My family and friends are very worried about bribery in South Africa	1	2	3	4	5	6
Enough is being done to combat bribery in South Africa	1	2	3	4	5	6
Bribery is a way of life in South Africa	1	2	3	4	5	6
Bribery should be legalised	1	2	3	4	5	6

8. Lastly, thinking about yourself, what would you say is the one thing you can do to help stop bribery in South Africa?

About EthicsSA

The Ethics Institute of South Africa (EthicsSA) is a non-profit, public-benefit organisation that commenced operations in August 2000. The organisation is governed by a board of directors consisting of prominent persons committed to promoting ethical responsibility.

EthicsSA's vision is: "Building an ethically responsible society".

We achieve our vision by forming partnerships with the public and private sectors, and the professions. EthicsSA serves as a resource through our thought leadership, research, training, support, assessment and certification activities.

Thought leadership

EthicsSA is committed to stimulate and advance awareness of ethics in South Africa and in other countries on the African continent where we are active. We participate regularly in public debates in the media and contribute to policy formulation in respect of business ethics, corruption prevention and professional ethics.

Services offered

EthicsSA offers a wide array of services related to the management of ethics in organisations and professions. These services include: training, advisory services, assessments, certification, project management and membership services.

More information on EthicsSA can be found at www.ethicssa.org



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