

Motivation of public employees: case study of Slovak teaching and professional staff

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Abstract: *The main purpose of this scientific paper is to analyze the factors that affect the motivation of teaching and professional staff in state primary and secondary schools in Slovakia. The secondary purpose is to analyze the level of motivation of the teaching and professional staff in state primary and secondary schools, and to investigate if there is any relationship between motivation and job satisfaction. Data was collected by means of a survey questionnaire distributed among teaching and professional staff in state primary and secondary schools. Simple random sampling method was used to collect data from 500 teaching and professional employees. In total, 384 teaching and professional employees responded to the questionnaire, but only 320 questionnaires were considered valid for analysis. Two hypotheses were tested during the research, which were tested by Pearson correlation. The findings have shown, that although the higher career degree means higher financial incentives, it does not contribute to higher motivation level. Employees with higher motivation levels, are more satisfied with their work. Despite the fact that many research studies have been carried out on motivation of public employees worldwide, there are only few articles that has focused solely on the concept of motivation of teaching and professional staff of state primary and secondary schools in Slovakia.*

Keywords: motivation of public employees, public service motivation, teaching and professional staff, public school

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Introduction

The public administration is an important part of every state's economy, which purpose is to provide various public services to citizens (Klimovský, 2014). In the last two decades of the 20th century significant changes have taken place in the social, political and economic system of countries of central and eastern Europe, which also resulted changes in the public administration of these countries, also in Slovakia (Malíková, 2000; Kútik, et al., 2014; Nemeč, et al., 2005; Cívik, 2015; Imrovič & Švikruha, 2015). Wherefore the public administration has an impact on the security of a country, it's economic activity and development is important (Kuril, 2018; Papcunová, & Gecíková, 2011). The Slovak public administration is characterized by the late adoption of new procedures and development techniques, bureaucracy and corruption, and public services are classified as inelastic and ineffective by the citizens (Nemeč, 2018). Researches that has been written in the context of the modern administrative development concept shows that people are reluctant to use new technologies which prevents the development of modern public administration (Klimovský, et al., 2014; Machyniak, & Brix, 2015).

The demand for public and social services related to demographic and other changes in European society is a challenge for public administration not only in Slovakia, but also in neighbouring countries (Smékalová, et al., 2017). The increasing global pressure and clients' expectations encourage the leaders of the public administration to increase labor force requirements - especially in terms of education, qualification, professional experience and competences -, thus increasing the quality of public services (Dobrovolskienė, et al., 2017; Bayar, 2016; Kádár, 2017; Kubeš, & Rančák, 2018; Hornáček, & Zelenková, 2014). To increase the quality of public services, the human capital is essential, since it is considered to be the most valuable and complex factor. Precisely for this reason is important to use the skills and knowledge of employees, which is greatly influenced by the motivation of employees.

The effective human resource management has an impact on the quality of public services, so it is important to focus more on motivation of professionally qualified and stable workforce (Birčák, 2014; Lelek, 2014; Poór, et al., 2017; Myšková, et al., 2016; Oláh, et. al., 2017; Jeřábek, & Čapošová, 2016). Motivation is closely related to trust. Research shows that trust allows better implementation of organizational innovations and knowledge transfer within the organization. (Gavurova, 2017). Unfortunately, public administration is also characterized by institutions wanting to maximize their profits and minimize their spending, which represents wage costs and a proper human resource management system (Giriūnienė, 2013; Lucas et al. 2004).

According to international research reports of „Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development“ and according to international indicators like „The worldwide governance indicators“, the public administration in Slovakia is characterized by poor quality and unequal HR management system, high fluctuation of employees, especially during the election period. The HR management system is characterized by serious problems starting with the

recruitment and selection process, continuing with education, performance appraisal and remuneration, up to the impact of political changes. One of the most significant problems is the lack of skilled workforce. Although a lot of graduates drop out of the educational institutions every year, graduates are not in their own field of expertise (Plchová, Kuperová, 2017).

There are many social and economic factors that trigger young people to start a business rather than be employee (Belás, et al., 2017; Mészáros, 2018; Žul'ová et al. 2018; Ciobanu, Androniceanu, 2018). For example, the interest has increased recently, especially among employers, to include an arbitration clause in employment contracts allowing resolve future employee-employer disputes at an arbitration tribunal. Although this kind of dispute resolution is faster and less costly, many employees consider this to be unfair because they are the weaker party (Olšovská, & Švec, 2017). All these factors greatly limit the motivation and use of human capital, and consequently the quality of public services (Skorková, 2016; Porvazník, et al., 2016).

1. Literature review

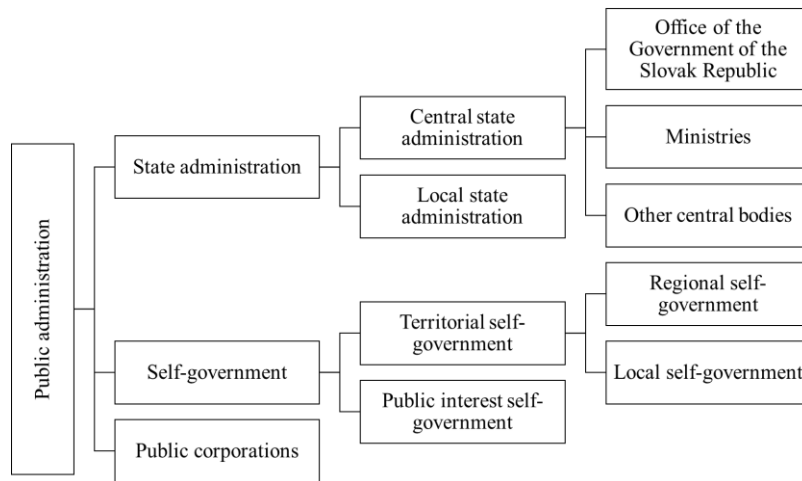
1.1 The public administration of the Slovak Republic

The public administration of the Slovak Republic contains three basic parts, which are state administration, self-government and public corporations (Papcunová, & Gecíková, 2011; Klimovský, 2014). The state administration is a major part of the public administration. Under the notion of state administration, we can express both: state administration activity and the system of state administration authorities (Kútik, & Karbach, 2011; Štofko, et al. 2011). According to the scope of authority, we can speak of central and local state administration. The tasks of the central state administration include the provision of state functions throughout the state. Central state administration contains three basic parts, which are the Office of the Government of the Slovak Republic, ministries and other central bodies (Neubauerová, & Dubrovina, 2010; Hamalová, et al., 2014). The bodies of local state administration are directed and controlled by the bodies of central state administration. The main task of the local state administration is to implement state administration tasks in a certain area (Klimovský, 2014). State administration has undergone a change in recent years. Modernization of state administration, reduction and efficiency of public administration are characteristic features of the reform ESO /effective reliable open/ (Klierová, & Kútik, 2017).

Another major part of public administration is self-government, which means the influence of social life on a non-state level. We are talking about tools that do not have state character. The self-government can be divided into territorial self-government and public interest self-government. Two major groups of territorial self-government are the local self-government and the regional self-government (Štofko, et al., 2011; Papcunová, & Gecíková, 2011). Public interest self-governments are the third largest group in Slovak public administration. Under

the notion of public interest we mean a legally-regulated merger of individuals to achieve a certain purpose (Klimovský, 2014).

Figure 1. System of public administration of the Slovak Republic



(Source: Klimovský, 2014, the author's own contribution)

1.2 Motivation in public administration

Motivation is a determining factor in workplace behavior. Without motivation, it is not possible to define goals and expect their fulfillment, while with proper motivation employees are willing to take reasonable risk to achieve the goals (Poór, et al., 2017; Korcsmáros and Huszárík, 2012; Kozubíková, et al., 2015). The level of motivation is influenced by the motifs. These motifs may, according to some researchers, have different strengths and may change over time (Myšková, et al., 2016). Motifs can be divided into internal and external motifs. Internal motifs in public administration may include the desire to influence the public affairs in positive way, to work for the public, the compassion, assistance and self-sacrifice (Birčák, 2014).

According to the driving theory, motivation is a leadership activity in which the leader encourages employees to reach a specific goal while he is taking into account their needs. Accordingly, the subjective of the workplace motivation is the manager and the subject is the employee (Myšková, et al., 2016). Over the past decades, many motivational theories have been created to highlight motivation from a human perspective. The motivational theories are meant to explain why people behave the way they did (Fuksová, 2009). The issue of motivation in public administration, the role of leaders in creating this and the question of factors influencing the quality of HR have become the subject of researches over the last

decades, attracting the attention of many researchers (Gecíková, & Papcunová, 2014; Radjenovic, 2018). Because of generational, gender, educational differences and different types of personality, employees have different motives (Szretykó, & Mészáros, 2013; Hitka, et al., 2018; Bencsik, et al., 2016; Bencsik, et al., 2017; Hitka et al. 2018; Bencsik, et al., 2016; Cseh Papp, et al., 2017). Other researches has examined the role of gender in explaining behavioral differences (Fapohunda Tinuke, 2017).

Various comparative studies carried out on public administration have shown that employees in public administration have different motives than their colleagues in private sector because they are not motivated by external incentives. Therefore, the Public Service Motivation theory was created to understand the motives of employees in public administration. According to the PSM model, motivation should be aimed at creating value by employees and achieving goals in public administration. However, this model does not provide a universally accepted direction as how to motivate in public administration (Hrašková, 2012; Rashid, & Rashid, 2012; Buelens, & Broeck, 2007; Özsoy, et al., 2014; Rashid, et al., 2013; Houston, 2000). According to some theories, public administration traditionally offers such strong external incentives that may be attractive, such as providing a stable job, career opportunity or retirement (Cseh Papp, et al., 2018; Perry, & Hondeghem, 2008, Klus, & Kralik, 2009). Again, from another point of view, an employee in public administration usually does routine activities, leads defined procedures, which can reduce lack of motivation.

Moreover, in the poorer regions of Slovakia the salaries of employees in public administration are higher than the average salary, but constant strikes by public administration employees shows that salaries are not competitive. They are far away from salaries in private sector (Birčák, 2014).

2. Research results and discussions

The purpose of this scientific paper is to point out to the importance of motivation of teaching and professional staff in public primary and secondary schools in Slovakia. The main objectives of this study are:

- to determine the factors, that affect the teaching and professional staff in public primary and secondary schools,
- to analyze the level of motivation of the teaching and professional staff in public primary and secondary schools,
- to investigate if there is any relationship between motivation and job satisfaction.

During the research hypotheses were formulated. The formulated hypotheses are null hypotheses (H_0), the opposite of null hypotheses are called alternative hypotheses (H_1). The null hypothesis expresses no relation between two variables. During the research, we wanted to prove the correctness of the hypothesis H_0 , and the acceptance of this was also a rejection of H_1 . The significance level was set at 0.05. To perform the empirical research, the data was

collected by survey questionnaire. Simple random sampling method was used to select 500 employees. In total, 384 teaching and professional employers responded to the questionnaire, but only 320 questionnaires were considered valid for analysis. Data collected through the survey were analyzed using SPSS 23.0. Before carrying out the research, we made a probe query. To our probe query we chose 20 people from the target crowd of the questionnaire. The probe query was made in similar environment like the real survey. After the probe query we edited the questionnaire, which meant that we corrected all mistakes, which were occurred during the probe query.

The empirical research was carried out in period May – July 2018. Likert scale, Semantic differential and Stapel scale was used in the questionnaire. Likert scale is a psychometric scale, when respondents specified their level of agreement or disagreement on the 5 point scale. Semantic differential is a rating scale designed to measure the opposite meaning of concepts. We used 7 point Semantic differential and opposite adjectives were listed at the endpoints of the scale. Stapel scale is a rating scale designed to measure the respondent's attitude. We used 10 categories ranging from -5 to +5 without any neutral point.

The teaching staff in public primary and secondary schools make pedagogical activity, which means a set of work activities carried out by direct educational activity and other educational activities. Teaching staff shall be subdivided into following categories: teacher, master of professional education, educator, pedagogical assistant, foreign lecturer, sports school coach and sports class coach and corepetitor.

The professional staff in public primary and secondary schools make professional activity, which means a set of work activities performed by a professional employee, in particular in the provision of psychological, speech-therapist, special-pedagogical care or educational and social counselling. The professional staff members are divided into the following categories: psychologist, school psychologist, school speech therapist, special pedagogue, school special pedagogue, field special pedagogue, medical pedagogue and social pedagogue.

The questionnaires were 28.13 % male and 71.87 % female, representing the Baby-boom generation (37.5 %), X-generation (53.12 %) and Y-generation (9.38 %). Most of them work for 5 to 20 years in their current job (62.6 %), 12.6 % of them work less than a year at their current job. In Slovakia there are career degrees, in which individual employees are classified into. The higher career degree means higher salary and other financial incentives. We assumed that the higher career degree of employee means higher motivation level. The following research question was stated: is there any relationship between achieved career degree and motivation? According this, our first hypothesis is:

H₀: There is no significant relationship between achieved career degree and motivation.

H₁: There is significant relationship between achieved career degree and motivation.

For testing the first hypothesis we used correlation analysis, which shows the tightness of the relationship between two metric variables, the strength and intensity of the relationship. Our two metric variables were motivation and career degree.

Table 1. Correlation between motivation and career degree

		career degree	motivation
career degree	Pearson Correlation	1	,173
	Sig. (2-tailed)		,344
	N	320	32
motivation	Pearson Correlation	,173	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,344	
	N	32	320

(Source: the author's own contribution)

The results obtained shows that there is no significant relationship between career degree and motivation. The correlation coefficient of career degree and motivation is 0.173, which indicates a very weak positive relationship. Correlation is acceptable at a level of significance at least 0.05, which is not fulfilled because the significance level is 0.344. Accordingly, H_1 is rejected, H_0 is accepted.

Although the higher career degree means higher financial incentives, it does not contribute to higher motivation level.

As teaching and professional employee, the employees must be trained, usually annually. This is not only a statutory duty (9.4 %), but it also contributes to gaining (40.6 %), maintaining (15.6 %) and improving (50 %) professional competencies. Some trainings does not have cost (28.1 %), while in other cases the employer reimburse only 50 % of the cost (18.8 %), in fact, most of employers did not reimburse any costs (37.5 %). Only 12.5 % of respondents stated, that their employer reimburse 100 % of costs.

Respondents indicated how satisfied they are with their salary on a 5 point Likert scale. 12.5 % of respondents were not satisfied with their salary, 40.6 % of them were more or less satisfied and only 6.3 % were absolutely satisfied with their salary. The mean of the answers is 2.72, but the high standard deviation shows that the answers are not homogeneous (1.0545). Answers are not surprising if we observe which elements form their salary and which elements they really get. The most important element of salary is the contractual or standard wage, which is paid to every employee (100 %). A few percent of respondents receive other financial bonuses too. The highest value is represented by personal salary (43.75 %) and by credit bonus (40.63 %), but the data shows that these two incentives are paid only to those who work for more than 5 years at workplace. For employees who work less than 5 years at workplace, we cannot talk about other financial bonuses.

Although the law provides a bonus for beginner teaching and professional employees, only 3.2 % of them receive this. The respondents did not receive any overtime premium (3.13 %), or bonus for socially disadvantaged students (0 %) or practical preparations (0 %). A very low percentage of them receive performance

bonus (3.13 %), and only 31.25 % of them receive remuneration. For this reason, employees felt that they are not properly evaluated for their work (2.63).

Not only the salaries are the problem, but also various benefits. 46.88 % of respondents do not receive any benefit and 53.13 % of them are not satisfied with the benefit system. Those receiving benefits have the following benefits: contribution to insurance (43.75 %), contribution to catering (37.50 %), contributions to culture events and sports activity (25 %), contribution to training (15.63 %). 12.50 % of employees get reimburse of travel costs and 3.13 % of them get contributions to healthcare. Several respondents have made suggestion for improving the benefit system.

Respondents believe that the first step would be to create a benefit system and the employers should have inform everyone about the benefit system. 37.50 % of respondents do not know if there is a benefit system at their workplace! Respondents also explained that even if there is a benefit system, they are not sufficiently informed about it (12.50 %) and there is no written document about that (6.25 %). After the establishment of the benefit system, the transfer of information and the range of benefits are also a criterion for creating a viable benefit system. 96.88 % of respondents stated that they are willing to give higher performance, if the employer motivates them. 5 point Likert scale was used to identify, which factors motivate the employees and 7 point Semantic differential was used to identify, how much these factors are present at their workplace.

Table 2. Motivational factors and their presence at public primary and secondary schools

	N	Mean of 5 point Likert scale	St. Deviation	Mean of 7 point Semantic differential	St. Deviation
workplace relationships	320	4.22	0.9917	4.88	1.6910
personality of leader	320	4.50	0.7071	4.50	1.7854
communication	320	4.31	0.6818	4.28	1.4628
the possibility of self-realization	320	4.47	0.7493	4.34	1.6319
working conditions	320	4.47	0.7064	4.50	1.4142
work environment	320	4.38	0.7395	4.75	1.4361
praise, acknowledgment, recognition	320	4.38	0.7395	4.06	1.3905
feedback	320	4.38	0.6495	3.91	1.4654
internal information flow	320	4.03	0.9838	3.91	1.5281
the possibility of increasing qualification	320	4.19	0.8455	4.81	1.5898
transfer of responsibility	320	3.63	1.0533	3.78	1.3166
career advancement	320	4.13	1.0825	4.22	1.5152
the possibility of engaging	320	3.66	1.1349	4.19	1.2609
flexibility of working hours	320	4.31	1.0735	4.28	1.6247
food and refreshment system	320	3.34	1.1071	4.03	1.6102

	N	Mean of 5 point Likert scale	St. Deviation	Mean of 7 point Semantic differential	St. Deviation
organizational events	320	2.97	1.2115	4.22	1.4303
interesting and varied work	320	4.19	0.9164	4.59	1.4971
job stability	320	4.31	1.0440	4.78	1.3166

(Source: the author's own contribution)

Before formulating the second hypothesis, we assumed that employees are more satisfied at workplaces with higher motivation level than at workplaces where motivation level is lower. The following research question was formed: is there any relationship between motivation level and job satisfaction? According to this, our second hypothesis is the following:

H₀: There is no significant relationship between workplace motivation and job satisfaction.

H₁: There is significant relationship between workplace motivation and job satisfaction.

For testing the second hypothesis we used correlation analysis, which shows the tightness of the relationship between two metric variables, the strength and intensity of the relationship. Our two metric variables were motivation and job satisfaction.

Table 3. Correlation between motivation and job satisfaction

		job satisfaction	motivation
job satisfaction	Pearson Correlation	1	,717**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		,000
	N	320	320
motivation	Pearson Correlation	,717**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,000	
	N	320	320

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

(Source: the author's own contribution)

The results obtained show that there is significant relationship between career degree and motivation. The correlation coefficient of career degree and motivation is 0.717, which indicates a very strong positive relationship. Correlation is acceptable at a level of significance at least 0.05, which is fulfilled because the significance level is 0.00. Accordingly, H₀ is rejected, H₁ is accepted.

3. Conclusions

Examining the research data shows that the public administration human resource management system has serious problems. Based on the evaluation of respondents on the Stapel scale, it is visible that the motivation level of employees is extremely low (0.50). According to the respondents, this can be explained by the fact that there is almost no workplace motivation system (0.06), the workplace evaluation system (0.56) works hardly, including the low level of monetary incentives (0.38) and non-monetary incentives (-0.31). All this contributes to the low employee satisfaction (0.34).

Only 15.6 % of the respondents were satisfied with their work and 81.3 % of them would change something at their workplace, for example their salary (62.5 %), the workplace conditions (37.5 %) and workplace relationships (31.3 %). They would also change the benefit system (25 %), the scope of employment (21.9 %), the working time (15.6 %) and their leader (15.6 %). Respondents have also noted high administrative burdens.

They explained, that in some places the school building itself is in very poor condition, it is very cold in winter and very hot in summer. They feel that these working conditions do not allow quality work and their work is not recognized and appreciated.

Two hypotheses were formulated during the research. After testing the first hypothesis, it turned out that although higher career degree means higher financial incentives, it does not contribute to higher motivation level. To this end, managers should use other non-financial incentives. After testing the second hypothesis, it showed that employees with higher motivation level are more satisfied with their workplace. Motivation contributes greatly to job satisfaction.

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