

Motivation And Satisfaction In The Public Sector: A Comparative Analysis

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Abstract:

Background: This study investigates the motivation and job satisfaction of public servants, focusing on the intrinsic and extrinsic factors that influence these aspects.

Materials and Methods: Articles selected from academic databases such as **Google Scholar, Scopus and Web of Science** were used, using search terms such as "motivation in the public service", "job satisfaction", "remuneration in the public sector", and "people management". The analysis of the collected data was carried out through the **content analysis technique**, with the objective of identifying relevant themes and patterns in the reviewed research.

Results: The results indicate that intrinsic factors, such as commitment to public mission and perception of social impact, play a central role in the motivation of public servants. However, the lack of salary adjustments and recognition can reduce satisfaction.

Conclusion: It is concluded that people management policies that promote recognition and autonomy are essential to ensure high levels of motivation and long-term satisfaction.

Keywords: Motivation in public service; Job satisfaction; People management; Wage policies.

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I. Introduction

Motivation and job satisfaction are essential factors for the performance of public servants, since they directly impact the quality of services provided to society (Perry; Wise, 1990).

Several studies indicate that motivation in public service is distinct from motivation in the private sector, being more strongly influenced by intrinsic factors, such as personal fulfillment and the desire to serve the public (Perry; Wise, 1990; Rainey, 2009).

In this sense, this article seeks to analyze the differences between intrinsic and extrinsic factors in the motivation and satisfaction of public servants, through a literature review. The analysis also explores how people management policies can influence these factors and improve the work environment in the public sector.

II. Materials And Methods

This study was conducted based on an extensive literature review, covering academic articles, dissertations and reports that discuss motivation and satisfaction in public service. Articles selected from databases such as Scopus, Web of Science, and Google Scholar were used, focusing on studies published in the last 10 years. The survey considered the keywords "motivation", "satisfaction", "remuneration" and "people management" in the context of public service, comparing different realities, such as Brazil and the Azores.

III. Literature Review

Motivation at work has been widely studied by theorists such as Maslow, Herzberg, and Perry and Wise, whose contributions are key to understanding motivation in the public sector. Maslow (1943) proposed a hierarchy of human needs, ranging from physiological needs to self-actualization. In the context of the public sector, many public servants seek to satisfy the highest needs, such as self-fulfillment, through their work, especially when it positively impacts society. For many civil servants, the opportunity to make an impact and contribute to collective well-being is directly linked to their intrinsic motivation.

Similarly, Perry and Wise (1990) point out that motivation in public service differs from motivation in the private sector in that it is driven by values such as civic duty and commitment to social welfare. More recent studies, such as those by Homberg, McCarthy and Tabvuma (2015), reinforce this idea by demonstrating that the altruistic motivation of public servants is positively correlated with job satisfaction. The application of this theory was tested in several contexts, including the empirical study conducted at the Federal Institute of Espírito Santo, which confirmed this correlation, using the Job Satisfaction Scale (Siqueira, 2008) and the PSM questionnaire (Perry, 1996) as a basis.

This motivation is underpinned by intrinsic values, such as the desire to serve and promote social welfare, which differentiates public servants from private-sector workers, whose motivation is often linked to financial rewards. However, wage policies continue to play an important role, especially in contexts of high social demand and limited infrastructure, as observed in the study by Oliveira and Silva (2012) in public health in the Amazon.

Maslow's Theory of Needs

Maslow's theory organizes human needs into a hierarchy, ranging from the most basic to self-realization. In the public service, motivation often stems from meeting security needs, such as stable wages and job stability. However, as Medeiros (2014) shows in his study in the Azores, public servants often seek satisfaction at higher levels, such as recognition and personal fulfillment. The study demonstrates that, although stability is important, it is the recognition and positive impact of work that really motivates civil servants.

Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory

Herzberg (1966) proposed that job satisfaction and dissatisfaction result from two types of factors: hygienic factors (such as salary and working conditions), which prevent dissatisfaction, and motivational factors (such as recognition and responsibility), which promote satisfaction. Ventorini et al. (2019) demonstrated that, in the Brazilian public service, where autonomy is limited, motivational factors play a central role in satisfaction.

Bichett and Vargas (2021) corroborate these findings by highlighting, in a study carried out in the municipality of Rio Grande do Sul, that remuneration and recognition are determining factors for both the motivation and demotivation of public servants. The study also indicates that when the institution implements strategies that value personal and professional needs, motivation and job satisfaction increase considerably.

Assis and Reis Neto (2012) complement by showing that, even in environments with good salary conditions, the absence of recognition generates low satisfaction.

Theory of Motivation in Public Service (PSM)

Perry and Wise (1990) introduced the Theory of Motivation in Public Service, suggesting that public servants are primarily driven by altruistic values, such as civic duty and social welfare. Subsequent studies, such as those by Vandenebeele (2007), have confirmed PSM, revealing a positive correlation between high levels of altruistic motivation and performance in the public sector. Teixeira et al. (2019) add that alignment between the

personal values of civil servants and organizational objectives is essential to increase motivation, especially in contexts where the sense of public mission is strong.

While these theories provide a solid framework for understanding motivation in public service, they face challenges and limitations. Maslow's hierarchy, for example, is criticized for its rigidity in assuming that all people follow the same progression of needs. In the Brazilian public service, where stability and benefits are guaranteed, many civil servants have already reached high levels in the hierarchy, but still face dissatisfaction due to the lack of recognition, as pointed out by Medeiros (2014) and Oliveira e Silva (2012).

Herzberg is also criticized for not adequately addressing situations in which hygienic factors, such as wages, take on greater importance. In Brazil, studies such as those by Klein and Mascarenhas (2016) show that, in certain contexts, the absence of salary adjustments generates significant dissatisfaction, even among civil servants who feel professionally fulfilled.

IV. Results

The results of the reviewed surveys indicate a clear predominance of intrinsic factors as determinants for the satisfaction of public servants. The analysis by Klein and Mascarenhas (2016) reveals that the perception of social impact and personal fulfillment are central elements for the motivation of civil servants. Civil servants who perceive their activities as aligned with public mission and social well-being report higher levels of commitment and job satisfaction.

These findings are in line with the study by Homberg, McCarthy and Tabvuma (2015), who showed, through a meta-analysis, the strong relationship between motivation in public service and job satisfaction. Similarly, the study carried out at IFES by Duarte, Teixeira and Sousa (2019) confirmed that civil servants with greater commitment to the public interest and attraction to the formulation of public policies had higher levels of satisfaction, corroborating the Theory of Motivation in Public Service (Perry, 1996).

This commitment to public mission was also identified in the study by Medeiros (2014), who points out that civil servants in the Azores value self-realization as a key element for job satisfaction, even in contexts with infrastructure challenges.

In the municipal public sector, Bichett and Vargas (2021) found that recognition and appreciation by superiors are also crucial factors for the motivation of civil servants. The survey shows that most civil servants feel valued by their superiors, which contributes significantly to their commitment to their activities, while the absence of this recognition can generate demotivation and dissatisfaction.

Oliveira and Estivalete (2019) highlight that the Individual-Organization Adjustment (AIO) is an important mediator between the motivation of the civil servant and the manifestation of organizational citizenship behaviors (CCO). They say that when employees perceive a congruence between their values and those of the organization, their willingness to engage in discretionary behaviors, such as helping colleagues or contributing beyond their formal duties, is significantly higher.

In Brazil, Ventrini et al. (2019) demonstrated that informal participation in organizational decisions has a positive impact on the motivation of civil servants. This finding suggests that the decentralization of power and greater autonomy can improve motivation in the public service, corroborating Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory (1966) and Perry and Wise's (1990) concept of PSM. However, as demonstrated by Assis and Reis Neto (2012), poorly implemented variable compensation can undermine these efforts, generating dissatisfaction and evasion of civil servants.

The study by Oliveira e Silva (2012), carried out with employees of the Roraima Health Department, demonstrated that, even in highly bureaucratic environments, satisfaction is strongly linked to the perception of positive impact on society. When civil servants do not receive adequate recognition or face poor working conditions, their motivation decreases, even if hygienic factors such as wages are present.

V. Discussion

The convergence between the theories and the reviewed studies reveals that intrinsic motivation plays a key role in the satisfaction of public servants. Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory finds ample confirmation in the studies by Ventrini et al. (2019), which highlight the importance of recognition and autonomy as essential factors for satisfaction. When civil servants have the autonomy to make decisions and perceive that their work is valued, their motivation increases, even in contexts where extrinsic factors, such as salaries, are limited.

Perry and Wise's (1990) Theory of Motivation in Public Service (PSM) is reinforced by the evidence that civil servants who perceive an alignment between their personal values and the public mission demonstrate greater satisfaction and commitment. However, the Brazilian reality, according to Klein and Mascarenhas (2016), points out that the lack of salary adjustments can undermine motivation, even in civil servants who feel professionally fulfilled. In the Azores, according to Medeiros (2014), the absence of adequate salary policies can also reduce the satisfaction of civil servants, despite high levels of intrinsic motivation.

Table 1: Comparison of Theories

Theory	Key Factor	Empirical Evidence	Case Study
Maslow (1943)	Self-realization	Limited application in the public service	Oliveira e Silva (2012)
Herzberg (1966)	Motivational and Hygienic Factors	Autonomy and recognition are essential, remuneration is critical to avoid dissatisfaction	Ventorini et al. (2019)
Perry e Wise (1990)	Civic Duty and Altruism	Alignment of values increases motivation, but compensation is essential	Klein and Mascarenhas (2016)

VI. Conclusion

This study demonstrated that motivation in public service is a complex and multifaceted phenomenon, predominantly influenced by intrinsic factors, such as self-realization and commitment to the public interest. Classical theories, such as Maslow's, Herzberg's, and Perry's and Wise's, provide a solid basis for understanding the mechanisms that guide motivation in the public sector, but face limitations when applied to specific contexts, such as Brazil, where job stability is guaranteed, but opportunities for recognition and career advancement are limited.

Empirical evidence indicates that satisfaction in the public service is closely linked to the perception of social impact and the recognition of the work performed by civil servants. The perception of autonomy and participation in organizational decisions also proved to be a critical factor for motivation, especially in contexts where administrative centralization is strong, such as in the Brazilian public sector. The analysis of the reviewed case studies, such as the one by Ventorini et al. (2019) and Sousa (2014), reinforces the importance of people management policies that not only ensure material working conditions, such as salaries and infrastructure, but also promote the continuous development of civil servants, with clear opportunities for career progression and recognition.

The issue of remuneration, although crucial to prevent dissatisfaction, is insufficient to guarantee satisfaction in the long term. As shown by the study by Medeiros (2014) in the Azores, even in contexts where financial stability is present, the lack of recognition programs and incentives for professional growth generates dissatisfaction. This is also corroborated by Klein and Mascarenhas (2016), who point out that, in Brazil, the delay in salary adjustments and the absence of a clear career development policy have been constant sources of demotivation, despite the strong connection of civil servants with the public mission.

Thus, it is evident that more effective public policies for people management must go beyond the simple offer of stability and adequate salaries. Public organizations need to invest in training programs, recognition and promotion of the autonomy of civil servants. The development of an environment that values the active participation of employees in organizational decisions and publicly recognizes their efforts is crucial to ensure high levels of motivation and satisfaction.

In addition, the study identified that regional and sectoral differences play an important role in determining the factors that influence motivation. For example, while the public health sector, especially in regions such as the Amazon (Oliveira and Silva, 2012), faces challenges related to infrastructure and working conditions, in contexts such as the Azores (Medeiros, 2014), the main difficulty is related to the lack of opportunities for growth and recognition, even with financial stability already guaranteed.

Finally, it is concluded that the application of motivation theories in the public service should be contextualized according to local and sectoral realities. The integration of policies that promote both the financial well-being and the personal and professional development of civil servants is essential to ensure long-term motivation and job satisfaction, resulting in a higher quality of services provided to society.

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