

The perception of the population regarding the water supply in Pitești City, Argeș County, Romania

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Abstract: Water, as the vital resource for life, is subject of several challenges in the contemporary world. One challenge is to complete supplied it in the best parameters for the entire world population, from crowded cities to remote areas. An assessment upon the state of population water supply is fundamental for establishing and adopting measures and policies for a sustainable management of this resource. Therefore, the aim of this study is to explore the population's perception regarding the water supply in Pitești City, Argeș County, Romania. For this study, a cross-sectional survey was used, disseminated online to the Pitești residents. The results showed both the strengths and some weaknesses of the water supply in Pitești. About 60% of those surveyed have a very good and good opinion about the quality of water supply services in Pitești City, while the remaining 40% are more reserved about it. The study could help local authority to establish a sustainable water management for urban residents.

Key words: Pitești City, water supply, public perception, survey research

1. Introduction

Water represents one of the most important resources of the Earth, ensuring through its circuit the natural function of all environmental components, but, in the same time is a vital source for population and implicitly for household, but also for all economic activities. However, this resource has been considerably at risk in recent decades as a result of climate change and fast urbanization, placing more emphasis on its sustainable and rational use, especially in large cities (Heidari et al., 2021). It is estimated that by the year of 2050, 68% of the population will be urban, that will increase pressure on the water supply of the cities (Pluchinotta et al., 2021). The cities affected by rural-urban migration (Simukonda et al., 2018) or urban sprawl which is associated in many cases with unplanned constructions within the city (Suditu et al., 2010) face the increase of population's ask more buildings, houses, and hence the need to resize water supply according with the new sizes. Furthermore, limited natural water resources is another factor influencing its supply in cities. Even if, for inland rivers, Romania uses less than 40% of the available freshwater (Ene & Teodosiu, 2009), there is a need to adopt several strategies for sustainable management (Voskamp et al., 2021), and, also to plan the water reuse (Ormerod et al., 2019). So, taking into consideration the local characteristics of the city and its buildings, the community, local policies, decision makers and administrative systems (Dias & Ghisi, 2024) could develop or adopt certain systems for rational usage of the water (Wong & Mui, 2008) to be prepared to use modern technology, in line with the sustainable development, which could be safest way in case of water crisis. Moreover, the involvement of governments is crucial both for the

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