

EMPIRICAL EVIDENCE OF EXPECTANCY THEORY: INSIGHTS FROM BELGIAN AND ROMANIAN LOCAL PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

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ABSTRACT

This paper focuses on studying instrumentality as defined by Victor Vroom in his expectancy theory. Each element of expectancy theory may be influenced by the organizational context (through various aspects), which will lead in the end to influencing work motivation. This study presents the influence promotion and the reward system that local public institutions have on instrumentality and thus on the work motivation of civil servants.

The research was conducted in the Brussels Region (Belgium) and the Northwest Region (Romania) by using both a quantitative and a qualitative research approach. The results indicate that both aspects influence instrumentality, but the influence type may vary. The aspects regarding promotion have a negative influence on instrumentality in the Brussels Region, a positive influence in the Northwest Region while the reward system influences instrumentality in a negative way in both analyzed regions.

KEYWORDS *civil servants, expectancy theory, instrumentality, local public administration.*

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1. INTRODUCTION

This article is based on the research conducted on the local administration of two European countries that apply the same career management system for their civil servants. The study provides useful insights with respect to how public institutions may influence the level of instrumentality of their civil servants and thus their work motivation by using Vroom's Expectancy theory. How to motivate the employees from public administration is a challenge that local public institutions have to face since their field of activity implies taking into account the limits imposed by the legislation, the bureaucracy, etc.).

2. WORK MOTIVATION IN THE PUBLIC SECTOR

Work motivation is defined as the set of internal and external forces that initiate the behavior towards work and influence its form, direction, intensity and duration (Pinder, 1998). Studies on work motivation in public administration have shown: that public sector employees are less extrinsically motivated (Buelens & Van de Broeck, 2007); the most important condition for achieving better work performance from civil servants is to give them interesting, worthwhile, challenging, responsible jobs (Livingstone & Wilkie, 1981); females within the civil service were significantly more job dissatisfied and suffered from poorer mental and physical ill health (Bogg & Cooper, 1994); the importance of management and direct management in motivating civil servants (Druskiene &

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Sarkiunaite, 2018). It is believed that is easier to motivate the employees from private organizations (Suciu et al., 2013), since the range of tools to be used are numerous: by using competition, the team-based approach, etc., but these tools may not have the same results in the public sector, especially in local public administration. Therefore, different theories will be suitable for a particular context (Ramus et al., 2007). Having motivated civil servants will result, among others, in high performance, work involvement and commitment to the institution.

3. EXPECTANCY THEORY

Expectancy theory has been the dominant approach to research on motivation in industrial organizations for several years (Campbell & Pritchard, 1976). Expectancy theory as a process motivation theory tries to explain how motivation occurs, what factors influence it and what the relations between these factors are. In contrast to earlier motivation theories, which emphasized substantive factors that motivate individuals (need theories, for example), expectancy theory focuses on the cognitive processes through which individual effort is energized, directed, and sustained over time. Expectancy theory attempts to explain how individuals make decisions between different alternatives or activities (such as spending time preparing a lecture or on research) and decisions about how much effort to invest in any activity (Mowday, 1982).

According to expectancy theory, motivation is determined by three factors: expectancy, instrumentality, and valence.

$$M = E \times I \times V \quad (1)$$

Thus, the individuals' desire for specific rewards (valence), perception of the link between their own actions and receiving those rewards (instrumentality), and belief that they can complete the behaviors necessary to receive those rewards (expectancy) drive their effort toward completing tasks (Vroom, 1964).

$$E = A \times \left(\sum_{j=1}^n I_{ij} \times V_j \right) \quad (2)$$

Where: **E** is the effort intensity.

A is the belief that effort will lead to performance;

I_{ij} is the instrumentality of the performance *i* to achieve a second level result *j*;

V_j is the valence of the second level result;

n is the number of second level results.

Due to the multiplicative relationship between expectancy, instrumentality and valence, motivation will be high when the level of these three factors is high and low when they have low levels. Furthermore, if one of these elements is lacking, motivation will also be low or lacking.

Additionally, Graen's (1969) has focused on the distinction between first- and second-order results. The first order results are named "work role" meaning behavioral expectations considered to be appropriate for the person performing certain activities. The "work role outcome" are the second-order results and are believed to be related to intrinsic and extrinsic rewards.

Over time, Vroom's expectancy theory has been used as a theoretical framework in various fields and research subjects such as: the impact of cost budgets upon managerial motivation (Harell & Stahl, 1984), group coordination (Bauman & Bonner, 2017); to understand motivation, persistence, and achievement in university- level foreign language learning (Nagle, 2020), nascent entrepreneurship (Renko et al., 2012), etc.

Within the field of public administration, expectancy theory has been used as a theoretical framework for understanding motivation in public and private organizations (Frank et al., 2004), pay for

performance (Condrey et al., 1993), free-rider problems (Powers et al., 1994), risk culture (Bozeman et al., 1998), and mission valence (Rainey et al., 1999).

As most motivational theories, expectancy theory has also faced several criticisms such as: being unrealistic (Behling et al., 1973; Rainey, 1997); difficulty of results validation in empirical studies and related to the operationalization (Robbins, 1993; Campbell et al., 1976); lack of valid replication over time (Wabba et al., 1974). Despite these limitations, expectancy theory is still regarded as one of the most promising motivation theories (Rainey, 1997).

3.1 Instrumentality

Instrumentality is one of the most studied factors of expectancy theory, and the one that was confirmed by both theoretical and empirical studies (Fagbohunge, 2012; Pearson et al., 2001; Zaniboni et al., 2011;). There are also studies that explore both expertise awareness and instrumentality as drivers of group decision making (Emich, 2012).

Instrumentality is the perceived probability of an individual that his/her effort will be or will not be followed by a reward. Thus, instrumentality is the perceived probability that a first level result (i.e. performance) will be followed by a second level result (i.e. retribution, promotion, etc.). For example, people will work much faster if they obtain financial rewards or if they believe that the way in which they work affects their chances of promotion. Thus, performance represents an instrument to obtain the desired rewards (that is why it is called instrumentality).

In the literature, due to the multitude of studies referring to instrumentality, several types of instrumentality are identified, based on certain dimensions. For example, Simons et al. (2004) described four types of instrumentality: proximal utility-external regulation, proximal utility-internal regulation, distal utility and external regulation, and distal utility and internal regulation. Lens and Rand (1997) made a distinction between three types of instrumentality: extrinsically motivated and externally regulated, intrinsically motivated and internally regulated, extrinsically motivated and internally regulated.

The level of instrumentality can be determined by answering the question 'What do I gain?'. As in the case of expectancy, instrumentality can be both objective and subjective. Instrumentality may be objective due to some of the factors that characterize the working environment, such as: the reward system, remuneration, promotion, etc. Instrumentality may be subjective if the individuals are not informed correctly about the above-mentioned factors, so they tend to be optimistic or pessimistic regarding them.

4. HYPOTHESES

The hypotheses of this study are based on the elements identified by specialists (Eraly, 2009) as aspects that influence the employee's instrumentality. These elements through which organizations, including public ones, can influence the level of instrumentality are: promotion policy; the reward system; the attitude of superiors; meritocracy elements; the information provided to employees regarding the above stated elements and their degree of truthfulness. At the same time, depending on how the work environment influences expectancy, instrumentality and valences, we can determine a diagnosis for organizations by acknowledging the aspects that might be improved in order to increase the employees' work motivation.

In the present study, due to constraints related to editorial space, we have tried to determine whether the first two elements mentioned previously influence instrumentality in the case of the public institutions analyzed in Belgium and Romania.

Therefore, the aim of the paper is to establish the type of influence that the promotion policy and the reward system have on the instrumentality of civil servants from both analyzed regions.

The promotion system may influence both instrumentality and valences. In the case of instrumentality, promotion is seen as a way to reach other goals such as: rewards, self-esteem, the

respect of one's peers, job security, honors, social status, psychological satisfactions and participation in important decisions. Promotions, upward movements in an organizational hierarchy (Bagdadli et al., 2006), are tangible rewards deemed critical for employees (Lam & Schaubroeck, 2000). Employees who are pursuing a multi-organizational career are stimulated by the wage level and perceive promotion as an instrument for a wage increase. It is not the promotion but its result that is considered valuable (Takahashi, 2006). The results of performance measurements of civil servants should be included in promotion decisions and in the recognition of results, as civil servants are likely to be as motivated by these as by financial rewards (Mahyudi, 2019). Korman (1970, 1971, 1976) in his studies has focused on employees self-esteem, which, he believes is formed around work and organizational experiences, and has a great influence on employee motivation, work-related attitudes, and behaviors (Pierce & Gardner, 2004). If promotions are applied regularly, their effectiveness will decrease over time, but if they are not applied, there will be no positive effect at all (Otto, 2022). Promotion practices also have a significant influence on post-promotion performance (Wickramasinghe & Samaratinga, 2016).

Since in the ideal case promotion should positively influence instrumentality, our first hypothesis is: *Hypothesis 1: The promotion policy positively influences instrumentality in both analyzed regions.* Remuneration is instrumental in work motivation given that, as Emery (2004) has stated in his study, in most theories on work motivation (Lévy-Leboyer, 1998), remuneration, including any form of financial reward is sometimes seen as a central component of motivation, particularly in the works of the American expert E.E. Lawler (1990). As it can be observed in the following table, in the case of civil servants, the reward system is more complex, also including other components beside the financial one.

Table 1. Key components in civil servants' compensation and rewards

	Contractually provided			Non-contractual/intangible
		Monetary	In-kind	
Current rewards	Base Rewards	Base wage/salary	Health insurance	Job security, prestige, social privileges
	Allowances	Transportation, housing, meals, telephone, travel, cost-of-living	Transportation, housing, meals, travel	Trips abroad, training
Future expectations		Pension	Housing, land, etc.	Reputation, re-employment after retirement

Source: adapted from Ketelaar, 2007

Since in the ideal case the reward system should positively influence instrumentality, our second hypothesis is:

Hypothesis 2: The reward system positively influences instrumentality in both analyzed regions.

If both hypotheses are accepted, it results in a positive influence on instrumentality and it might lead to a positive influence on work motivation. We cannot talk for certain about a positive influence on work motivation, since instrumentality is also influenced by other aspects (mentioned above) beside the analyzed ones, and their influence type is unknown.

5. MATERIAL AND METHODS

The data assessed in this article come from the answers provided by Belgian civil servants from the Brussels Region and Romanian civil servants from the Northwest Region. This is why this study is based both on a qualitative and quantitative research, which should not be considered an issue since in Bergman's opinion (2008), the separation of qualitative and quantitative methods is to a considerable degree related to "delineating and preserving identities and ideologies rather than to describe possibilities and limits of a rather heterogeneous group of data collection and analysis techniques".

5.1 The qualitative research

The qualitative research consisted of intensive interviews with Belgian civil servants, conducted by the authors, with a duration between 30 and 60 minutes. Prior to having the interviews, a sample of 5 interviews was conducted in order to determine how the interview should be structured. That is why after the first interviews the research switched to a direct approach (by specifying the theme of the conversation, with precise questions) based on structured interviews. The interview was designed based on both the legislation regarding local public administration in Belgium-the Brussels Region (the Social Charter), and on the information obtained (prior to conducting the interviews) from specialists in the field of public administration in the Brussels Region (one expert from the Regional Training Center for civil servants, a former human resources manager at the city hall of a commune, a Belgian local public administration consultant and two professors who teach human resource management and had the possibility of being appointed on the exam commissions for promoting civil servants in a few communes in the Brussels Region).

The questions on the interview guide referred to the main stages that form the Belgian civil servants' careers within the local public administration (the probation period, trainings, mobility, rewarding, performance appraisal, sanctions), and work motivation. The interview guide was designed to capture all the aspects that expectancy theory considers. In this study we have analyzed only the questions that refer to the scope of this article, which will be presented subsequently.

The first step in collecting data was obtaining approval from the city halls for doing the research. We have obtained the acceptance from six communes (out of 19): Schaarbeek, Uccle, Etterbeek, Ixelles, Anderlecht and Jette.

The second step involved getting in contact with the civil servants through e-mail and by phone and establishing the meetings. The civil servants received explanations regarding the scope of the research and the duration of the meeting. Moreover, we have obtained permission to tape them, ensuring personal data confidentiality and the use of the information obtained only for scientific purposes.

The interviews took place simultaneously in the six communes, from April to May of 2010. All interviews were recorded, made anonymous and transcribed.

Miles and Huberman (1994, p.239) identify three major approaches to qualitative data analysis: interpretative approaches, social-anthropological approaches, and collaborative social research approaches. We have chosen the interpretative approach for our research since interviews and observational data can then be transcribed into written text for analysis. How one interprets such a text depends in part on the theoretical orientation adopted by the researcher. Moreover, this approach provides a means for discovering the practical understandings of meanings and actions.

In our case, since the information was obtained most often prior to asking the concrete question, we have grouped the answers in categories (the equivalent of codes) for the purpose of the analysis; these categories were later used as sections in designing the questionnaire that was used in Romania. The information obtained after the first interviews was then used in the subsequent ones in the attempt to find explanations for certain responses.

Since most of the time qualitative research does not imply the use of statistical analysis, we have analyzed the obtained information as general for the entire sample. The responses that did not fit into

a certain category were given special attention to explain the differences. If the subsequent answers fit, they were put into an existing category and, if not, a new category was created.

In each commune, after the third or fourth interview, the information started to repeat itself, reaching data saturation (Sargeant, 2012), which is the 'gold standard' in assessing quality (Saunders et al., 2018). As stated in the literature (Fucss & Ness, 2015) failure to reach saturation has an impact on the quality of the research conducted. It is known that qualitative research does not imply using many subjects. The number of participants depends upon the number required to fully inform the all-important elements of the phenomenon being studied (Sargeant, 2012). Thus, we have decided to conduct 10 interviews per commune, to ensure the representativeness of the research sample, data validity and, at the same time, to be able to extend the results to the entire region.

The interviews were conducted with civil servants from different departments: finance, law, urbanism, human resources. However, the final sample consisted of 59 civil servants, since one meeting was canceled due to objective reasons. The questioned civil servants were occupying public functions of both leadership and execution. Almost half of them (45%) were aged between 36-45 years, and 53% were women.

5.2 The quantitative research

At the beginning of our research, we wanted to do entirely comparative qualitative research both in Belgium and Romania, due to the opportunity of conducting interviews in Belgium. Thus, when attempting to apply the same research instrument in Romania, we were confronted with the reticence and the refusal of civil servants to be interviewed and taped. The alternative was applying questionnaires, which has also given rise to reticence and even a few refusals from the Romanian civil servants.

The questionnaire was designed based on the interview guide used in the qualitative research. The questionnaire was based on the Romanian legislation related to the career and work of civil servants. Closed-ended questions built as Likert were used. Data was analyzed with SPSS. We have used Chi-Square Test and Kendall's Rank Correlation Coefficient in order to explain the results.

When selecting the cities in Romania so as to be able to compare the results with the ones from Belgium, we have taken into consideration: first, the existence of a correlation between the numbers of inhabitants in the Belgian communes where we have interviewed civil servants and the Romanian cities; and second, the area around these cities had to be considered a region (in order to be compared with the Brussels Region in Belgium), which we have called the Northwest Region. Questionnaires were applied, using random sampling, in 2011, to the civil servants from the following city halls: Sighetu-Marmatiei, Satu-Mare, Turda, Zalau and Cluj-Napoca. There were a few persons who have refused to participate in the study.

From 660 distributed questionnaires, 467 were filled, out of which 458 were considered appropriate to make part from the final analysis sample.

Table 2. The structure of the sample by cities

City Hall	No. of civil servants	No. of respondents
Cluj-Napoca	592	96
Turda	171	95
Zalău	203	93
Satu-Mare	333	114
Sighetu-Marmației	61	60
Total	1.360	458

Source: authors' projection based on the information from the city halls website – 2011

The representativeness of the resulted sample is given by the fact that, except the city of Cluj-Napoca, in the other cities almost half of the civil servants have participated in the survey. Over a third of respondents were aged between 36 and 45 years. More than half of the civil servants participating in the research had a large seniority in the field (between 5 and 14 years). Most of the questioned civil servants are women (62.4%) and a large part of the respondents (89.5%) were having a execution type of public function.

5.3 Questions referring to instrumentality

Instrumentality is probably the most difficult element of expectancy theory to measure in practice. This is because unlike expectancy and valence, most times it is hard to identify the path to follow to reach goals and most of the times instrumentality can also be a valence.

To determine the level of instrumentality, based on the theoretical background presented above, due to constraints related to editorial space, we have chosen to present in this study only the elements referring to promotion and the reward system.

At empirical level it is relatively difficult to identify the aspects that strictly influence just one of the expectancy theory elements (E, I, V), due to their complexity and especially since some of them could influence more than just one expectancy theory element at a time, depending on the observation angle. The *promotion system* for example may influence both instrumentality and valences. In the case of instrumentality, promotion is seen as a way to reach other goals such as: rewards, self-esteem, the respect of one's peers, etc. In our interviews and questionnaire we have tried to observe if there are differences regarding the way promotion is stipulated in the law and the way it is put into practice, the influence of the political factor and the performance-promotion link (the relevant questions were: *In the institution where I work there are differences between regulations and the practice regarding promotion, I believe promotions are fairly made in the institutions I work for, Promotions are influenced by politics, The probability of getting a promotion is bigger if the civil servant does his/her job well,*) since the instrumentality level is influenced by the way rules (the law) are obeyed. This comes in accordance with the findings of Zhu et al. (2022) who have shown in their study that promotion rejection has detrimental effects on employee and organizational efficiency, and fairness is often leveraged to address these drawbacks.

Regarding the *reward system* we have tried to highlight the perceived equity (question: *The remuneration of civil servants in the institution I work for is fair*) and how civil servants perceive their remuneration/reward system, through the questions: *I believe I am not paid enough for the volume and difficulty of my work, If I was paid more I could work more, If I was paid more I could work better, It happens often that my work is rewarded through other means than money and The fact that I get thanks for the way I do my work is motivating.* For example, obtaining a bonus may be instrumental in growing the esteem of peers and superiors towards a certain employee. As in the case of a promotion, some aspects related to rewards may also be a factor of influence in the case of valence, or even be a valence.

For a better understanding, we must mention that we have kept the names of the variables (in the statistical analysis) the same as the questions.

6. RESEARCH FINDINGS

6.1 Results related to promotion policy

As stated before, promotion seen as an instrumentality is influenced among others by the way the law is put into practice. Studies have shown there is a connection between the fairness perception with regards to the promotion and the employees' job satisfaction (García-Izquierdo et al., 2012, Reiley & Singer, 1996;) and work engagement (Zhu et al., 2022).

In the case of the Northwest Region, almost half of the respondents (47%) believe there are no differences between the law and the way it is put into practice regarding promotions, while 20% of

them argue they do not know and another 7% say they do not want to answer the question. Upon analyzing the answers to many of the questions, we have often encountered the civil servants' fear of disclosing information due to some possible negative consequences for their activity or even career. The Belgian respondents' opinion yet differs. Almost all civil servants believe that there are differences in practice, compared to what the law stipulates regarding promotions. Most of them believe they are not made fairly within the public institution they work for, while in the case of the Northwest Region, over a half of the civil servants (59%) believe promotions are granted fairly, 12% say they do not know and the other 7% refused to answer to the question.

We should remember that in the case of both regions, in order to receive a promotion, it is necessary to pass an exam, to meet certain seniority conditions and to obtain positive work evaluations. A first difference in legislation is that in the case of leadership positions, in the Brussels Region, the Local Council appoints a person, who must meet the language condition (the number of public leadership positions occupied by French speakers must be equal to the number of public leadership positions occupied by Dutch speakers). Since the number of people who speak Dutch is reduced, there is an intense competition for occupying the functions of the French speakers (most inhabitants of the Brussels Region speak French).

It is known that in many countries, the influence of politics in the public sector varies, most constitutions include incompatibility and ineligibility rules due to concerns about conflicts of interest and the politicization of public service (Braendle & Stutzer, 2016), and in some of them politics also influence the promotion of civil servants. In some member countries of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development, a clear line is drawn between senior staff appointed politically and others appointed using an administrative procedure. Political involvement in one dimension of human resources management – appointment – is a strong predictor of political involvement in the others. It is more or less replicated in looking at dismissal and promotion procedures (Katelaar, 2007). Thus, we wanted to see if this is also the case in both studied regions.

In the Brussels Region, since public leadership positions are occupied by appointment from the Local Council, the political factor influence is very strong. As the respondents state, to occupy such a position, a civil servant is advantaged if he sympathizes with a certain political party. Some civil servants confirmed they have sympathized with a certain political party to obtain a promotion, but most of them stated they would not do such a thing since they either do not like doing this type of thing, they do not like political games, or they believe that engaging in such strategies is dangerous and unethical.

In the Northwest Region, the importance of the political factor is not considered to be very strong since barely a fifth of the respondents believe political intervention is felt. One of the causes might be the fact that unlike Belgium, Romania has made passing an exam compulsory, among other conditions in the case of public leadership positions. Even so, the relatively important percentages (12% respectively 21%) of civil servants who do not want to express their opinion regarding this aspect or who say they do not know raises some questions. Again, it might be due to the fear of negative consequences for their activity or career.

We were surprised to find out that there are a few Belgian communes in which promotions have not been granted for more than ten years. A reason for this fact might be the lack of performance evaluations. To obtain a promotion it is necessary for the last activity evaluation to be positive, and since no evaluations have been performed in over ten years, there were no promotions either.

In consequence, this is different than the high proportion (almost 80%) of the Romanian civil servants in the Northwest Region who believe the probability of getting a promotion is bigger as the civil servant in question does his/her job well (confirmed also by the medium intensity link ($\text{sig} = 0.000 < 0.05$, $k = 0.456$) between the variables: *I believe promotions are fairly made in the institutions I work for* and *The probability of getting a promotion is bigger if the civil servant does his/her job well*, since those in the Brussels Region affirm the opposite.

Below you may find an example of the statistical analysis in the case of the two variables. The rest of the results concerning the analyzed variables will be presented directly.

Table 3. Statistical analysis for the variables: *I believe promotions are fairly made in the institutions I work for and The probability of getting a promotion is bigger if the civil servant does his/her job well*

	Value	Df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)	
Pearson Chi-Square	312,521a	25	.000	
Likelihood Ratio	255,965	25	.000	
Linear-by-Linear Association	114,335	1	.000	
Symmetric Measures	Value	Asymp. Std. Error ^a	Approx. T ^b	Approx. Sig.
Nominal by Nominal Contingency Coefficient	.639			.000
Ordinal by Ordinal Kendall's tau-b	.456	.038		.000
N of Valid Cases	.458			

a. Not assuming the null hypothesis.

b. Using the asymptotic standard error assuming the null hypothesis.

Source: authors' analysis

The aspects regarding promotion have a negative influence on instrumentality in the Brussels Region and a positive influence in the Northwest Region, thus Hypothesis 1 is partially confirmed.

In the Romanian public administration, a system of work performance indicators has been recently introduced and is considered to be a way to motivate civil servants. Still, it is interesting to notice that more than half of the Romanian civil servants questioned say they would be able to work more and better if they got be paid more. This is in accordance with Giauque (2003) who in his study shows that members of the civil service take a cautious, or even passive, professional attitude, with a view to doing just enough so that they are not noticed and do not stand out.

It can be noted that the Romanian civil servants talk about an increase of their effort both quantitatively and qualitatively, unlike their Belgian colleagues who argue that even if such a system existed (in the Brussels Region it does not exist) they could not work better (since they are already doing the maximum from the quality point of view) but they could probably work more, meaning making a greater effort.

In our opinion, here we are facing some differences in mentality between the two nations that are most likely due to cultural differences. Thus, it can be summarized that the Romanian civil servants do not make the maximum effort from the quality point of view, and if we also look at their complaints about their financial rewards, there might be an explanation for this answer. The effect-effort relationship is not perceived as being equitable, so the effort made is not maximum.

As a consequence, the reward system *influences instrumentality in a negative way* in both analyzed regions, since civil servants do not perceive equity in the *reward system* and they believe they would be motivated more if other forms of appreciation would be used for their work. This is consistent with the findings of Profiroiu, C., et al., (2021) who show in their study that the low level of remuneration and the lack of legal forms for rewarding public personnel for their achievements as a form of developing motivation led to low performance in the public sector. We should also keep in mind that the cornerstone of a good financial reward system has less to do with the resources allocated than with providing an appraisal system that is faultless in both design and implementation (Campbell et al., 1998). If this does not happen, as in our research, the reward system becomes just an illusory, or

even misleading component of motivation that is instrumental and can be detrimental to intrinsic motivation (Deci et al., 1999). In this case, taking into account the findings of the study Hypothesis 2 has been rejected.

7. CONCLUSIONS

The purpose of this study was to present the influence promotion and the reward system in local public institutions have on instrumentality and thus on the work motivation of civil servants. The findings show a different type of influence on instrumentality. The aspects regarding promotion have a negative influence on instrumentality in the Brussels Region, a positive influence in the Northwest Region, while the reward system influences instrumentality in a negative way in both analyzed regions, as it can be seen in Table 5.

Table 4. The elements that influence instrumentality in both analyzed regions

	Influence on instrumentality	
	Brussels Region	Northwest Region of Romania
Promotion	Negative influence (-)	Positive influence (+)
Rewarding system	Negative influence (-)	Negative influence (-)

Source: authors' analysis

The difference arises from the fact that both regions have problems concerning civil servants' rewards, and while in the case of Romanian civil servants the aspects related to promotion have a positive influence on instrumentality, that is not the case in the Brussels Region. We should keep in mind though, that in the case of the Brussels Region, the fact that we have discussed with each civil servant has given us the possibility of finding more information, which was not the case of the Romanian civil servants. So, there might be a relatively high possibility that in the Romanian civil servants' case, if approached more thoroughly, the aspects regarding promotion would lead to negative results.

Yet, the data we have obtained shows otherwise, so we have obtained a positive influence of promotion on civil servants' instrumentality.

These results lead to the assumption that, in the case of civil servants from both regions, instrumentality might negatively influence their work motivation level. If the rest of the elements (the attitude of superiors; meritocracy elements and the information provided to employees regarding the above stated elements and their degree of truthfulness) also have a negative influence on instrumentality, then it results that instrumentality influences work motivation in a negative way, causing its reduction. If, on the other hand, the rest of the elements cause a positive influence on instrumentality, then instrumentality may not affect work motivation in such a negative way. Testing these assumptions remains though among the future directions for research.

Nevertheless, this research shows that public institutions can influence their civil servants' instrumentality, and through instrumentality also their work motivation. That is why we believe that public institutions should try to increase as much as they can the level of instrumentality of their civil servants. Below are a few recommendations we believe might be useful in order for this to happen, in the case of both analyzed regions: firstly, there should be compliance in practice with the legal regulations on promotion, which will lead, among other things, to changing perceptions on the fairness of promotions; secondly, the work performance criteria should be established in a way that will not allow the disclosure of political preferences among civil servants; thirdly, promotions should be based on objective appraisal of the civil servants' work. Moreover, remunerations should be made according to the job (this is hard to put into practice since in both countries salaries of civil servants

are established by the central power). Fundamentally, the reward system implemented is not indifferent and the question of pay should be put back into this more general framework, which underlines the need for harmonizing the systems put in place to influence staff behavior (Carestia-Lanciaux, 1990). Furthermore, the introduction of a bonus system based on performance in Belgium should be considered. Schemes based on the relationship work-payment can be measured through behavior or results (Rynes et al., 2005). The use of performance-related pay schemes is a part of the reform of civil services in many countries (OECD, 2014). Finally, superiors should appreciate the work of their subordinates through other reward types than money. Non-monetary forms of remuneration, such as the organization of working hours, improvements in equipment and work resources and the development of skills, are appreciated by civil servants and correspond more to the public sector culture than purely monetary remuneration (Emery and Giaouque, 2001). Some efforts have been made, given that in 2017, the Romanian authorities conducted a reform regarding public personnel remuneration through the adoption of Law no. 153/2017 on the unitary remuneration of the personnel paid from public funds. The purpose of this law was to ensure a uniform remuneration framework in the public sector by applying clearly formulated principles and criteria, as well as to decentralize the decisions made in this area. Yet, the current remuneration system does not support sufficiently the modernization process in public administration, and more than that, it led to an increase in the costs of implementing the regulations of the normative act, because a significant proportion of public servants have contested in court the manner in which this law was applied (Profiroiu, et al., 2021).

Even if these results may seem more developmental than definitive, we believe this study contributes to both work motivation and public administration literature, and it might be a first step to studying more deeply how expectancy theory may be used as a framework in studying different aspects related to civil servants' work motivation. From another point of view, this research might be considered exploratory since very few studies (Baciu, 2017; Suciu, 2013; Agbele, 2021) were identified to have been conducted in public administration based on Vroom's expectancy theory. Of course, operationalization might be considered here as a limitative element, but this is a limitation that is characteristic for expectancy theory in general. However, we believe the findings are valuable for giving an insight on how public institutions can influence, through instrumentality, their civil servants' work motivation. Future research might include studying the effects of the elements that influence the other two factors in the model (expectancy and valence) and even the work motivation level.

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