

# VROOM'S EXPECTANCY THEORY. AN EMPIRICAL STUDY: CIVIL SERVANT'S PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL INFLUENCING EXPECTANCY

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## Abstract

This study aims to highlight the importance of performance evaluation from the perspective of work motivation. The research is based on the expectancy theory developed by Victor Vroom and is meant to show that performance evaluation influences one of the factors from the VIE model, the expectancy. The empirical part of the research aims to show the above mentioned in the context of local public administration, namely in the case of the Romanian civil servants from the North-West Region. We have presented the particularities of civil servants performance evaluation in the Romanian local public administration, and its connection to their expectancy and work motivation.

The results have shown that civil servants performance appraisal influences civil servants expectancy and this in its turn influences their work motivation.

**Keywords:** performance evaluation, expectancy, civil servant, work motivation.



## 1. Introduction

The aspects related to employee's job performance have been a concern of all times, but especially of the contemporary society, regardless the field of activity.

Performance is defined as the output and accomplishments of a worker, which are acknowledged by the organization or system in which he works (Robbins, 2004). Many studies have focused on analyzing performance and also to determine what are the factors that contribute to achieving it. One of the opinions (Shah *et al.*, 2011) concludes that Performance = Abilities + Opportunities + Motivation. In this case, motivation is seen as what its general definitions state, more precisely 'those psychological processes that cause the arousal, direction, and persistence of voluntary actions that are goal oriented' (Mitchell, 1982, p. 81).

In the present research, the authors will focus on work motivation, as a particular form of motivation and its determinants, based on Victor Vroom's expectancy theory. We will focus on showing the influence civil servants performance appraisal has on the expectancy element, as described by Vroom in his theory. In other words, this study focuses on showing how the civil servants' performance appraisal affects their expectancy and how this is reflected on their overall work motivation.

## 2. Performance appraisal in local public administration

Evaluating employee's performance is a very common practice whether it is done within private or public organizations. 'Everyone has had their performance appraised in some context' (Wiese and Buckley, 1998, p. 233). Some authors (Dulebohn and Ferris, 1999) might even argue that assessing employee's performance is one of the important functions of human resource management (HRM) in any organization. Others (Ikramullah *et al.*, 2012) believe that in many developed countries it is one of the most important human resource management (HRM) subsystems, especially since 93.3% of OECD (Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development) countries have come to rely on individual performance appraisals (Lah and Perry, 2008).

This practice has become so common that nowadays we can talk about a formal system of assessing the performance of employees called performance appraisal system (PAS). This system is mostly researched by theoreticians and practitioners in the area of industrial organizational psychology (Holbrook, 1999). According to some specialists (DeVries *et al.*, 1981) PAS allows an organization to evaluate its employees' behavior and achievements over a specific period of time. The literature has given a serious consideration to performance appraisal, since many studies have revealed its connection to employee's job performance, and organizational commitment (Colquitt *et al.*, 2001) or job satisfaction (Blau, 1999). Thus, the performance appraisal system has raised question marks related to its implementation. According to the literature (Boswell and Boudreau, 2000) using PAS in organizations has led to mixed results, some authors (Meyer, 1991) arguing that PAS usually does not achieve the results expected. For example, according to Oh and Lewis (2009), the system has failed in motivating employees to do a better job. Poorly managed PAS can cause va-

rious problems for organizations, like disputes among employees and management or anger in staff (Ikramullah *et al.*, 2012).

When discussing about the public sector, some authors (McEvoy, 1990) believe that the aspects referring to performance appraisal constitute a serious problem especially since one of its main goals is to encourage employees to change their behavior for performance improvement (Roberson and Stewart, 2006). Its implementation in the public organizations seems to be caused, especially in the developing countries, by the capacity and institutional constraints (Adei and Boachie-Danquah, 2003; Parizek, 2010; Rasheed *et al.*, 2011). Some authors (Daley, 1992) believe that performance appraisal raises similar problems in both the public and private organizations. Despite this, there are certain opinions (Liu and Dong, 2012) arguing that, technically speaking, performance appraisal is more difficult to carry out in government agencies than in private sector organizations. One of the reasons is that most often in private organizations there are specific goals, most of the time measurable ones, together with specific indicators that facilitate evaluation. In public organizations objectives and criteria are complex and very usually the goals are intangible and vague. That is why it is difficult to specify and quantify the performance measures, not to mention the problem of goal conflicts associated with government agencies and services (Rainey, Backoff and Leveine, 1976).

Evaluating civil servant performance has caused numerous discussions, most of them focusing on a few very important questions (Join-Lambert and Lochard, 2011):

- How is a civil servants work to be measured?
- Are qualifications evaluated while seeing to it that as many employees as possible can be promoted?
- What competences and aptitudes are graded and how do criteria develop?
- How can one make sure that grades faithfully reflect each person's capacities?
- How is one to acknowledge individual personal worthwhile guaranteeing promotions to the largest number?
- What are the instruments to be used for evaluation?

### **3. The public sector and work motivation**

The term motivation is derived from the Latin word 'movere', meaning to move (Kretiner and Kinicki, 1998). Motivation is, by definition (Lévy-Leboyer, 2003), a multidimensional concept that appeals to notions such as: direction (purpose), intensity (effort) and duration (persistence in effort). According to Robbins (1993) motivation is the 'willingness to exert high levels of effort toward organizational goals, conditioned by the effort's ability to satisfy some individual need'.

Motivation is also seen as a set of processes that stimulate, direct and maintain human behavior towards achieving a particular goal (Cesare and Sadri, 2003), or even a sum of drive and persistence in achieving goals (Hung-Wen and Ching-Hsiang, 2009).

The most common form of motivation that occurs within organizations or institutions is work motivation. It is important to acknowledge that most often, motivation is not used as the general term, but as the motivation of something specific such as: work motivation, public service motivation etc.

Work motivation has been defined as the process by which behavior is energized, directed, and sustained in organizational settings (Steers and Porter, 1991) or a set of aspirations attached by a worker to its workplace, each aspiration having attached a probability coefficient designed in order to accomplish his work related desires, depending on the effort and work recognition (Frances, 1995).

Being able not just to motivate but to keep the employees motivated is a hard thing to do in most organizations. In public administration, due to its particularities (the constant presence of legislation, the strict rules, the existence of red tape) most of the times, motivating employees seems almost impossible. If in private organizations motivating employees can be done more successfully either by using competition or the opposite using the team-based approach, in the public sector, and especially local public administration, these approaches do not have the expected results.

One of the most important outcomes of motivation in public administration, which is often observable, is the civil servants behavior expressed in an increased work involvement, increased commitment to the public institution, kindness in serving the citizens and, of course, performance.

#### **4. Vroom's Expectancy Theory**

There are many motivational theories expressed in the literature over the years that approach motivation through different perspectives. Nonetheless, most theories would agree that motivation requires a desire to act, an ability to act, and having an objective (Ramlall, 2004). Motivational theories have been grouped in three main categories by taking into consideration different approaches as it follows: content theories, process theories and consolidation theories. Content theories argue that people act in certain ways based on their needs (such as the ones of Maslow and McGregor). Consolidation theories emphasize the connection between individual's behavior and certain specific results (such as the ones of Thorndike and Skinner). Process theories try to explain how motivation occurs, what factors influence it and what the relations between these factors are (such as the ones of Vroom and Locke).

The expectancy theory of Victor Vroom belongs to the category of process theories since, as Klitzner and Anderson (1977) state, motivation is seen as a multiplication of three factors. This theory integrates many of the elements of the needs, equity and reinforcement theories (Gordon *et al.*, 1990, p. 450). 'Expectancy theory holds that people are motivated to behave in ways that produce desired combinations of expected outcomes' (Kreitner and Kinicki, 1998, p. 227).

Vroom's Expectancy Theory tries to explain the motivated behavior as goal oriented. He argues that people tend to act in a hedonistic way (Vroom, 1964) preferring the actions that will bring the highest subjective utility. Essentially, the expectancy theory argues that the strength of a tendency to act in a certain way depends on the strength of an expectation that the act will be followed by a given outcome and on the attractiveness of that outcome to the individual (Robbins, 1993). As a consequence, behavior could be oriented towards anticipated and individualized goals. Vroom's theory states that the 'choices made by a person among alternative courses of action

are lawfully related to psychological events occurring contemporaneously with the behavior' (Vroom, 1964, p. 15). So, people choose among alternatives in a conscious manner and the choices are systematically related to psychological processes, particularly perception and the formation of beliefs and attitudes (Pinder, 1984).

Motivation is determined by three factors: expectancy, instrumentality and valence.

$$M = E \times I \times V$$

People will be motivated when they believe that effort will lead to performance, they can see a clear link between performance and certain results and the results are important for them.

In a more developed manner this theory may be expressed as below:

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

**E** is the effort/the intensity of the effort;

**A** is the expectancy that effort will lead to performance;

**I<sub>ij</sub>** is the instrumentality of the performance *i* to achieve a second level result *j*;

**V<sub>j</sub>** is the valence of the second level result;

**n** is the number of second level results.

Vroom states that an outcome is positively valent if the person believes that it holds high instrumentality for the acquisition of positively valent consequences and the avoidance of negatively valent outcomes. Also, 'if you believe that a particular behavior will certainly lead to a particular outcome, but place no value on that outcome, you will not be motivated to behave in that way. On the other hand, if you place a high value on a goal, but expect that the probability of attaining it is zero, your motivation will again be zero' (Buchanan and Huczynski, 1985, p. 58). The instrumentality is what links an outcome to other outcomes. Expectancy is the strength of a person's belief about whether a particular outcome is possible.

The absence of any factor from the formula will lead to a lack of motivation (that is why in the above formula there is a multiplication and not an addition sign). So, if any of the model's factors is null, motivation will also be null. As professor Eraly (2009) states, the model does not refer to motivation in general, but to the motivation of doing something (in our case civil servants' work motivation). According to Luthans (1989) everyone has a unique combination of valences, instrumentalities and expectancies.

The VIE model (as the expectancy theory is also called) indicates only the conceptual determinants of motivation and how they are related and does not provide specific suggestions on what motivates organizational members (Luthans, 1989). This is among the reasons why the theory is not considered as popular as some of the content theories (for example Maslow's or Herzberg's). Yet its applicability is demonstrated by the numerous studies the literature provides us with. Only prior to 1990 there have been identified seventy four empirical studies that test expectancy theory predictions

(Van Eerde and Thierry, 1996). The number decreases after 1990 according to Navarro (2009). Some authors (Ambrose and Kulik, 1999) believe this reflects the theory's maturity.

The studies conducted based on the expectancy theory (Ambrose and Kulik, 1999, p. 236) are divided into four main categories: research that uses expectancy theory as a general framework, direct tests of expectancy theory, integrations of expectancy theory with other theories of motivation, and subjective expected utility theories as a forum for examining decision biases.

With regard to the theory's limitations, most of the theory's critics relate to the difficulty of its empirical validation and operationalization due to criterion and measurement problems. As Robbins (1993) observed most studies have failed to replicate the methodology as it was originally proposed. The interpretation and operationalization of the expectancy, instrumentality, and valence constructs seem to be a continuing issue in expectancy theory research (Van Eerde and Thierry, 1996; Klein, 1991).

In addition, different operationalizations of expectancy theory constructs are associated with different study results (Klein, 1991). Other critics refer to the fact that (1) the model is too complex to measure (Connolly, 1976); (2) the key variables of performance, effort, and valence lack consistent definition and operationalization (Hemenan and Schwab, 1972); and (3) repeated measures of the model's validity over time (reliability) do not exist (Wabba and House, 1974).

#### ***4.1. The expectancy factor***

Since in our study we focus mostly on the expectancy factor of the VIE model, we believe it is useful to make a few remarks about it.

Expectancy has been defined as the subjective probability (because individuals differ in their estimations of the relationship between behavior and outcomes) for the individual's expectation that behavior would lead to a particular outcome (Vroom, 1964) and as individual's anticipation that his performance will be followed by either success or failure (Atkinson, 1957).

Expectancy is what one awaits related to the individual effort. Expectancy expresses the success chances that depend on one's abilities in order to reach performance. An individual will be more willing to engage in work if he believes that his effort will help him reach performance.

Expectancy is important because it assumes that behavior depends on a self-estimation of being able to achieve the valued goals (Petri, 1991). A self-confident person will have greater expectancies than one who does not believe in his/hers own abilities, is not well prepared for work or has encountered failure in accomplishing a certain task. In addition, a person who sees no link between effort and performance will have zero expectancy (Gordon *et al.*, 1990). As a probability, expectancy may vary between 0 and 1, from no chance at all to absolute certainty (Buchanan and Huczynski, 1985, p. 58).

There are two kinds of expectancy beliefs (Bandura, 1977): the outcome ones (expectations that a given behavior can produce a certain outcome), and efficacy ones (an individual's expectations that he can produce the outcome).

Expectancy can be influenced by several factors (Eraly, 2009) such as self-esteem (Gaignard, 2003), others' esteem regarding one person's abilities, colleagues/superior support, competencies and abilities as a result of work experience, clarity of goals regarding performance, resources availability (an organization/institution could influence the expectancy through the lack of resources needed by the employee for doing his job).

#### ***4.2. The link: Performance-Performance appraisal-Expectancy-Work motivation***

As stated above expectancy is usually a subjective element, even when referring to objective elements. An employee may have all necessary resources in order to perform a task, but if he does not feel capable to, his expectancy will be low. Just because employees have the ability to do a good job does not mean that they will perform satisfactorily (Tomovic, 2001). Most people learn from their past work experiences and they can tell what is possible to achieve and what is not. It is therefore possible to identify features of organizational life that influence people's expectations (Buchanan and Huczynski, 1985, p. 61). According to professor Eraly (2009), the organization could influence the expectancy level through organizing work in such a manner as to allow competence development, training programs or internal mobility (such as transfers).

Related to public administration, in our opinion, organizing work in such a manner as to allow competence development implies also the performance appraisal of civil servants. Evaluating civil servants performances at work can influence their perception of their own person, their competencies, abilities or self-esteem in making the work effort (in other words the expectancy according to Vroom's expectancy theory).

Regardless of the type of organization, employees must be told what are the results expected from them and also what behavior is asked in order to attain those results.

The way in which performance is evaluated may also influence in the future the effort put into reaching performance again. If a civil servant believes he/she has reached an outcome that equals performance but the performance appraisal is poorly done in the public institution, he/she will decide not to put so much effort in work in the future because has no recognition of his/her merits. This recognition may come under the shape of financial rewards or not. In addition, if a civil servant believes that it is not enough to put only effort in order to reach performance, but he observes that factors such as loyalty or camaraderie (Tomovic, 2001) are being rewarded over efforts that lead to improved performance, efforts may be compromised.

In other words, a civil servant needs to have the confidence that if he makes the effort (effort allowed by his capabilities and also by the public institution resources) will lead to a certain performance (priorly defined by the institution) and that this level of performance will be recognized through rewards he believes are valuable to him. All these will lead to a high work motivation.

### **5. The Romanian civil servants performance appraisal**

The term appraisal (evaluation, assessment) is a complex one and it may refer to several aspects. It is therefore necessary that when we refer to the evaluation of civil

servants to specify at what level is this assessment made. According to specialists in the field, the appraisal activity in the Romanian public institutions comprises four dimensions: the knowledge appraisal of the candidates to public functions; the appraisal of the debutant civil servants; the appraisal of civil servants' job performance (professional performance) and the appraisal of the jobs structure civil servants occupy.

In the present study we have focused on evaluating job performance as a factor of influence on expectancy and therefore also on work motivation of the civil servants from local public administration. In the case of job performance appraisal we cannot talk yet about an efficient and at the same time objective system for all organizations and public institutions. According to some authors (Hume and Wright, 2010) the system of evaluation with targets and goals is not always the best to ensure performance progress.

In Romania, based on the job performance appraisal (the Romanian term is professional performances) civil servants get promoted and they advance in the pay scales. As Government Decision no. 611/2008 stipulates, 'the professional performance evaluation refers to all processes and procedures implemented annually by applying performance criteria to the fulfillment degree of individual professional goals, established based on job description'. Evaluating civil servants' professional performance is based on the job description.

The same decision states that Romanian civil servants' professional performance evaluation includes *two components*:

- *the evaluation of the way and the degree of achieving individual goals*

These individual goals are established by the assessor for each civil servant in correlation with the public function occupied, its grade (II, III etc.), and the theoretical and practical knowledge, together with the abilities of the public servant. These individual goals have to match several requirements as it follows:

- to be specific to activities that imply exercising public power prerogatives;
- to be quantified (to have a concrete way to be achieved);
- to have dead lines;
- to be realistic (to be able to achieve them within the dead lines and with the allocated resources);
- to be flexible (if the priorities of the public institution change, the individual goals may be revised).

Individual goals may be revised quarterly, in which case the changes are recorded in a document signed both by the assessor and the civil servant that will be evaluated. This document is then attached to the final evaluation report.

It is important to add that for each of the individual goals established by the assessor there will be mentioned the performance criteria.

Each objective is evaluated with grades from 1 to 5, the grade expressing the degree of fulfillment of that goal in relation to performance indicators.

In order to obtain the grade for the achievement of individual goals the average of the grades given to the achievement of each individual goal is calculated.

- *the evaluation of how performance criteria were achieved*

In the case of the second component, performance criteria are established according to the class the civil servants belong to, with the possibility of adding other criteria according to the specific activity of the public institution/authority and the activities performed by the civil servant. Each performance criteria is ranked with a grade from 1 to 5, the grade expressing the assessment of meeting the performance criteria in achieving the established individual goals.

In the table below are presented the performance criteria the same decision (no. 611/2008) stipulates both for executive and leading public functions.

Table 1: Performance criteria for civil servants

No.	Executive civil servants	Leading civil servants
1	Capacity of implementation	Capacity to organize
2	Capacity of efficiently solving problems	Capacity to lead
3	Capacity of assuming responsibility	Capacity to coordinate
4	Capacity for self-improvement and capitalizing the experience gained	Capacity to control
5	Capacity for analysis and synthesis	Capacity of obtaining the best results
6	Creativity and initiative spirit	Decision-making competence
7	Capacity of planning and strategic acting	Capacity to delegate
8	Capacity to work independently	Abilities in managing human resources
9	Capacity to work in teams	Ability to develop employees' skills
10	Competence in managing the allocated resources	Ability to mediate and negotiate
11		Objectivity in evaluation/appreciation/value
12		Performance criteria for the executive functions (from 1-7, and 10)

Source: adapted after Government Decision no. 611/ 2008, Attachment no. 5

In order to obtain the grade for the fulfillment of performance criteria the average of the grades given to the fulfillment of each criterion is calculated. The *final score* of the annual evaluation is the average of the grades obtained for the individual goals and the performance criteria.

Civil servants are evaluated by an *assessor*. In the case of the civil servants that have executive public functions the assessor is the direct chief, while in the case of civil servants that occupy leading positions the assessor is the direct chief. According to article no. 107 of the decision, the persons in charge with the assessment (the assessors) have the *obligation* to establish the individual goals for the civil servants in accordance to the public function the civil servants occupy, the grade, theoretical and practical knowledge and abilities.

The evaluation involves completing an *evaluation report* by the assessor, in which are recorded the public servants' results and how individual objectives have been achieved.

Then, the assessor has an *interview* with the civil servant who is evaluated in which the notes made in the evaluation report are discussed. The evaluation report is signed by both parties. Afterwards, the evaluation report will be signed by the supervisor of the assessor.

After evaluating professional performance, depending on the score obtained, the public servant receives one of the ratings: unsatisfactory, satisfactory, good or very good.

Depending on the final grade the civil servant then can:

- advance in the pay scale;
- be promoted in a superior public function;
- be demoted; or
- be released from the public function.

## 6. Research methodology

### 6.1. The studied population

This study is based on a quantitative research, a survey based on questionnaire. The research was conducted in several cities from the Nord-West Region of Romania. The purpose was that the area bounded by these cities to be considered a region, which we have called the North-West Region. Even though we have tried to include in our research all counties from the 'North West Development Region' (Cluj, Sălaj, Satu-Mare, Maramureș, Bistrița-Năsăud, Bihor), this was not possible due to the reticence of some city halls in participating in our study. Therefore we have tried to compensate this shortcoming by distributing questionnaires to a larger number of civil servants from the rest of the counties surveyed in order to ensure a better representativeness of the sample.

Table 2: Composition of the analyzed region

North West Region	
Municipality-City	Inhabitants (No.)
Cluj-Napoca	306 009
Turda	59.610
Sighetu-Marmației	41.220
Zalău	62.927
Satu-Mare	112.143

Source: authors' projection (based on the data available on the city halls' web pages, 2011)

The survey took place after receiving the approval of the city halls regarding the distribution of questionnaires to their civil servants (the approval was obtained based on a written request which was approved in the meeting of the Local Council, with the specification of keeping confidentiality regarding personal information and using the obtained data only for research purposes).

Thus the quantitative research based on distributing questionnaires took place within the city halls of the next cities: Cluj-Napoca, Turda, Zalău, Satu-Mare and Sighetu-Marmației. The questionnaires were distributed within the period of February until June 2011.

The targeted population was the one of the civil servants from the city halls of the above stated cities. After receiving the approval of distributing the questionnaires we have pursued in distributing the questionnaire by person, to each office. The sample

was randomly calculated by distributing questionnaires in each office without following a certain probability law. Random sampling excludes any subjective intervention in the sample selection, because each element of the population has a non-null and calculable chance of being selected in the sample. We have taken into consideration only the statutory civil servants (because the civil servants hired based on a contract are subject to different legal provisions). Some of the civil servants were very reticent and did not want to receive the questionnaires (even so, from the ones that did accept to participate in the survey, we could not collect all the questionnaires because they were not completed in the moment of collecting them (even if the collection was made after at least two weeks).

There were 150 questionnaires distributed in each city hall, except the one of Sighetu-Marmației where 60 questionnaires were distributed. The number of distributed questionnaires was established so as to give a sampling error of less than 5% in order to ensure the representativeness of the sample. Of the 660 questionnaires distributed 467 questionnaires were returned. The final database comprises 458 questionnaires (most of the civil servants cited lack of time to complete the questionnaire, although the time left at their disposal to fill in the questionnaires was at least two weeks) because 9 questionnaires were eliminated from the sample because of the reduced degree of their filling. As a result there was a response rate of 69%.

Table 3: 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	1360	458

Source: data provided by the city halls

Based on data provided by the city halls, the total number of civil servants was 1360. Our sample consists of 458 civil servants, over a third of the population studied. From Table 3 above it can be seen that in each municipality, beside the one of Cluj-Napoca, have participated in our survey about 50% of all civil servants, which shows a high representativeness of the resulted sample.

Regarding the demographic characteristics of the studied population, over a third of respondents are aged between 36 and 45 years, women prevail among the surveyed civil servants (62.4%). Almost 90% (89.5%) of respondents hold executive public functions while the rest of them occupy leading public functions and more than half of respondents have seniority in the local public administration between 5 and 14 years.

## 6.2. Research instrument

In order to collect data, we have used an omnibus type of questionnaire because it allows handling more themes / issues and also offers the opportunity to capture their

interaction and conditioning. Both factual and opinion questions were used. Also we have used both closed and open questions.

The questionnaire was based on the Romanian legislation mainly the Civil Servants Statute and the other legal provisions concerning the career and work of civil servants including the requirements on the assessment of civil servants (Law no. 215/2001, Government Decision no. 611/2008, Law no. 251/2006, Government Ordinance no. 1066/2008, Government Ordinance no. 2033/2009). The questionnaire was designed to capture all the elements considered by the expectancy theory.

The questionnaire included 80 questions and it was divided into ten sections: the debutant civil servants probation period, promotion, training/professional development, performance appraisal, mobility, reward/wages, sanctions, career in local government, working environment and work motivation.

We have used closed questions. Some of the variables we have used were built as Likert items with a scale from 0 to 3 (Yes, No, I do not know, I am not answering) while others were from 0 to 5 (In a very large extent, In a large extent, In a small extent, Not at all, I do not know, I am not answering). In order to obtain as accurate answers as possible, the respondents were given the possibility to refrain from answering by choosing the answer 'I am not answering' or 'I do not know'.

The present study shows some of the data obtained, namely those related to the assessment of civil servants, in order to determine its influence on expectancy and therefore also on work motivation. The questions on performance appraisal of civil servants were formulated in order to highlight how civil servants performance appraisal influences expectancy and work motivation automatically.

In our opinion, performance appraisal influences expectancy if a few conditions are met:

- performance appraisal takes place as the law requires them (the exact question was: *In the institution where I work, I was evaluated annually*);
- for civil servants it is important to be evaluated (the exact question was: *For me it is important to be evaluated*);
- positive and negative evaluations influence the attitude of civil servants regarding its work (the exact questions were: *If I am not evaluated it influences my work motivation; A positive evaluation motivates me to do a better job; A negative evaluation demotivates me; I often feel evaluated unofficially by my superior; I often discuss my work with my superior*).

We have also analyzed the responses to the question regarding work motivation, expressed as: *In general I feel motivated in the work I do*.

Therefore we have conducted the research based on the hypothesis that *civil servants performance appraisal influences civil servants expectancy*. This influence would be also reflected in their work motivation level (if performance appraisal influences expectancy in a negative way, a low expectancy would determine a certain decrease in the work motivation level and the other way around).



Figure 1: The link between performance appraisal and work motivation (based on Expectancy theory)

Source: authors' projection

In order to verify some of our assumptions related to certain results we have used a descriptive statistics analysis (the Chi-Square Test and Kendall's Rank Correlation Coefficient). The Chi-Square Test shows if there are correlations between two or more variables. If Chi-Square Test (Sig.) > 0.05 => the null hypothesis is accepted (there is no rank correlation between the variables), and if Sig. < 0.05 => the null hypothesis is rejected (there is a rank correlation between the variables). Kendall's Rank Correlation Coefficient shows the intensity of the rank correlation (link) between variables. If  $k > 0$ , there is a direct link;  $k = 0$ , there is no link;  $k < 0$ , there is an indirect link. Also, if:  $k \in [0; 0,3)$ , there is a weak intensity link;  $k \in [0,3; 0,7)$ , the link is of medium intensity;  $k \in [0,7; 1)$ , there is a strong intensity link.

We have kept the variables as the name of the questions for a better understanding.

## 7. Findings

Since the Romanian legislation (Statute of Civil Servants) requires annual assessment of public servants, we wanted first to see if this is done in practice. Over 95% of respondents said yes which means civil servants are evaluated annually as the law stipulates.

Also asked to what extent they feel motivated in the work they do only about 6% of respondents say they are not motivated at all, while over 80% say they are motivated from a small extent to a very large extent (Figure 2).

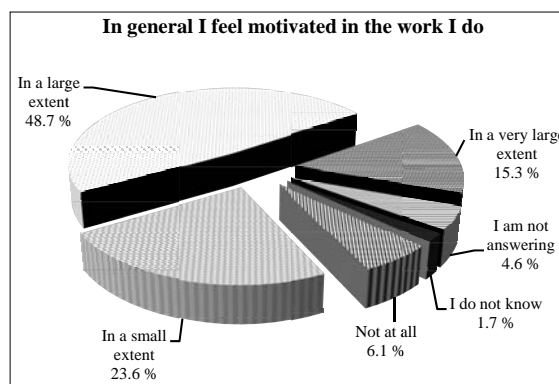


Figure 2: Respondents' opinion related to their work motivation

Source: Authors' own statistical analysis

Regarding the importance of performance evaluation, over a third (35.3%) of the respondents sustain that for them it is important to be evaluated in a large extent, while almost the same percent (28.35%) affirm for them it is very important to be evaluated (see Figure 3.). We could explain this by the fact that performance appraisal allows finding the superiors' opinion about their work, about what they need to improve and it also allows the employee to obtain a more real image about their professional performance.

You can also assess the achievement of individual professional goals (we remember that in the performance evaluation, in addition to assessing the achievement of performance criteria it is also evaluated the degree and manner individual objectives were achieved). Evaluations also allow setting goals for future work. Clearly establishing the objectives for the next period is as important as the values, strategies and vision of the organization. Researchers found that the importance of an organization's mission can increase work motivation in the public sector by making the job more important (Weiss and Piderit, 1999). Mission statements create opportunities to accelerate performance in public agencies (Wright, 2007).

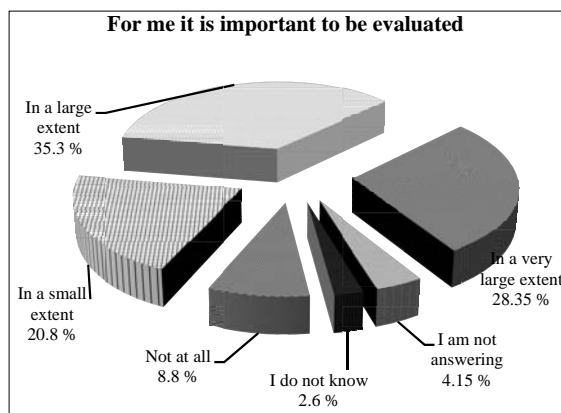


Figure 3: Respondents' opinion related to the importance of professional performance evaluation

Source: Authors' own statistical analysis

From Figure 3 above we can see that almost a third of the respondents believe that it is important for them in a small extent to be evaluated (20.8%) while for another 8.8% it is not important at all. These percentages make us believe that evaluations are made just because the law requires them; do not reflect the practical knowledge and employee's performance; they have a low degree of objectivity in presenting reality; or to some civil servants performance evaluation is not a motivator factor. Another explanation may be based on Herzberg's motivation theory, in this case evaluations are seen as a hygiene factor, and their absence do not create a lack of motivation to work, but rather cause dissatisfaction (because civil servants do not know their goals, they cannot appreciate their quality of work etc.).

We believe that individual's personality may be related to their perceptions about evaluations as there might be civil servants who do not want to be evaluated because

they fear their superiors or they fear of obtaining poor rankings. Even the literature provide us with proof on the matter saying that when employees believe their supervisor is competent and has a good knowledge of the subordinates' job duties, they will be more likely to trust their supervisor and rate their performance appraisal experience positively (Greenberg, 1986).

In addition, if civil servants have often formal and less formal discussions with supervisors, and there is communication between the two parts referring to daily work, the importance of the official evaluations decreases. This is confirmed by the fact that 71.7% of respondents often discuss their work with superiors (in a very large extent 32.8% and 38.9% in a large extent). As a result, not all individuals give the same importance to official evaluations. This is also confirmed by the direct link (sig=0.000<0.05) of a weak towards medium intensity (Kendall's coef. tau b= 0.237) existing relation between the variables '*I often discuss my work with my superior*' and '*For me it is important to be evaluated*'.

Table 4: Statistical analysis

		Symmetric Measures			
		Value	Asymp. Std. Error <sup>a</sup>	Approx. T <sup>b</sup>	Approx. Sig.
Nominal by Nominal	Contingency Coefficient	.506			.000
Ordinal by Ordinal	Kendall's tau-b	.237	.041	5.697	.000
N of Valid Cases		454			

a. Not assuming the null hypothesis.

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

Source: author's own data analysis (SPSS)

Both variables were built as Likert items with a scale from 0 to 5 (In a very large extent, In a large extent, In a small extent, Not at all, I do not know, I am not answering).

At the same time nearly a third of respondents say they feel often informally evaluated by their superiors in a very large extent (8.7%) and a large extent (22.1%). So this may also be an explanation about the importance civil servants attach to official evaluations. Individuals with a high internal need to fulfillment, who want to excel in relation to a particular set of standards, are less motivated by a performance evaluation conducted by the organization (Tomovic, 2001).

We wanted to see if there is a connection between the variables '*For me it is important to be evaluated*' and '*In general I feel motivated in the work I do*' to see to what extent civil servants' evaluations (which we have seen are done in reality) influence their work motivation. In other terms we wanted to see to what extent the fact that most of the civil servants are motivated in their work is due to their professional performance evaluation (evaluations which we have shown are an influence factor of expectancy). The statistical analysis has shown a direct link (sig=0.000<0.05) even if it has a weak to medium intensity (Kendall's coef. tau b = 0.234).

Both variables were built as Likert items with a scale from 0 to 5 (In a very large extent, In a large extent, In a small extent, Not at all, I do not know, I am not answering).

Table 5: Statistical analysis

		Symmetric Measures			
		Value	Asymp. Std. Error <sup>a</sup>	Approx. T <sup>b</sup>	Approx. Sig.
Nominal by Nominal	Contingency Coefficient	.498			.000
Ordinal by Ordinal	Kendall's tau-b	.234	.042	5.493	.000
N of Valid Cases		455			

a. Not assuming the null hypothesis.

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

Source: author's own data analysis (SPSS)

This result confirms the hypothesis that performance appraisal is important to civil servants and the importance of performance appraisal is reflected in a certain manner in their work motivation. The hypothesis we started from was confirmed, meaning *civil servants performance appraisal influences civil servants expectancy* and this in its turn influences their work motivation.

Additionally we wanted to see to what extent the type of evaluation has a direct influence on work motivation. Thus we have observed that positive evaluations motivate civil servants in doing better their jobs in a very large extent (27.4%) and large extent (38.8%), as Figure 4 shows. We have to remember that, as the law prescribes, a positive evaluation (the ratings 'good' or 'very good') may help civil servants to either advance in the pay scale or be promoted in a superior public function. That is why, in our opinion, such a large number of civil servants believe positive evaluations motivate them in doing better their jobs.

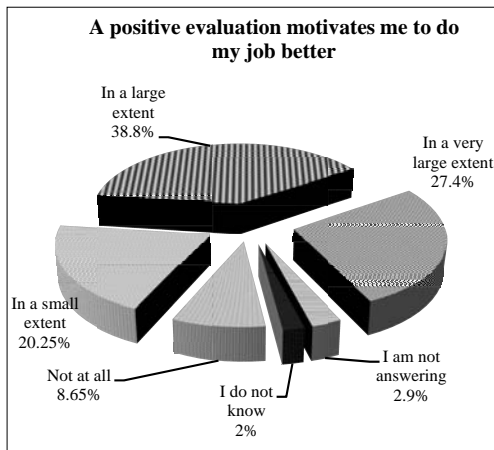


Figure 4: Respondents' opinion related to the link between positive evaluation and their work motivation

Source: Authors' own statistical analysis

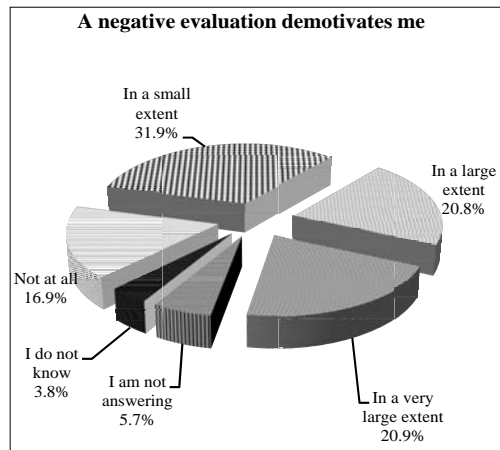


Figure 5: Respondents' opinion related to the link between negative evaluation and their work motivation

Source: Authors' own statistical analysis

In addition, a positive evaluation usually leads to an increase of esteem colleagues and superiors have towards them, and to an increase of trust in one self along with a self-esteem increase, all of these leading to an increase of expectancy. There are also civil servants (8.65% of respondents) who claim that they perform their duties well

whether or not they receive a positive evaluation. For them the stimuli maybe the nature of work they do, meaning they are civil servants who do their job well because they love what they do, they have an intrinsic motivation. We believe these are similar to what literature (Tomovic, 2001) calls 'hard chargers'. Hard chargers are typically motivated by personal responsibility, feedback, and moderate risks. On the other hand, not everyone wants a challenging job. While a portion of the labor force seeks interesting and challenging jobs, these cannot be generalized to the entire population.

Nearly half of respondents (41.7%) are demotivated in a very large and large extent by getting a negative evaluation. These civil servants may feel demotivated probably because, according to law, in case of obtaining a negative evaluation (the ratings 'unsatisfactory' or 'satisfactory') they could be demoted or even released from the public function. If taking into consideration the actual national economic crisis and the fact that many civil servants have lost their jobs, we could state that civil servants are afraid of losing their jobs (to which obtaining a negative evaluation has a great influence). Relating this to the *expectancy* element, we can conclude that civil servants *believe* that obtaining a negative evaluation will lead to negative outcomes (as the ones presented above), which means their expectancy is influenced by the type of evaluation they might receive.

It is interesting to notice that almost 17% of the respondents believe a negative evaluation does not demotivate them at all while other 31.9% believe a negative evaluation demotivates them in a small extent (see Figure 5). One likely explanation is that negative evaluations are perceived useful in discovering mistakes and correct them, and do not inspire fear. Another one could be related to the fact that these civil servants do not fear of the consequences a negative evaluation may have over their jobs/career (demotion, release form the public function).

We must keep in mind that as it is stated in the literature (Liu and Dong, 2012) one of the problems of employee's performance evaluation in general, is that it is often used either to reward or punish, while it should be aimed to develop their professional skills. Most times the fact they like their work (resulting in a certain level of intrinsic motivation) it is not enough to motivate employees to work and therefore they also need merits recognition from their superiors.

## **8. Concluding discussion and implications**

In the public sector there are numerous discussions regarding what performance means. That is why it is important prior to evaluating civil servants professional performance to define first what this performance implies.

Pointing performance in the public sector is even more important as we speak of public money and citizens' demands referring to the quality of civil servants are high. However, it is difficult to define performance criteria that would consistently lead to above average results and also be generally valid and applicable to all categories of public institutions and civil servants.

From this study we have found that performance evaluation is important, among others, also because it influences the motivation process, in other words it affects civil servants' work motivation.

Applying the expectancy theory in local public administration and not only, requires from individuals to believe they have the ability and skills necessary to exert the work effort and this effort to be assessed in a manner that would lead to an increased self-esteem and confidence.

In this study we have started from the hypothesis that *civil servants performance appraisal influences civil servants expectancy* (which will also be reflected into influencing their work motivation). In order for this to happen, civil servants had first to find the performance appraisal important to them (to influence their beliefs) which we have found to be the case of more than 64% of the respondents. Secondly, in order for performance appraisal to influence expectancy and through it, work motivation, we have shown that there is a direct link with the fact that most civil servants are motivated in the work they do also due to their professional performance evaluation. Thirdly, we have shown that the type of evaluation influences expectancy since most civil servants *believe* that obtaining a positive evaluation will lead to positive outcomes for them, while a negative one will lead to undesired ones. In addition, we have shown that the type of evaluation has a direct influence on work motivation also (which is normal, since it influences expectancy).

These results show that performance appraisal is important to civil servants, and the importance of performance appraisal is reflected in a certain manner in their work motivation. Thus, the hypothesis we started from was confirmed, meaning civil servants performance appraisal influences civil servants expectancy and this in its turn influences their work motivation.

In our opinion regarding the performance appraisal in public administration there are certain things that should be taken into consideration, as follows:

- compliance with the law requirements on the frequency and how evaluations have to be done. For this we believe it is required the involvement of the city halls management through the assessors that make sure evaluations are made according to law;
- monitoring how evaluations are made in order to reflect fairly the performances and to remove any trace of bias on the performance of the assessed civil servants;
- paying high attention to how unsatisfactory evaluations are presented in order not to affect the public servants in a negative manner;
- using more types of evaluation. For example we believe using the 360° evaluation (even though it would be difficult to put into practice, due especially to bureaucracy) would offer an overview of the civil servants' work;
- using the performance evaluations' results mainly to develop civil servants' competencies and just in subsidiary for rewarding or sanctioning them.

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