

WORK MOTIVATION AND SATISFACTION OF CIVIL SERVANTS FROM ROMANIA'S SENATE

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Abstract

The present study tries to analyze work satisfaction and motivation of civil servants from the Parliamentary offices of Romania's Senate in order to identify the factors that employee satisfaction and motivation depend on and the possible causes of dissatisfaction. The research methodology consists of an opinion survey conducted in Romania's Senate using a questionnaire designed by the authors. The study revealed that the majority of the respondents declared themselves satisfied with their workplace, their working activities, the working conditions, the level of remuneration, the relationship with the hierarchic superiors and colleagues, as well as the organizational climate. The participants in the study were satisfied the most about the remuneration level and job security and the least, about merit recognition and the opportunities to develop new skills. Also, the respondents considered that the main factors which can increase work motivation and satisfaction are: a higher level of remuneration and improved work conditions.

Keywords: work motivation, work satisfaction, civil servants

1. INTRODUCTION

Civil servants' motivation and work satisfaction are still matters of interest considering public administration's specificities and the restrained possibilities of motivating public employees. More than that, the majority of studies regarding motivation and job satisfaction have focused on private organizations. Consequently, research on public administration employees' work satisfaction and motivation is based on the results and theories that are offered by the private sector (Bercu and Onofrei, 2017). The main problem consists of the fact that the theories and results from the private sector are not always suited for public institutions considering their specific characteristics. As an example, previous studies (Trenovski et al., 2021, Feleki et al., 2021, Jalagat and Aquino, 2021) revealed that in the private sector, promotion and the level of remuneration represent two of the most important factors of motivation for employees. At the same time, other studies (Ciobanu and Androniceanu, 2015, Bercu and Onofrei, 2017) suggested that for public employees, these factors, related to extrinsic motivation, are not the most important ones for developing motivation. More than that, public employees' motivation seems to be related more to other factors correlated with intrinsic motivation, and less related to extrinsic motivators. Another interesting aspect is that motivation and satisfaction are directly connected to the level of organizational performance and to the proper functioning of the organization. In public administration, these aspects seem not to relate directly to the motivation or to be less important (Wittmer, 1991, Micle and Saucan, 2009, Bercu and Onofrei, 2017).

In this respect, the present research aims to investigate civil servants' work motivation and satisfaction and the most important factors that influence public employees' motivation. The research has been conducted in the parliamentary offices of the Romanian Senate (the Superior Chamber of Romania's Parliament), using as a research instrument, a questionnaire designed by the authors, with the purpose of revealing which are the most important factors with impact on work satisfaction and motivation and which are the main causes of work dissatisfaction of the civil servants .

2. THE ANALYSIS OF THE MAIN THEORIES AND STUDIES REGARDING PUBLIC SERVICE MOTIVATION AND SATISFACTION

Motivation in public service was defined as employees' motivation to contribute to the achievement of the public interest, without considering their own interests. Scholars defined public service motivation (PSM) (Perry and Wise, 1990, Perry and Vandenberg, 2015, Elsayed et al., 2021) as being the individual predisposition to respond to motives specific primarily or uniquely in public institutions.

Even if numerous studies focusing on this subject have been conducted, the main question still remains: which are the factors that influence civil servants' motivation? Authors such as Pandey and Stazyk (2008) investigated these motivational drivers and revealed the existence of several factors such as: gender and age (Dehart-Davis et al, 2006), family socialization, religious or volunteering experience (Perry et al, 2007) and organizations' culture, values and specific characteristics (Monyhan and Pandey, 2007).

Regarding work satisfaction, it can be considered a multidimensional concept combining personality traits and environmental factors (Roelen, et al., 2008). Henne and Locke (1985) affirmed that employees' satisfaction stems from the fact that their jobs allow them to meet their needs and standards or achieve their objectives. Unsatisfied employees could be adequately assisted in changing the work aspects that cause certain dissatisfaction, thus preventing long-term absenteeism and disability due to mental disorders. In addition, training opportunities and lifelong learning have a positive impact on the feeling of satisfaction (Roelen, et al., 2008).

According to Stephen (2001), work satisfaction can be defined as employees' positive attitudes towards work. Highly satisfied employees will have positive attitudes towards work, while the dissatisfied ones will have negative attitudes. More than that, the author (Stephen, 2001) emphasized that work requires interactions with colleagues and leaders/managers, following rules and policies, compliance with performance and labor standards and all these aspects influence the assessment of employees' job satisfaction, making it a complex process.

Other studies revealed that besides the work itself, reputation, promotion opportunities, and the relationship with leaders and colleagues, one of the most important factors that might lead to great satisfaction at work is to be happy with what you do and happiness is a matter of perception and subjectivity, being difficult to measure. Also, it is supposed that the jobs providing training opportunities, independence and control on the activities, are the most satisfactory ones. More than that, a study conducted in organizations from different Member States, revealed that education, safety at work, autonomy at work, and work-life balance are directly linked with a high level of work satisfaction (Stephen et al, 2010).

One of the most mentioned factors with influence on job satisfaction is the remuneration level (Profiroiu et al., 2021). Regarding this factor, which is also related to motivation and in particular, with extrinsic motivation, some interesting findings are revealed by previous studies. As an example, in a study conducted by Stephen et al., (2010), the authors observed that for the people with low incomes, those living below the poverty limit, or in underdeveloped countries, the level of remuneration is directly related to work satisfaction and satisfaction in general. In comparison, a study carried out in 14 EU countries revealed that in the UK, employees with lower income levels were more satisfied compared with the employees that earned more. The explanation would be that employees with a lower level of remuneration receive other non-material benefits. Also, the study revealed that the level of remuneration' impact on work satisfaction varies among European countries. Indeed, money motivates people, but motivation doesn't mean the same thing as what makes us happy. Career changes are

becoming more frequent, as employees with a high salary tend to change jobs for a lower salary, which gives them greater satisfaction (Stephen et al, 2010).

Regarding work dissatisfaction, it was observed that employees express it in different manners: some resign, others do not resign and intentionally slow down work procedures or fill file complaints and avoid some of their work responsibilities. Some authors considered that work satisfaction and work performance was a myth of management, but a high number of studies have shown that the relationship between these two concepts is very strong. When satisfaction and productivity data are collected at the organizational level, it can be observed that the organizations where employees are satisfied, are also the most efficient ones (Stephen, 2001).

What employees' values or needs represent can be defined in a number of ways, such as the significance of the work itself, remuneration, promotion, recognition, working conditions and how workers feel about their colleagues and supervisors, and not least, their perception about the organization in general (Henne and Locke, 1985).

Work satisfaction is not just about working conditions, because the personality also plays an important role. People who behave less positively towards themselves are also not so satisfied with their work. Research shows that people who have a positive self-assessment towards themselves and trust themselves, are more satisfied with their work than those who do not have these traits. People with negative self-assessment do not set ambitious goals, and drop out easier when facing challenges, looking for types of work that suppose routine (Stephen et al., 2010).

Frederick Herzberg developed the theory of dual factors as a means of understanding employee satisfaction at work. According to Herzberg (1968), the factors generating dissatisfaction are related to the working environment, but even when they are managed very well and the working environment is excellent, employees will not always feel satisfied with their work. According to Herzberg (1968), satisfaction is not the opposite of dissatisfaction. He claims that the opposite of satisfaction is the absence of satisfaction, and the opposite of dissatisfaction is the absence of dissatisfaction.

Herzberg (1968) argues that these dissatisfaction situations can be remedied in two stages. The first step is to eliminate the determinants of dissatisfaction (change of organizational policies with negative impact, effective supervision, ensuring competitive wages, respectively job security). The second stage would be to build the drivers of satisfaction, such as providing opportunities for achieving objectives, recognizing contributions to the team's achievements, offering opportunities for advancement, etc.

Herzberg's conclusion (1968) is that his theory investigates what motivates employees. For employees to work better, they need to be mobilized by appealing to motivating factors. Therefore, in order to increase employees' satisfaction, it is not enough to eliminate the dissatisfaction factors, but to identify the most important motivators.

Modern psychology recognizes two types of motivation: intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. The first type is related to non-financial motivational factors and the other one, with the financial motivational factors.

In addition, Victor Vroom's theory of expectations represents a complex model of motivation being based on a simple assumption: motivation depends on the extent to which people want something specific and how much they think they can get it. The theory states that each action of an individual can lead to different results-desirable and undesirable ones. In general, people can be motivated to perform activities that they find attractive and feel that they can do. The attraction to various activities depends on the degree to which they lead to favorable personal consequences (Emilian, 2003).

Also, communication is essential for the correct usage of this theory. If employees' expectations are known, then their behavior can be influenced. Given that this model can help employees to get rewards, this theory can be a guide for leaders, but it should not be misunderstood, as it does not specifically show the motivational elements, but provides an explanation for this complex process (Foktas and Jucevičienė, 2021).

3. THE RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The main objective of the study is to investigate the work satisfaction and what influences work motivation among civil servants in the Parliamentary offices of Romania's Senate in order to identify the factors on which employee satisfaction and motivation depend and the possible causes of dissatisfaction.

The specific objectives of the study are:

1. To identify the factors on which civil servants' satisfaction depends;
2. To reveal the main factors that may cause work dissatisfaction;
3. To analyze the factors that influence civil servants' motivation.

The hypotheses of the study are:

H1. The most important factor that influences work satisfaction is the remuneration level and the least important factor is represented by the internal opportunities for professional development.

H2. The most important cause of dissatisfaction is the lack of collaboration with the top management of the Senate.

H3. The most important factor that influences work motivation is the remuneration level.

The research methodology consists of an opinion survey conducted in the Romanian Senate which is the Superior Chamber of Romania's Parliament. The survey was conducted using a questionnaire designed by the authors comprising 18 questions. The first four questions referred to respondents' age, gender, level of education, and seniority in the institution. The other 14 questions aimed to investigate respondents' job satisfaction and the factors that would influence motivation and would help at increasing job satisfaction. The questionnaire was sent via e-mail to 700 people that work in the Romanian Senate services. The exhaustive sampling method was used and out of 700 potential respondents, 142 agreed to participate in the study.

4. THE MAIN FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

4.1 The main characteristics of the sample

The questionnaire was filled by 142 civil servants in the Parliamentary offices of Romania's Senate. Regarding respondents' gender distribution, 63 were women and 79 were men. The average age of the respondents was 40.6 years.

Concerning civil servants' level of education, 37 (26.1%) respondents had bachelor degrees, 84 (59.2%) had master degrees and 21 (14.8%) had doctoral studies.

As far as the seniority in the institution is concerned, 62 (43.7%) civil servants worked in the Senate services for less than 5 years, 17 (12%) persons had a seniority between 5 and 9 years, 36 (25.4%) had between 10-15 years of seniority and 27 (19%) civil servants worked in the institution for more than 15 years.

4.2 The main results of the study

TABLE 1: CIVIL SERVANTS' DEGREE OF SATISFACTION REGARDING THE RELATIONSHIP WITH COLLEAGUES AND HIERARCHIC SUPERIORS

Degree of satisfaction	Percentage	Frequencies
Very satisfied	0 %	0
Satisfied	59.2 %	84
Neither unsatisfied nor satisfied	29.6 %	42
Unsatisfied	4.9 %	7
Very unsatisfied	6.3 %	9

Source: Authors (2021)

The civil servants were asked if they felt treated with respect by the persons they work with and how satisfied they were about the relationship with their hierarchic superiors and colleagues. They could choose from five answer variants: 1- very unsatisfied; 2-unsatisfied; 3-neither unsatisfied nor satisfied; 4-satisfied; 5-very satisfied. The highest proportion of respondents- 59.2 % (84) declared themselves as being satisfied with their relationship with colleagues and hierarchic superiors and considered that they were treated with the deserved respect. Only 4.9% (7) declared that they were unsatisfied and 6.3% (9) were very unsatisfied.

TABLE 2: CIVIL SERVANTS' DEGREE OF SATISFACTION REGARDING THE OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED BY THE INSTITUTION TO DEVELOP NEW SKILLS

Degree of satisfaction	Percentage	Frequencies
Very satisfied	0 %	0
Satisfied	31 %	44
Neither unsatisfied nor satisfied	26.8 %	38
Unsatisfied	35.9 %	51
Very unsatisfied	3.6%	9

Source: Authors (2021)

Another aspect with impact on job satisfaction is related to the opportunities for professional development. Consequently, the civil servants were asked how satisfied they were, on a scale from 1 to 5, about the opportunities offered by the institution to develop new skills. It can be observed that the majority of respondents - 35.9% (51) - were unsatisfied and very unsatisfied 3.6% (9). None of them was very satisfied and only 31% (44) considered that the offered opportunities were satisfactory. The results should put into perspective the necessity of offering civil servants more opportunities to participate in training courses and professional development courses.

TABLE 3: CIVIL SERVANTS' DEGREE OF SATISFACTION REGARDING THE RECOGNITION OF THEIR MERITS

Degree of satisfaction	Percentage	Frequencies
Very satisfied	0 %	0
Satisfied	29.6 %	42
Neither unsatisfied nor satisfied	50.7 %	72
Unsatisfied	4.2 %	6
Very unsatisfied	15.5%	22

Source: Authors (2021)

Merit recognition is an important factor influencing satisfaction being related to intrinsic motivation. Through merit recognition employees' self-esteem and confidence are raised, they involve more in work-related activities and become more efficient. Consequently, the respondents were asked if they considered that their hierarchic superiors and colleagues recognized their work merits. 29.6% (42) of the civil servants were satisfied and 19.7% (28) were unsatisfied and very unsatisfied. However, 50,7% declared themselves as being neither unsatisfied nor satisfied. The results should put into perspective the necessity of recognizing civil servants' merits and appreciating their work because this neutral perception in such a high proportion might represent in fact, the lack of recognition, but undeclared directly by the respondents.

TABLE 4: CIVIL SERVANTS' DEGREE OF SATISFACTION REGARDING THE PERFORMED ACTIVITIES

Degree of satisfaction	Percentage	Frequencies
Very satisfied	27.5 %	39
Satisfied	33.1 %	47
Neither unsatisfied nor satisfied	31 %	44
Unsatisfied	8.5 %	12
Very unsatisfied	0%	0

Source: Authors (2021)

Moreover, the civil servants were asked if they were satisfied with the performed activities, because one of the factors which influences satisfaction and motivation is to like the work you do. The highest proportion of respondents- 60,6 % (86)- declared themselves as being satisfied (33,1%-47 respondents) and very satisfied (27,5%- 39 respondents) about their work, 31% (44) had neutral opinions and only 8.5% (12) declared that they were unsatisfied.

TABLE 5: CIVIL SERVANTS' DEGREE OF SATISFACTION REGARDING THE LEVEL OF REMUNERATION

Degree of satisfaction	Percentage	Frequencies
Very satisfied	11.3 %	16
Satisfied	81.7 %	116
Neither unsatisfied nor satisfied	0.7 %	1
Unsatisfied	6.3 %	9
Very unsatisfied	0%	0

Source: Authors (2021)

As previous studies showed, remuneration represents one of the main important factors with impact on work motivation. A low level of remuneration conducts to a high level of dissatisfaction and low motivation. As it can be observed, the majority of civil servants- 93% (132)- were satisfied (81,7%-116 respondents) and very satisfied (11,3%- 16 respondents). Only 6.3% (9) of the civil servants were unsatisfied. Remuneration is the most important factor causing job satisfaction among civil servants in the present research, being the only factor with the highest proportion of respondents declaring to be satisfied and very satisfied. The results can also be related to work motivation revealing that respondents' extrinsic motivation seems to be well developed.

TABLE 6: CIVIL SERVANTS' DEGREE OF SATISFACTION REGARDING THE WORKING ENVIRONMENT

Degree of satisfaction	Percentage	Frequencies
Very satisfied	24.6 %	35
Satisfied	22.5 %	32
Neither unsatisfied nor satisfied	40.8 %	58
Unsatisfied	5.6 %	8
Very unsatisfied	6.3%	9

Source: Authors (2021)

The working environment stimulates intrinsic motivation being related to the level of job satisfaction. It can be observed that in this case, a high proportion of respondents- 40,5% (58) declared themselves as being neither unsatisfied nor satisfied, the results showing the need for improving the working conditions. Although a high proportion of respondents- 47,1% (67) were satisfied (22,5%-32) and very satisfied (24,5%-35), the high number of respondents having a neutral perception about this factor reveals the need for changes in order to create better working conditions.

TABLE 7: CIVIL SERVANTS' DEGREE OF SATISFACTION REGARDING THE RELATIONSHIP WITH THE TOP MANAGEMENT

Degree of satisfaction	Percentage	Frequencies
Very satisfied	19 %	27
Satisfied	38 %	54
Neither unsatisfied nor satisfied	23.2 %	33
Unsatisfied	12.7 %	18
Very unsatisfied	7 %	10

Source: Authors (2021)

The relationship with the top managers triggers mainly intrinsic motivation. A good relationship is an important factor that influences work satisfaction and the lack of collaboration with the top management can lead to a

high level of dissatisfaction. If managers appreciate subordinates' work, listen to their opinions, engage them in problem-solving, they will be more confident, more efficient, and more dedicated to their work, giving meaning to what they do. Concerning this issue, 19% (27) of the respondents were very unsatisfied (7%- 10) and unsatisfied (12.7%-18). The positive aspect is that 57% (81) of the participants declared to be satisfied (38 %-54), and very satisfied (19%-27) regarding the collaboration relationship with the Senate's top management.

TABLE 7: CIVIL SERVANTS' DEGREE OF SATISFACTION REGARDING THE HIERARCHIC SUPERIOR'S FEEDBACK

Degree of satisfaction	Percentage	Frequencies
Very satisfied	17.6 %	25
Satisfied	51.4 %	73
Neither unsatisfied nor satisfied	11.3 %	16
Unsatisfied	17 %	12
Very unsatisfied	7.7 %	11

Source: Authors (2021)

Receiving feedback helps at improving the quality of work and influences self-confidence and self-esteem. The respondents showed a high degree of satisfaction regarding the feedback received from their hierarchic superiors. The majority- 69% (108) of the respondents, mentioned that they were satisfied (51.4 %-73), and very satisfied (17.6%-25) and only 24,7% were unsatisfied (17%-12), and very unsatisfied (7,7%-11).

TABLE 8: CIVIL SERVANTS' DEGREE OF SATISFACTION REGARDING THE INTERNAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR CAREER DEVELOPMENT

Degree of satisfaction	Percentage	Frequencies
Very satisfied	9.9 %	14
Satisfied	31 %	44
Neither unsatisfied nor satisfied	20.4 %	29
Unsatisfied	31 %	44
Very unsatisfied	7.7 %	11

Source: Authors (2021)

Regarding civil servants' degree of satisfaction related to the internal opportunities for career development, the respondents seemed to be divided into two categories- those who were very unsatisfied (7.7%-11) and unsatisfied (31%-44) and those who declared themselves as being satisfied (31%-44) and very satisfied (9.9%-14). It can be observed that the proportions are almost equal revealing the necessity of more internal opportunities for career development.

TABLE 9: CIVIL SERVANTS' DEGREE OF SATISFACTION REGARDING JOB SECURITY

Degree of satisfaction	Percentage	Frequencies
Very satisfied	40.8 %	58
Satisfied	47.9 %	68
Neither unsatisfied nor satisfied	3.5 %	5
Unsatisfied	0 %	0
Very unsatisfied	7.7 %	11

Source: Authors (2021)

Regarding job security, it can be observed that the majority (88,7%-126) of the civil servants were satisfied (47.9%-68), and very satisfied (40.8%-58), no person was unsatisfied, and only 7.7% (11) were unsatisfied about this aspect, revealing a positive perception.

The last four questions aimed to investigate which are the factors that might influence civil servants' motivation. In this respect, the participants in the study were asked to respond on a scale from one to five, to what extent (where *1- not at all, 2- to a small extent, 3- to a medium extent, 4- to a high extent, 5- to the highest*

extent), a series of factors, such as- *improved work conditions, merit recognition, granting holiday tickets and increasing incomes* would influence their work motivation.

TABLE 10: THE PERCEPTION REGARDING MOTIVATIONAL FACTORS

Motivational factors	Averages
Improved work conditions	4.42
Merit recognition	3.94
Holiday tickets	4.19
Higher level of remuneration	4.8

Source: Authors (2021)

It can be observed that all the presented factors would influence respondents' motivation from a high to the highest extent. The most important motivational factor would be a higher level of remuneration and the least important factor would be merit recognition. Even if all the mentioned factors present a high level of importance for raising motivation, it can be assumed that the civil servants in the sample are more motivated by financial factors, presenting a high level of extrinsic motivation.

5. MAIN CONCLUSIONS OF THE STUDY AND HYPOTHESES VALIDATION

The study revealed that civil servants of the Romania's Senate were satisfied the most about the remuneration level and job security and the least, about merit recognition and the opportunities to develop new skills. The findings validated partially the first hypothesis and unvalidated the second one. The last hypothesis was validated, as the level of remuneration was considered the most important motivational factor. On a whole, the study revealed a positive perception and a high level of satisfaction concerning all the mentioned factors. However, some aspects, such as merit recognition from the hierarchic superiors and colleagues, the opportunities for developing new skills or for career advancement, should be improved. The civil servants from the top management and also the direct hierarchic superiors should try to develop more the intrinsic motivation of their subordinates, appreciating them and rewarding them using non-financial instruments, which will lead to a high degree of satisfaction. Also, the institution should introduce a system where, on a regular basis, information regarding internal opportunities for career development and training courses, should be posted and all employees could inform themselves.

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