

THE DEGREE OF EXTRINSIC MOTIVATION OF ROMANIAN CIVIL SERVANTS

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ABSTRACT

Over the last two decades, a great deal of emphasis has been placed on the motivation of public employees, and especially on the intrinsic motivation of public officials. Therefore, numerous theories have been developed, pointing out that the factors that move personal interest and constitute the engine of action in public administration are more oriented towards intrinsic motivation; while private employees are more motivated by extrinsic factors. In other words, the satisfaction inherent in carrying out activities that have a collective interest and a social value, would constitute an essential motivational factor among civil servants.

This article analyses the answers of several civil servants from the central public administration, related to intrinsic motivation.

KEYWORDS: *civil servants, motivation, public administration.*

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1. INTRODUCTION

One of the main reasons to study motivation is to reveal whether it exists in civil servants and to what extent it influences individual behavior.

The reform movement around the New Public Management (Pollitt & Bouckaert, 2004), especially at the municipal level, is strongly pronounced in the Romanian version, the new Control Model – a rational image oriented towards placing the employee at the center of attention.

In recent years, however, there has been a lot of criticism that the Public Service Motivation (PSM) is only viewed in isolation and not within the broad scope of the psychological process theories of motivation (Wright, 2007)

Elmer Staats' quote (1988) "Public service' is an attitude, a sense of duty" resembles the words spoken by Grant, (2008) who states that the intrinsic motivation is joy and pleasure, prosocial motivation (and also PSM) emphasizes the meaning and purpose as the cause of exertion. Public service motivation is also different from intrinsic motivation.

Perry created Six Dimensions of Public Service Motivation and designed the corresponding Likert items to be recorded in a questionnaire (Perry, 1996).

These six dimensions were motives (1) political motivation (affinity to public policy), (2) public interest and social responsibility (commitment/ devotion/ dedication to the public interest), (3) civic duty, (4) social justice (social justice), (5) social compassion, and (6) altruism (self-sacrifice) (Hammerschmid / Meyer / Egger-Peitler, 2009; Perry, 1996).

Assumption made by Perry and Wise about the implications of public service motivation, aimed at the use of motivational incentives. Perry and Wise assume that public organizations where

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employees have a highly level of public service motivation are less dependent on utilitarian incentives to effectively control the individual performance of employees.

Apart from the structure of the assumptions chosen by Perry and Wise (1990) there are many other aspects of public service motivation, which have been investigated since the concept was established.

Among the most important is the question of whether intrinsic motivation is a dependent variable or is it an independent variable. Do civil servants work in the public service because they have a high degree of intrinsic motivation, or do they have a high degree of intrinsic motivation, because they are employed in the public sector?

2. THE THEORY OF PUBLIC SERVICE MOTIVATION (PSM)

Motivation and performance have been central questions in psychological, business and sociological literature. The number of different theories are now unmanageably large.

There are also numerous suggestions on how to group the approaches. In the application-oriented literature, a distinction is often made between content and process theories as two basic types.

In 1990 Perry and Wise, in their article, assumed that people with a high public service motivation in the sense of the person-organization-fit theory particularly often choose and remain in the public service. Perry and Wise defined three types of motivations which can be found especially in the public sector:

(1) rational motives, (2) norm-based motives, and (3) affective motives.

Rational reasons refer to a person who is interested in certain public services because they identify with their targets/ambitions/objectives; normative reasons – when a person believes in the public interest, including communal faith and loyalty to government institutions; and affective motives are characterized by the desire to help other people.

They further postulated a positive connection between public service motivation and performance in the public service.

According to Kurt Lewin's theory – multiply value of goals with the expectation of actually being able to achieve them, and then choose the alternative that brings the maximum subjective benefit.

The followers give an answer to this question – the concept of public service motivation.

In the early 90s, originating in the USA, there was a movement against reforms in the spirit of the New Public Management, the main reason being the transfer of business models to the administration. A representative concept of public service motivation is that public service employees have a particularly strong focus on the common good.

The focus was always on whether there are motives (in the sense of motivational bases) that are primarily or exclusively connected with the public service and if so, which motives are these (Perry / Wise 1990).

Leonard White (1929) has become known with "The Prestige Value of Public Employment as well as and Kilpatrick, Cummings and Jennings.

The PSM research does not assume that Public Service motivation can only be found in the public sector, but that the PSM is based on the tasks of the public service and to be found more strongly in the public sector than in other sectors (Rainey, Steinbauer 1999; Wise 2000).

Many authors have come to the conclusion that the influence of the PSM on the choice of the sector for starting a career and staying in this sector is moderated by other factors.

The figures from the various studies cannot be directly related to one another.

With due caution, however, it allows to make orders of magnitude visible and to recognize trends.

The work is structured as follows: In addition to theoretical insights into the concept of "motivation" and the basic mechanisms of how this comes about or how it is destroyed, a successful manager also needs an understanding of the way in which structural framework conditions that

cannot be directly changed by it – collective bargaining and legal requirements, demographic developments, financial and socio-political trends etc. – affect the motivation of workers.

3. INTRINSIC MOTIVATION

Intrinsic motivation distinguishes between internal and external rewards, in psychology. In "Introduction to Psychology: Gateways to Mind and Behavior with Concept Maps," the authors offer a definition. Coon D, Mitterer JO mentioned that a person's intrinsic motivation occurs when the actions he undertakes are not aimed at obvious external rewards. Intrinsic motivation translates into the joy and satisfaction felt when carrying out that activity. We talk about intrinsic motivation when we do not feel obliged to do something, when it does not bring us negative things, such as frustrations, but on the contrary, we perceive it as an opportunity to gain experience, to learn new things. Although it is shown that the use of extrinsic rewards, such as a bonus, can lead to increased productivity and achievement of performance, the actual quality of work performed is influenced by intrinsic factors. From the above sentence it can be concluded that the intrinsic factors can not only make it possible to achieve the performance, but also it is more likely to be maintained in the long term.

Most often, new ideas and innovative solutions are found by people interested in what they do, who perceive the workplace as a challenge in the best sense of the word.

Five factors were identified by Malone and Leeper as responsible for intrinsic motivation:



Figure. 1 Factors influencing intrinsic motivation

Source: adapted from Malone and Leeper (1987)

Challenge: when the goals, which people want to achieve, have a personal meaning, the degree of motivation is higher. Also, self-esteem is a factor that falls here, and it appears when praise and positive feedbacks exist.

Control: both in everyday life and at work, people want to have control over the activities they do and the environment in which they are carried out.

Cooperation and competition: The satisfaction felt from helping others can be a stimulus for increasing intrinsic motivation. Likewise, another boost to intrinsic motivation is the positive feeling when you compare your result or performance with another's.

Curiosity: sensory curiosity is a factor that increases the intrinsic motivation of the employee/individual and is understood by capturing the attention of something in the environment.

Cognitive curiosity is another factor that increases motivation. It appears when the individual/employee wants to learn, find out new information, enrich his knowledge.

Recognition: Another important intrinsic motivating factor is the recognition of their work by the people around them.

Public workers do value highly the intrinsic reward of work that is important and provides a feeling of accomplishment. Public employees place on top the importance of job security.

4. METHODOLOGY

This paper is an empirical study about the impact and importance that the intrinsic motivation of public sector employees has on the good functioning of the organization and if it is enough to be able to achieve it without having extrinsic motivation.

The article is based on theories of motivation and will analyze the dimensions designed by Perry and the idea of Elmer Staats who believes that those who work in public service must have within them the desire to work for the common good. Starting from Elmer's idea and Perry's dimensions related to commitment/ devotion/ dedication to the public interest, a set of 5 questions was designed and answered by 16 central public administration servants, between the 6th and the 9th of September.

As from the basic questions (table 1) the answers were derived, thus a wide discussion could take place, and the answers will be presented in the results.

Also, the conclusions will be drawn taking into account the statements, opinions, perceptions expressed by the interviewees, obtained in the discussions that were developed starting from the five basic questions.

5. RESULTS AND CONCLUSIONS

A number of 16 public service employees from the central administration, positioned on different hierarchical levels and departments answered the 5 questions. The answers were free, giving the opportunity for a broad discussion.

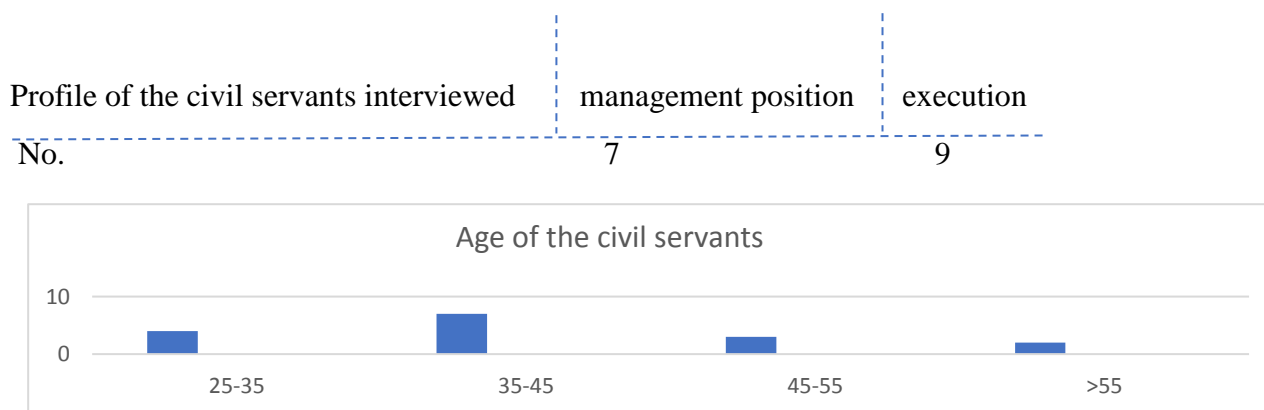
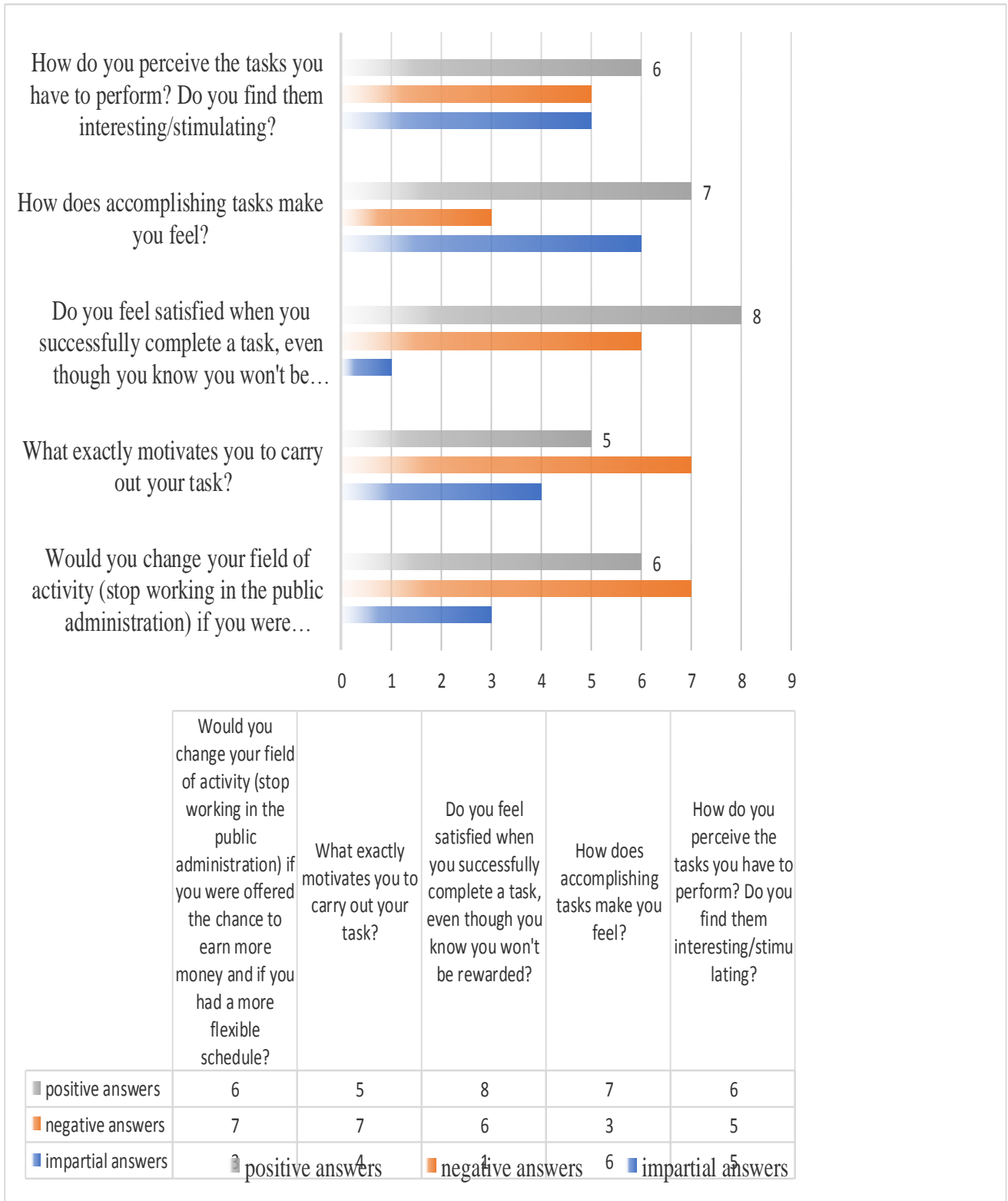


Figure. 2 Age of civil servants interviewed

Source: created by the authors

Table. 1 Questions dedicated to intrinsic motivation/ the answers received



Source: created by the authors

We will again specify Perry's 6 dimensions, which we will analyze together with Staats' phrase ("Public service' is an attitude, a sense of duty" to be able to analyze them through the prism of the answers collected from civil servants

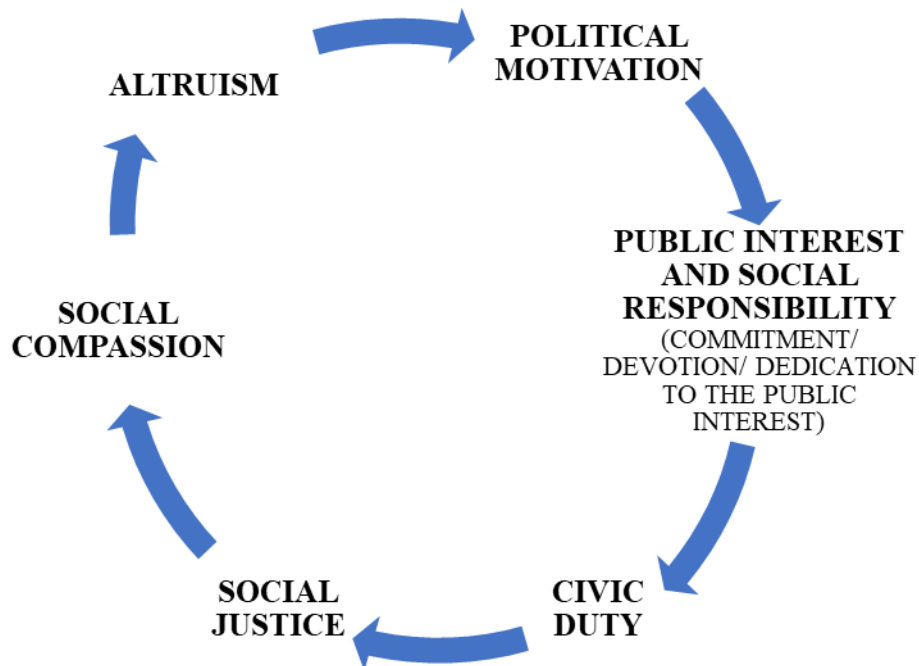


Figure. 3 Perry's dimensions of Public Service Motivation

Source: adapted from Perry (1996)

Taking an overview, we notice that the number of those who gave positive answers regarding the existence of intrinsic motivation does not differ much, quantitatively, from those who gave negative answers. The question <<What exactly motivates you to carry out your task?>> gathered fewer responses that would demonstrate the existence of intrinsic motivation than those that demonstrate the opposite, namely that it is not some intrinsic motivation that causes them to perform their tasks, or that satisfies them when they do. The answers received (negative) were: 'I don't want to be reprimanded because I didn't complete the task'; 'no one else can do it'; 'I don't want conflicts with colleagues or supervisors'; 'I do it because I have to'.

The biggest difference between the affirmative and negative answers can be found in the 2nd question << How does accomplishing tasks make you feel?>>, to which we received 7 answers proving that civil servants have an increased dose of intrinsic motivation, and which proves the opposite of the result obtained in the previous question. From here, we can conclude that although civil servants are not motivated enough to complete their tasks, yet the result - the completion of the task, brings them satisfaction through the validation of their work by colleagues and supervisors.

Returning to the proposed hypothesis, capping occurs after a certain number of years spent in the institution/ with age and experience, intrinsic motivation increases. From the answers received, we see which of them are confirmed.

The questions derived from the basic ones, listed in the table, related to capping at the workplace after a certain time, and the changes that took place, over time, related to motivation methods, demonstrate that the level of motivation is similar, both for people who have been in the public administration for less than 10 years, as well as for those who have more than 15 years of experience.

The conclusion proves to us that motivation can exist or not, regardless of seniority at work.

Statistically speaking, the close number of positive responses to the negative ones to the five summary questions, and from the discussions that derived from them, we can conclude that the intrinsic motivation of civil servants is not strong enough to give rise to greater efforts than that of "to do what has to be done".

However, the responses to question <<Do you feel satisfied when you successfully complete a task, even though you know you won't be rewarded?>> demonstrate that intrinsic motivation exists, and confirms Staats's statement, namely that there are officials who have a sense of duty, even civic duty (one of Perry's dimensions).

Future research directions starting from this article will be the analysis of the motivation of civil servants on a larger scale (larger number of interviewees) and civil servants from several public administration institutions – both from rural and urban environments, and also, a future direction of research will be based on the discovery and analysis of the factors that influence intrinsic motivation.

This work together with the proposed future research directions will help to discover if the intrinsic motivation of civil servants is decreasing, if the work environment or seniority in the workplace influences the level of intrinsic motivation.

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