

THE PROBATION PERIOD FOR DEBUTANT CIVIL SERVANTS. INFLUENCING EXPECTANCY

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Abstract

This study is part of a broader research on work motivation in the Romanian local public administration, based on Vroom's motivational model. The research has tried to diagnose Romanian local public institutions (city halls in particular) regarding the work motivation level of their civil servants. Since the research was too broad to be presented entirely in this article, the authors will show only the findings obtained in one city hall from a city, county residence. Due to the same reason, this paper refers to just one of the Vroom's model elements (the expectancy) and to one of the aspects that could influence it: the probation period for the debutant civil servants.

The probation period is critical in preparing civil servants for their future job and career within the local public administration. That is why it can influence the expectancy of civil servants, which in its turn, (from Vroom's' model perspective) influences work motivation.

Keywords: civil servants, probation period, expectancy, local public administration, work motivation.



1. Introduction

People often use the expression 'I am not motivated' when asked why they are not doing something. 'I need some motivation' is another cliché used mostly by the employees when asked to do a supplementary task or work harder. So, people often use the term 'motivation' when related to various aspects of their everyday life.

However one cannot talk about a general and universal definition of motivation for all the people. Some individuals adopt a certain behavior in order to meet their needs, others because of their personal ambitions, out of habit or because of the attractiveness of the associated rewards and the examples could go on.

Many researchers and specialists have dedicated their studies to motivation. In all its forms, work motivation received special attention. This is especially due to the importance managers attribute to knowing what motivates their employees in order to achieve performance. Most studies on work motivation have usually taken place in the industrial environment. Vroom's Expectancy Theory, on which our research is based, was just one of those many studies. In this case we try to analyze work motivation within the public sector, namely in local public administration.

2. Work motivation in the public sector

Motivation is, by definition, a multidimensional concept that appeals to notions such as direction (purpose), intensity (effort), and duration (persistence in effort) (Levy-Leboyer, 2003). Some specialists (Hung-Wen and Ching-Hsiang, 2009) believe that motivation is the drive and the persistence needed to achieve goals, while others (Cesare and Sadri, 2003) believe that motivation is a set of processes that stimulate, direct, and maintain human behavior towards achieving a particular goal. There are opinions (Mercier, 2002) according to which the gap between the current situation and the desired one (the target) determines an individual's motivation, if the desired goal seems realistic enough to be reached. Motivation is a psychological process that causes the onset, direction and persistence of voluntary actions oriented for reaching the goals (Mitchell, 1982).

Most times people talk about the motivation of doing something and not about motivation in general. Within the work field the specific term is 'work motivation'. Work motivation is 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 necessary effort and work recognition (Frances, 1995). The public sector, and especially the public administration is probably one of the fields in which keeping the employees motivated is one of the hardest things to do. This is due to legislative regulations and strict rules that public institutions need to obey and, as a consequence, to the red tape. However, in the public sector motivation is often associated with high performance (Brewer, 2008, pp. 136-154).

One of the most important outcomes of motivation in public administration, which is often observable, is the civil servants' behavior manifested as increased work involvement, increased commitment to the public institution, kindness in serving the

citizens and, of course, performance. Studies (Androniceanu, 2008) have shown that 76% of the respondent civil servants feel that motivation is particularly important in stimulating personnel for the proper functioning of public institutions, 22% believe this should be taken into account and 2% have no particular interest for the topic.

3. Vroom's Expectancy Theory. Theory limits

Motivational theories assume that human behavior is oriented towards goal achievement. Depending on how they were approached, three main categories of motivational theories have been identified: content theories, process theories and consolidation theories. Content theories are based on people's needs and what determine people's behavior (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 are the relations between these factors (such as the ones of Vroom and Locke).

As Klitzner and Anderson (1977) state, Vroom's theory is a process motivational theory, since motivation is seen as a multiplication of three factors. The expectancy theory, perhaps more than the preceding ones, offers a comprehensive view of motivation and integrates many of the elements of the needs, equity and reinforcement theories (Gordon *et al.*, 1990, p. 450).

Vroom's Expectancy Theory tries to explain 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. So, as a result, one can try to orient behavior towards anticipated and individualized goals. His theory is based on finding motivation determinants. As such, motivation is defined as being 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. The absence of any element from the above mentioned ones, will lead to a lack of motivation (that is why in the above formula there is a multiplication and not an addition sign). As Buchanan and Huczynski (1985, p. 58) state: 'If you believe that a particular behavior will certainly lead to a particular income, but place no value on that outcome, then 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'. According to Luthans (1989) everyone has a unique combination of valences, instrumentalities and expectancies.

We must note that Vroom's expectancy theory may not be as popular as others (for example Maslow's or Herzberg's) because, according to Luthans (1989), it indicates only the conceptual determinants of motivation and how they are related and does not provide specific suggestions on what motivates organizational members. Even so,

the literature provides numerous studies based on the model. Van Eerde and Thierry (1996) have identified 74 empirical studies that test expectancy theory predictions conducted prior to 1990. Ambrose and Kulik (1999) identify other ten such studies since 1990. Navarro (2009) in a review of Maslow, Herzberg and Vroom in the construction, engineering and project management fields has found other ten studies after 1990. According to Ambrose and Kulik (1999) the decrease (in the number of studies) is likely to reflect the theory's maturity.

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

For a better understanding of this study, we have to mention a few aspects concerning Vroom's model, as professor Eraly (2009) describes them:

1. If any of the model's factors is null, motivation will also be null.
2. The model does not refer to motivation in general, but to the motivation of doing something (in our case: work motivation). Even though several types of motivation (motivation to learn, public service motivation etc.) have been identified, from all of them work motivation has been given the highest importance by both theoreticians and practitioners. That is why, in our study, we also refer to the civil servants work motivation. Pinder (1997) describes work motivation as the set of internal and external forces that initiate work-related behavior and determine its form, direction, intensity, and duration. Frances (1995) sees it as an assembly of aspirations that each worker attaches to its workplace, each aspiration having a probability coefficient that depends on the work done.
3. This model could be the base for a diagnose analysis of organizations by finding the answers to the following questions:
 - Is the expectancy level sufficient? How could it be strengthened? (through better formation/trainings, through higher mobility and so on);
 - Is the instrumentality enough?
 - How are valences built?

Like most of the motivational theories, Vroom's expectancy theory has also known several critics. Most of them relate to the difficulty of its empirical validation and operationalization. The attempts to validate the theory have been complicated by methodological, criterion and measurement problems. Most importantly, most studies have failed to replicate the methodology as it was originally proposed (Robbins, 1989).

A continuing issue in expectancy theory research is the interpretation and operationalization of the expectancy, instrumentality and valence constructs (see Van Eerde and Thierry, 1996; Klein, 1991). For example, Klein (1991) noted that different operationalizations of expectancy theory constructs are associated with different study results. His research demonstrated that different operationalizations influenced the significance and direction of empirical findings.

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 (Heneman and Schwab, 1972) and (3) repeated measure of the model's validity over time (reliability) do not exist (Wahba and House, 1974).

3.1. *Expectancy*

Based on the above mentions, in the broader research we have conducted, we believed that the following aspects: (a) debutant civil servants probation period, (b) the training period, (c) mobility, and (d) civil servants' evaluation are relevant for measuring the level of civil servants expectancy.

Since presenting the results for all these elements would exceed the length limitations required for such an article, we have decided to present only the findings related to how the civil servants probation period influences their expectancy based on the questionnaires applied to civil servants from one city hall. In the following paragraphs we will present a few aspects related to expectancy.

Vroom used the term 'subjective probability' for the individual's expectation that behavior would lead to a particular income. This is subjective because individuals differ in their estimations of the relationship between behavior and outcomes. As a probability, it may vary between 0 and 1, from no chance at all to absolute certainty (Buchanan and Huczynski, 1985, p. 58). Expectancy is what one awaits related to the individual effort. It could be defined also as 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.

Atkinson (1957) defines expectancies as individual's anticipations that their performance will be followed by either success or failure. Bandura (1977) distinguishes two kinds of expectancy beliefs: (1) outcome expectancies are expectations that a given behavior can produce a certain outcome and (2) efficacy expectations are an individual's expectations that he or she can produce the outcome.

Expectancy is important because it assumes that behavior depends on a self-estimation of being able to achieve the valued goals (Petrie, 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).

According to the literature (Eraly, 2009), expectancy depends on several factors:

1. the clarity of goals regarding performance;
2. the self-esteem (Gaignard, 2003) based on the self-opinion or the ratio between the 'ideal me' and 'me the ideal one';
3. others' esteem / confidence regarding one person's abilities;
4. the individual's competencies and abilities as a result of his work experience, knowledge;
5. colleagues' / boss's support; and

6. the available resources; an organization/institution can influence the expectancy through the lack of resources needed by the employee for doing his job.

With all these, expectancy is often perceived in a subjective manner, even when referring to objective elements. Even if an employee has all the necessary resources in order to perform a task, but he does not feel capable of doing it, his expectancy will be low.

People come to recognize what is valued in a particular organization and learn what they can achieve and what is not possible. It is therefore possible to identify features of organizational life that influence people's expectations (Buchanan and Huczynski, 1985, p. 61). According to Eraly (2009), the organization could influence the expectancy level through: organizing work in such a manner to allow competence development, training programs or internal mobility (such as transfers).

Related to public administration, in our opinion, we could add the debutant civil servants probation period to the above mentioned factors. Law no. 188/1999, regarding the Statute of civil servants states that the purpose of the probation period for debutant civil servants is to verify their competences, to form them in a practical manner (not just theoretical) and also to allow them to get acquainted with the specificity of public administration. In other words, in our opinion, the purpose of the probation period is to help and at the same time prepare the debutant civil servants for their future jobs. As a result it could 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).

4. The debutant civil servants probation period

In this section we will present the most important aspects related to the debutant civil servants probation period.

In Europe, most public administrations require for their future civil servants to follow a probation period before entering the public service.

For example, in the Irish Civil Service, the probation is the trial period during which new entrants are assessed for their suitability. It usually lasts one year. Within this period, the new entrants are assessed on efficiency, conduct, punctuality, health and sick leave record. If an officer's probationary service is unsatisfactory the appointment can be terminated at any time during the probationary period. Officers who are appointed on the basis of a one year probationary contract and who satisfactorily complete their period of probation will be appointed as an established Civil Servant in the Civil Service (Government of Ireland, 2008).

In England, on the other hand, the departments and government agencies have the authority to determine whether their staff should be required to serve a period of probation and under what terms. Usually this period does not exceed two years (The UK Civil Service, [Online] available at <http://www.civilservice.gov.uk/about/index.aspx>).

Since our study was conducted on Romanian civil servants, we find it useful to present some of the particularities regarding the debutant civil servants' probation period in the Romanian legislation.

The probation period is mandatory for all the persons entering the Civil Service as debutants in an execution public function. Its purpose is to help the entrants know the activities and objectives of the institution and to acquire the specific abilities required by the public function. The probation period varies from 6 to 12 months depending on the class the civil servants will be appointed to. During the probation period, the debutant civil servants' activity is supervised by a coordinator (an appointed civil servant). At the end of the probation period both the debutant and the coordinator have to write an activity report describing the activities in which the debutant was involved, eventual difficulties, new acquired abilities, its conduct during the period and so on. Based on the two reports and an interview with the debutant civil servant, its activity is assessed. If the evaluation has a positive result (the performance was assessed as 'proper') the debutant will be appointed in the public function definitively, otherwise he/she will be dismissed.

5. Research methodology

Our study's purpose is to show in what manner the debutant civil servants probation period influences their expectancy. Prior to conducting the research, we have analyzed the answers of a pilot sample composed of 10 civil servants from one commune's city hall. After interviewing two of them, the questionnaires were designed and distributed to all of them. Based on the responses the civil servants provided, one could assume that the probation period contributes to an increase of their expectancy. This was due to the fact that most of the sample respondents were middle aged people and argued that during the probation period (at the beginning of their career in public administration) they had the occasion to put in practice their theoretical knowledge and they gained professional experience through this period. As a result, they felt more prepared and more self-confident regarding the public jobs they will occupy after being appointed.

Therefore we have started the research based on the hypothesis that the probation period contributes to an increase of the civil servants' expectancy. This should also reflect, in a certain degree, on their work motivation level.

Data was collected through a comprehensive questionnaire, which took into consideration multiple aspects of the work and career of public servants in local administration. The questionnaire had 80 questions divided into ten different sections. The questions were formulated based on the Romanian legislation applied to the activity and career of civil servants. For the present study we have analyzed only the questions related to the probation period of civil servants. We should add that all questions were closed-ended questions. Some of the used variables 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 answers as accurate 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'. For

a better understanding (and in order to avoid confusion), in the research results presented below we kept the questions from the questionnaires in exactly the same form, without changing names (the variables).

The questionnaires were applied in a Romanian city hall, county residence in February 2011. After obtaining the city hall's approval on conducting the research, we have distributed the questionnaires directly to the civil servants in each office. We have to keep in mind that among the personnel from a city hall there is also a category of personnel hired based on the labor code, which did not make the purpose of this study; therefore the questionnaires were given only to the statutory civil servants.

We should also mention that the broader research (from which this study is part of) implied distributing questionnaires in five different city halls, on samples of 150 civil servants per city hall, in order to ensure the representativeness of the final sample.

At the time when this study was conducted, the city hall in cause had a number of 592 statutory civil servants, but the questionnaires were given to only 150 of them. We have given a questionnaire to every fourth civil servant from each department. Anonymity was ensured during the whole process of data gathering and analysis, no names or personal details being requested from respondents.

The questionnaires were distributed in two consecutive days, but some of the civil servants were missing from their offices due to various causes (they were working on the field, they had vacation or medical leaves). The questionnaires were gathered after one, and respectively, two weeks, in order to give the civil servants time to answer all the questions. Out of the 150 questionnaires distributed, we gathered 108, out of which 8 were eliminated due to the fact that all the checked answers were the ones of: 'I do not know' and another 5 were eliminated from the final sample because of the lack of answers to most of the questions. One could mention here that these aspects are considered to be the main limits of this study, due to the reticence and even refusal of some civil servants to answer the questions in the questionnaires. The most common argument was related to the fact they did not have time to fill in the questionnaires. We should add here that the average time needed to answer to all the questions was ten minutes.

To highlight the main aspects and elements a descriptive statistics analysis has been used. Since the variables are ordinal ones, we have analyzed the values of the median and mode. Furthermore, by using the Chi-Square Test and Kendall's Rank Correlation Coefficient, we have given explanations to the results. For a better understanding, we will remind that if Chi-Square Test (Sig.) $> 0.05 \Rightarrow$ the null hypothesis is accepted (there is no rank correlation between the variables), and if Sig. $< 0.05 \Rightarrow$ 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 is included in the $[0;0,3)$ interval, there is a weak intensity link; if k is included in the $[0,3; 0,7)$ interval, the link is of medium intensity and if k is included in the $[0,7;1)$ interval, there is a strong intensity link.

5.1 Respondent's demographic characteristics

Most of the respondents are between 36 and 45 years old, meaning 34.7% of the total, and over half of them are women. 43.16% of the respondents have service seniority between 5 and 14 years and over 90% of them have an execution public function (see Figure 1 below).

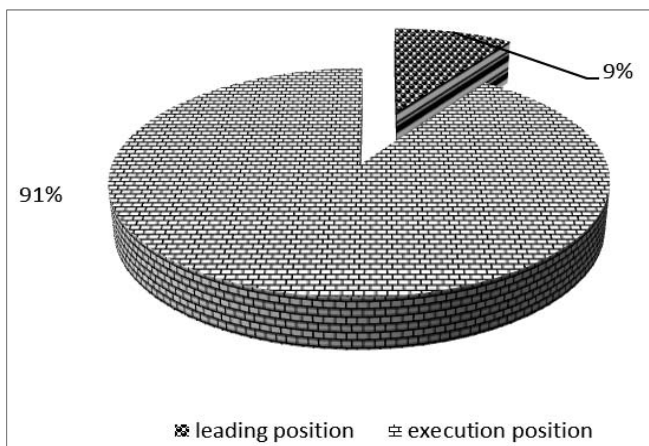


Figure 1: The structure of the respondents based on the job position they hold

6. Research results

Analyzing the responses of the civil servants, one could observe that only 11.58% of the respondents believe that not every civil servant follows a period of probation before being appointed in the public function, while 27.37% state they do not know or have chosen not to respond. (The exact statement was: 'Each civil servant follows a period of probation before the appointment', while the possible answers were: Yes, No, I do not know, I do not answer). The majority of the respondents (61.05%) believe that every civil servant follows a period of probation before the appointment.

At the same time, almost the same percent (65%) of the respondents consider the probation period a formality since they have answered positively to the statement 'The aim of the probation period is train the debutants and to verify their skills, but the reality is different'. Again just a small percentage (9.47%) of the civil servants believe the opposite, while 25.26% of the respondents said they do not know or refused to answer.

Many respondents (46.31%) consider the probation period to be a formal internship. (The exact statement was: 'The probation period is a formal period', while the possible answers were: Yes, No, I do not know, I do not answer). However, a significant proportion (22.11%) of respondents believes that the probation period is not a formal one. In this case it is interesting to note that 12.63% expressed their opinion, choosing not to respond, and 18.95% of them claim not to know the answer to the question.

All the aforementioned arguments lead us to believe that the probation period for the debutant civil servants is instituted by law in order to help them (that is, in our opinion, what results from the law stipulation) but unfortunately in reality it is being

considered a formality. We wanted to verify this assumption by analyzing if there is a rank correlation between the variables 'The aim of the probation period is to train the debutants and to verify their skills, but the reality is different' and 'The probation period is a formal period'. The answer was yes, there is a direct rank correlation of a medium intensity (the sig = 0.000 < 0.05; Kendall's correlation coefficient is 0.384) between the two variables, confirming the assumption made earlier. This means that indeed, the probation period for the debutant civil servants is a formal internship period and does not achieve its goal in reality.

Asked if they have followed a probation period as debutant civil servants, before being appointed into the Civil Service, more than half of the respondents (63.16%) answered positively. From the figure 2 below one could notice there is a percentage of 28.42% of the respondents who did not follow a probation period before being appointed to the civil service.

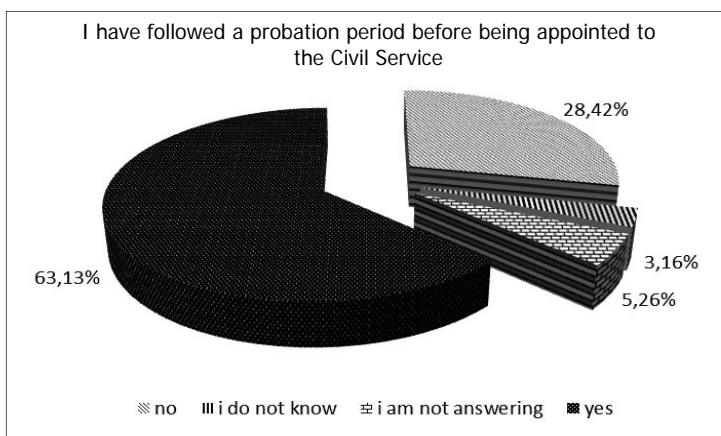


Figure 2: Response rates regarding the completion of a probation period

One explanation, in our opinion, could be related to the fact that the Statute of the civil servants (which mentioned for the first time the compulsoriness of the probation period for the civil servants) was adopted for the first time in Romania in 1999. Considering that over a third of the civil servants that responded to our questionnaire were aged between 36-45 years, we believe that they were, probably, already occupying their jobs when the Statute was adopted, so the probation period was not required for them anymore. We have tested this assumption by correlating the age variable and the variable 'I have followed a probation period before being appointed to the Civil Service'. No correlation was found between these variables (the sig = 0.323 > 0.05). Also, no correlation was found between the seniority in local public administration variable (we have analyzed the answers of those civil servants hired before 1999) and the variable 'I have followed a probation period before being appointed to the Civil Service' (the sig = 0.587 > 0.05). It means that almost a third of the respondents that have not gone through such a probation period had other reasons than the one regarding the implementation of the Statute.

Since utility value or usefulness refers to how a task fits into an individual's future plans (Wigfield, 1994), the most representative question regarding the importance of the probation period in influencing expectancy we considered to be the one related to the probation period's utility for the job afterwards (The exact question was: 'The probation period was useful for the work afterwards'). If the civil servant believes the probation period is useful for their job afterwards, his expectancy level will grow and he will put more effort into his work. The civil servant will attach a link between making the effort (performing well in the probation period) and the immediate result (the appointment in the public function).

At an overall view, it is important to note that most of the respondents believe that the probation period has been useful for their work afterwards. From the respondents who said they have been through such a probation period the majority believes that it helped them even if for some of them (36.67%) it was in a small extent, as it can be seen in the figure below.

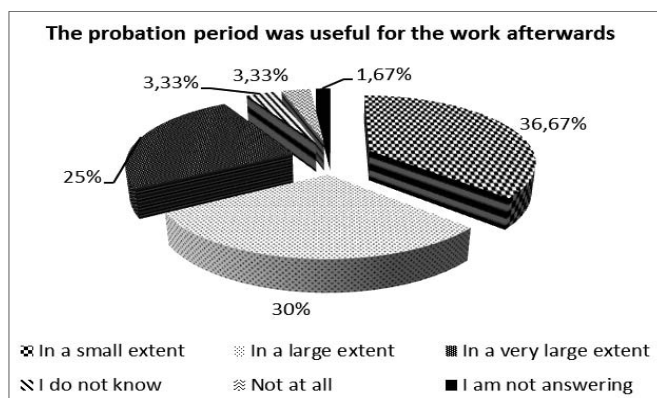


Figure 3: Response rates regarding the utility of the probation period

We wanted to see why the perception about the utility of the probation period for the afterwards work differs for some civil servants. In order to do this, first, we have analyzed the rank correlation existing between the variables: 'The probation period was useful for the work afterwards' and 'The aim of the probation period is to form practical the debutants and to verify their skills, but the reality is different'. It resulted a direct correlation of a medium intensity (the sig = 0.000 < 0.05; Kendall's correlation coefficient is 0.693) which could suggest that among the reasons why, for over a third of the civil servants sample, the probation period has not had utility for the work afterwards, is also the fact that its purpose is not reached in reality, as one could have observed in the above paragraphs.

Rasch and Tosi (1992) demonstrated, on a study on research engineers, that effort affects performance and is affected by goal difficulty, goal clarity and achievement needs. As mentioned before, obtaining a high expectancy level implies also a high self-esteem and confidence in one's own abilities. We wanted to see if the probation period seemed difficult for the respondent civil servants and if so, if it has influenced their self-esteem or confidence (by decreasing them).

The majority (90%) of the respondents stated that the probation period was not difficult for them. In our opinion there could be two explanations.

The first one refers to the fact that the civil servants did not find the probation period difficult, so for them getting appointed afterwards was considered a certainty (which again would lead us to the conclusion that the probation period may be considered a formality). We have verified this through the statement 'I was not sure that at the end of the probation period I will be appointed in the public function'. A high percentage (41.67%) of the respondents answered 'In a small extent', 6.67% 'In a large extent' 5% 'In a very large extent', while 26.67% 'Not at all'. The rest of the respondents answered 'I do not know' (11.67%) and 'I do not answer' (8.33%). Looking at the percentages, over half of the civil servants (53.34%) were in some extent sure they will get the appointment in the public function which confirms our first explanation.

In order to see the link between the perception of the probation period's difficulty and its influence on the self-esteem (and through it on expectancy) we have correlated the variables 'I was not sure that at the end of the probation period I will be appointed in the public function' and 'The probation period was a difficult one'. It resulted a direct correlation of weak intensity (the $\text{sig} = 0.003 < 0.05$; Kendall's correlation coefficient is 0.281). In our opinion this correlation shows that the civil servants' self-confidence is influenced by the difficulty of the probation period (even if it is a weak influence). This is confirmed also by the fact that the majority of civil servants believe the probation period was not difficult while most of them were, to some extent, sure they will be appointed into the public function.

The second one assumes that, whether the probation period was considered a difficult one or not, the civil servants had a high self-confidence and believed they are capable to finish the probation period (and were motivated to do so) due to the existence of some inner stimuli, which, regardless the difficulty of the probation period, would have determined the civil servants to get the appointment afterwards. This means that between the two variables ('The probation period was a difficult one' and 'During the probation period I was motivated in order to get the appointment') no link should be found, which was also the case in reality. We have found no rank correlation between the perception over the probation period difficulty and the self-confidence and motivation to get the appointment.

7. Conclusion

The probation period, in our opinion, should help debutant civil servants to acquire knowledge, to familiarize themselves with the tasks, job duties and the work environment. It also should verify their professional skills. As a consequence it influences the perceptions about their own person (their self-esteem), and their skills in order to make the work effort.

We believe the probation period leads to an increase of the expectancy level only if a few conditions are met:

1. The debutant civil servants do actually follow such a probation period.

2. The aim of the probation period is reached in reality (it is not considered a formality); and
3. The debutant civil servants believe that this period was useful to them in their work afterwards.

As one could observe, the conditions set out above, in order for the probation period to increase civil servants expectancy, are not entirely met. In addition, the majority of the respondents believe that the real purpose of this period is not achieved in practice, but in very few cases.

Concerning our hypothesis, one could say that it is partially validated since that probation period increased the expectancy of some civil servants (the ones who believed the probation period was useful for their work afterwards).

We believe that civil servants' probation period could increase even more their expectancy level, and indirectly their work motivation, as Vroom's model states. In our opinion, one of the main measures that could be taken in order to increase the expectancy level of all civil servants, refers to the internship coordinators, which should be pressured to monitor better the activity of 'trainees', to ensure the accumulation of practical skills and to verify these skills.

Like most studies based on Vroom's expectancy theory, the present study also suffers certain limits like the difficulty of empirically testing the theory in public administration (due to the civil servants reticence) or the difficulty of operationalizing certain concepts. Nevertheless, we believe this to be a small contribution in the existing literature concerning individual's motivation and human behavior.

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