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MOTIVATION POLICIES IN PUBLIC SECTOR OF SLOVAK REPUBLIC

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Abstract: A paper deals with a topic of increase in motivation of the public sector employees and managers in Slovak Republic. It concerns the public sector organisations and determinates the motivation policy as a way in which management of the public organisations can achieve a higher level of a felt motivation and satisfaction of their employees and managers. The motivation policy can be understood as a system of thoroughly defined and agreed priorities, principles, rules, etc. the purpose of which is to contribute systematically to a higher attractiveness of motivational atmosphere within the organisation, a strengthening of motivation of the individuals, groups, and all organisation, etc. A content of the paper is supplemented by results of a questionnaire survey realized in Slovak organisations in 2009 – the survey was oriented to the motivation dynamics of the private and public sector employees and managers.

Key words: public sector, policy, motivation, motivation policy, survey, motivation tools.

Raktažodžiai: viešasis sektorius, politika, motyvacija, motyvavimo politika, apklausa, motyvavimo įrankiai.

1. Introduction

In spite of many efforts, a market system in developed economies does not always mean high employment, price stability, wished living standard, felt social-economic safety, and socially demanded measurement of an economic growth. For these goals achievement, a public policy is necessary. It is important namely for an open economies exposed to international influences (Musgrave, R. A. – Musgrave, P. B., 1994, p. 5). In the open economies, connected with the economies of other countries and international economic alliances, also the public sector has an irreplaceable role. The public sector in every country acts as an integrating power which gives an accent of systematism, support, and pro-social importance to the economic development. The effective function of public sector provides stability to the country and by its services and outputs it supplements the private sector.

2. Public sector and its relation to private sector

In general, *the public sector* involves a set of activities needed for providing public benefit by a fulfilment of programs with a wider social, educational, ecological, developmental, or safety contents.

The organisations, concerned with these activities, do not follow the market and profit criterions purely, but they follow the criterions of universal usefulness for inhabitants and society as a whole. It means especially the providing of social infrastructure which involves the social services in the widest meaning – education, health care, care for socially handicap groups of population, etc. (Jakúbek, I. et al., 1993, p. 115). The public sector and the public organisations (ministries, courts, municipal and audit institutions, transport, etc.) have a certain static and pre-assigned characteristics. In the opinion of Robert J. Smith, these characteristics are determined by the fact that such organisations by their very nature have clearly defined functions (1994).

From a viewpoint of approaches to a management and usual structures in public sector, it is useful to consider the public sector as a set of ‘industries’, embracing core government departments, the armed services, public health providers, schools and many others organisations in these areas, just like firms in private sector industries, face similar challenges and demonstrate many similar responses in their approaches to human resource management (e.g. Bach, S. – Kessler, I., 2007). Also a following idea is important that two broad patterns of work organisations are important in the public sector. One occurs in the public service ministries and local government departments, which are typically much larger and much older than private sector establishments. They have therefore relied heavily on tall hierarchies and such bureaucratic devices as job description, job evaluation and performance appraisal systems. The other major pattern in the public sector is the existence of a high degree of highly skilled professional work (Kalleberg et al., 2006, p. 282).

But on the other hand, it is known that the situation of public sector employees is not always satisfactory. According to P. Boxall and J. Purcell, rather than feeling like partners with government in reforms, public sector workers feel under greater stress and less trusted than previously. A common complaint is having too much bureaucratic work to do to get the real job done (2008, p. 218). Too high bureaucracy and unclear administration procedures are understood as the unwished elements of these organisations’ structures and actions.

R. B. Reich in his paper from 2009 also presents that business stands at the center of many of most pressing public policy challenges: “The financial crisis has also brought to a head issues related to the availability of credit, the adequacy and safety of private pensions, and access to affordable housing, all of which involve business enterprise. Other emerging public concerns – the development of renewable energies, access to broadband, infrastructure repair and upgrades, and workplace education and training – necessarily influence how companies operate and how they design goods and services for their customers” (2009).

It flows from mentioned, that if the organisations accept the fundamental requirements of public sector in planning of their complex activities, also the questions/demands concerned with

motivational influence of the public sector upon the production organisations can be important and determining. But in this place, it is needed to present a following opinion of P. Stringer: „Attitudes are uttered in a social context, from one person to another. Their predictive content may depend on the context. The behaviour which one attempts to predict will also occur in a social context which may be quite different from that in which the attitude is elicited. There is not space here to expand the argument, by quite radical changes are needed in the ways in which we use information about people’s values, opinions and beliefs so as to inform policy decisions”, (In: Banister, D. – Hall, P., 1981, p. 36).

3. Motivation policy in public sector

In the effort to present basic reasons for necessity of the motivation policies existence in the public sector, it is convenient to deal with results of the Cranfield Project on European Human Resource Management. As J. Koubek presents, this field in Europe starts to use some common tendencies. The most important characteristic is that the human resource management has more and more strategic character. There put through the need to explicitly formulate the *human resource strategies and policies*. The growing attention is devoted to the external factors of forming and functioning of human resource, especially to the questions of population development, job market, social characteristics of society, new technique and technology, political-law questions, and also the questions connected with globalisation process (Koubek, J., 2007, pp. 34 – 35). The presented realities accent the need to concentrate attention to the formulation and implementation of the strategies, policies, and programs which will involve wider social and public problems. Surely, the addressees of these strategic pains would become not only the organisations of private sector, but also of public sector.

In the reality, in Slovak Republic, there is created the net of programs and measures for improving employment, social inclusion, etc. which act under the umbrella of *Found of Social Development*. The newest Operation Program of European Social Found provides support in four basic areas in the period 2007 – 2013. It is the development of human resource, the increase in employment, the improvement of social inclusion, and the building capacities of public administration (Sika, P., 2009, p. 13). But it seems that (e.g. National Project XII-2 Development and Improvement of Human Resource and Systematic Increase in Employees Qualification; ÚPSVR, 2010) all projects **omit an aspect of the motivation and systematic motivating employees** of the public sector organisations. As we will see in part about results of our survey realised in Slovakia in 2009, the motivation of public sector employees does not achieve an expected level always. The low motivation of public employees can negatively influence also the motivation quality of production organisations

employees probably. From this reason, the need to create (apart from the employment policy) just also *the policy of motivating public sector employees* becomes extraordinarily important.

The human resource policy helps to achieve state that there will be used an approach which is harmonised with values of the organisation in the decision making of matters concerned with employees (Armstrong, M., 2002, p. 271). Evidently, every organisation (private and also public) can work out more types of the policies. In these intentions, we can consider with the policy of employment, the policy of sustainable improvement, the policy of carrier development, the policy of internal customer approach, the policy of motivating, etc.

In the widest context, **the motivation policy** represents the system of thoroughly defined and agreed priorities, principles, rules, measures, etc. the intention of which is to contribute to the higher attractiveness of motivational atmosphere within the organisation, the strengthening motivation of the individuals, group, and all organisation, the improvement of motivation structure (motivation to work, motivation to development of one's potential, motivation to acceptance of desirable responsibility, motivation to creativeness and effectiveness, motivation to management and motivating), the harmonisation of individual and group motivations mutually, and their harmonisation with motivation of the organisation. Equally as in a case of the other policies, also in the case of motivational policy we can recommend so that the organisation will work out its motivation policy in writing shape and communicate this one to all organisational members (managers and employees).

But, so that the eventual departure from rules and principles defined by government will not occur in the area of public sector policies, it will be needed to respect priorities, intentions, and measures recommended from the side of government at the same time. It is not admissible so that the motivational policy of one branch (organisation) of the public sector will become an obstacle or contra-productive force acting against the motivation policy of the other public organisations.

An important task is that the *motivational policy for public sector and private sector* would be created in the open partnership and cooperation. It means the motivational policy for public sector has to be developed in **participation of the:**

- government representatives,
- ministries professionals,
- municipal experts,
- managers and experts of medical care (hospitals), transport organisations, educational institutions (universities, schools, academies), armed services (army, police, courts) and, of course,
- managers and experts of private sector (production and services organisations).

Cooperation with the managers and experts from the private sector is necessary: professionalism, obligingness, knowledge, flexibility, motivation, etc. of the **public sector employees and managers** have an **important impact** upon the motivation, innovativeness, belief, successfulness, and engagement of the **private sector employees and managers**. In these intentions, like a clear example of the patients' dependency/expectations on health care can be used the survey results of Polish authoresses, J. Rosak and R. Stasiak-Betlejewska, whereupon patients generally represent the employees and managers of the private sector organizations, and health care employees (doctors, nurses) represent the public sector. In this study from 2008, the authoresses confirm that satisfaction of the hospital clients/patients is depended on modernization of the hospital equipment, honesty to patients, communication with them, their protection, looking of the patient's opinions, etc. (2008, pp. 51 – 52). It means that satisfied patients, relieved their medical obstacles, or pain, can devote full energy to their work and in this way contribute to profit of the organisation in which they work. So, high-motivated employees of the hospitals (public sector) may influence – in positive or negative way – the motivation and capability of the private employees and managers.

4. Survey of motivation of public and private organisation employees and managers

In close cooperation with the colleagues, in 2009, we have realized an extensive survey orientated to the area of human potential motivation of the private and public sector organisations. The goal of survey was to obtain relevant knowledge concerned with dynamical aspects of the work motivation. From the viewpoint of efficiency (time, costs, returnable ability, processing difficultness, etc.), it was chosen a questionnaire method. According to Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic, 2,241.000 actively working people were totally in Slovakia at December 31, 2008 (2009, p. 33). There were 1.734.000 employees of private sector and 507.000 employees of public sector. From total number of working inhabitants, a sum of our survey participants (3.328) meant 0.15% quotient from the basic set. Thus, a realized survey may be considered as a **representative**.

As a basic scientific hypothesis of this survey was defined premise that **motivation of the human potential fulfils the characteristics of dynamics**, it means, it is changeable, it is influenced by many factors from the point of view of time, and it develops. The questionnaire was worked out in two versions: for employees and for managers. In the framework of survey, 3.600 questionnaires were distributed (for both groups), and (as presented in previous text) 3.328 of giving ones were stuffed correctly. It means 92.44% return. The survey participants worked in 164 Slovak organisations – 129 organizations of private sector and 35 organizations of public sector. These organisations were equably chosen according to a size (small, middle and great organisations). The survey was orientated

to organisations from the whole Slovak Republic (west, middle and east Slovakia). Also the structure of organisations corresponded equably with a classification of branches in Slovakia.

From the viewpoint of work category, there were 2.891 employees (1.821 from private sector and 1.070 from public sector organisations) and 437 managers (294 from private sector and 143 from public sector). There were 1.515 men in the group of employees (920 from private sector and 595 from public sector) what represented 52.40% of the total employees number (55.61% versus 50.52%) and 1.376 women (901 from private and 475 from public sector) – 47.60% of all employees (49.48% versus 44.39%). In the group of managers, there were 248 men (168 from private sector – 57.14%, versus 80 from public sector – 55.94%) what was 56.75% of number of the managers. In group of the managers, there were 189 women (126 from private sector – 42.86%, versus 63 from public sector – 44.06%), it means 43.25%. Concrete structure of the respondents from the viewpoint of age, length of their practice, and acquired education (degree) shows following table (Table 1).

Table 1: Identification of respondents by age, length of practice and acquired education

Age of respondents		Length of practice		Acquired education	
Private/public sector		Private/public sector		Private/public sector	
Interval in years	Number of respondents	Interval in years	Number of respondents	Education/Degree	Number of respondents
0 – 20	58/2	0 – 5	493/148	Apprentice	290/74
20 – 30	671/217	5 – 15	680/236	Secondary	1.179/539
30 – 40	672/270	15 – 25	571/358	University	637/444
40 – 50	520/405	25 – 35	313/351	PhD.	9/97
50 – 60	180/279	35 – 45	57/118	Assoc. profess.	0/47
60 and more	14/40	45 and more	1/2	Professor	0/12

At the same time, average age of the respondents achieved value 38.63 years, average time of practice was ascertained in length 17.39 years, and the most frequent education was secondary, namely in case of 51.62% of all questioned. We can see that qualification of the public employees is averagely higher in comparison with the private employees.

It is giving from valuation of survey results that motivation level of the managers and employee in private and public sector does not achieve wished values always. Many of respondents marked only *average level of their motivation* in basic areas of work performance (Table 2).

Table 2: Presented level of motivation in private and public sector organisations

Area of work effort	Level of motivation of private sector employees and managers (share of answers in %)					Level of motivation of public sector employees and managers (share of answers in %)				
	Very high	Sufficiently high	Average	Lower	Low	Very high	Sufficiently high	Average	Lower	Low
Quality of work done	22.88	54.09	20.85	2.08	0.09	22.34	56.72	18.55	2.14	0.25
Increase in level of knowledge and skills	15.13	45.53	32.72	5.77	0.85	13.27	55.48	27.62	2.64	0.99
New suggestions and increase in efficiency	8.61	39.72	41.56	8.13	1.99	8.66	43.86	38.25	7.42	1.81
Cooperation with manager and management /*	9.06	42.28	38.33	8.57	1.76	7.01	45.33	37.48	6.36	3.83
Leading and motivating of employee /**	21.09	54.08	22.79	2.04	0	8.49	47.49	35.04	5.61	3.38

/* this area was searched only in group of employees

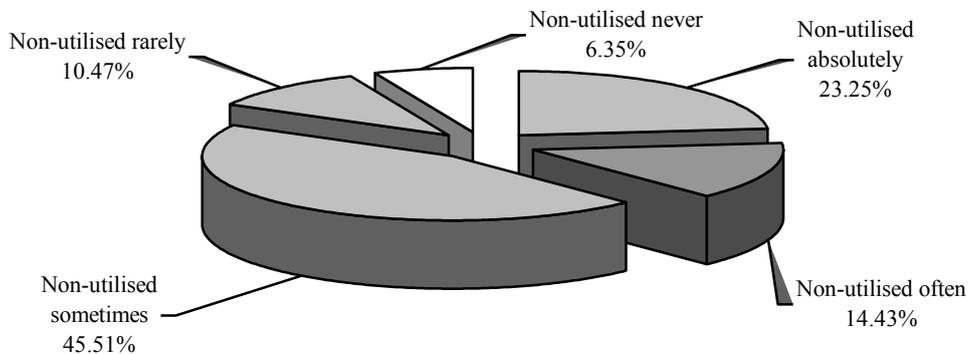
/** this area was searched only in group of managers

There is a negative ascertaining, that 41.56% of responded private organisations employees and managers felt only average level of their motivation to new propositions and to increase in effectiveness of processes. Or that 35.04% of public organisations managers marked their motivation to creative leadership and motivating their employees as only average too. A result is equally bad that motivation of the public organisations managers to the leading and motivating employees achieved lower values averagely in comparison with private sector. This result is probable a direct consequence of insufficient motivational conditions, non-existing motivational policies, and systematic motivational efforts created by superior institutions (government, ministries, regions administration, etc.). Probably, it is caused also by impaired motivation in the private sector.

Problems in the field of motivation and motivating employees in the public sector are indicated by searching usage of the managers' and employees' potential. This question in questionnaire was following: "Do you think that some non-utilised potential exists in yourself and this potential can be utilised better in case of more efficient motivating you by superior?" From Figure 1, we can see that more than 37% of the respondents presented that their potential is non-utilised absolutely and non-utilised often. It means that employees and managers of public sector dispose by great number, structure, and quality of skills and knowledge which are not used in their organisation. Executives of the public organisations have an opportunity and also an obligation to utilise these hidden

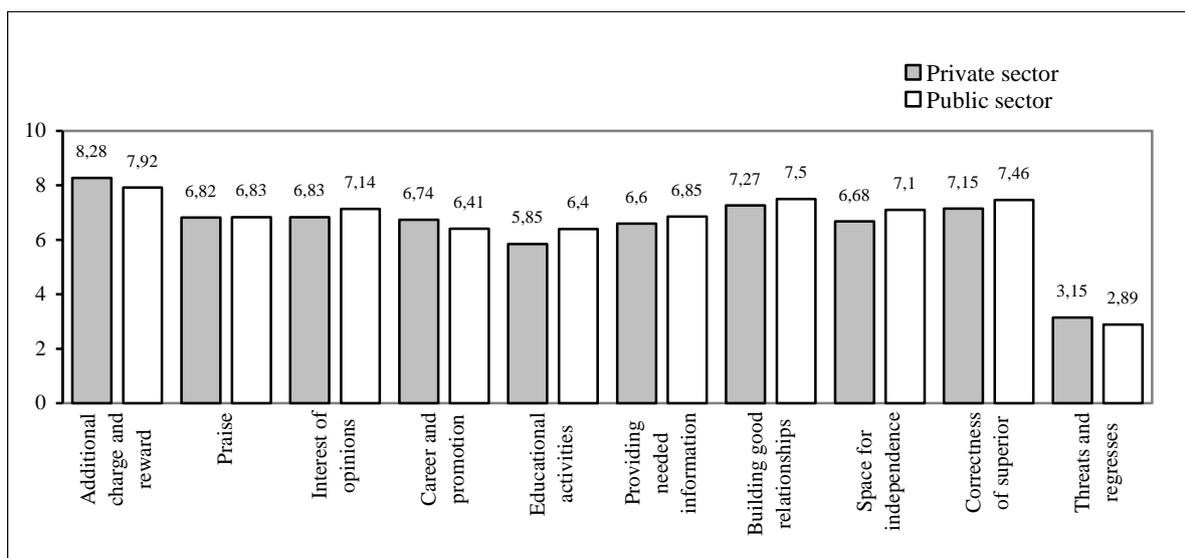
competencies because this is a right way how to increase the level of employees' and managers' motivation and performance.

Figure 1: Expressions of utilisation of public sector managers' and employees' potential



This situation can be improved by adequate motivating, it means namely by application of the suitable motivators. It is important so that the managers will respect *different efficiency of motivators*. As flows from Figure 2, there exist certain differences between perceived efficiency of several motivators (respondents could chose the efficiency of every defined motivator in scale 1 – 10, whereby value 1 meant the lowest efficiency and value 10 meant the highest efficiency of this motivator).

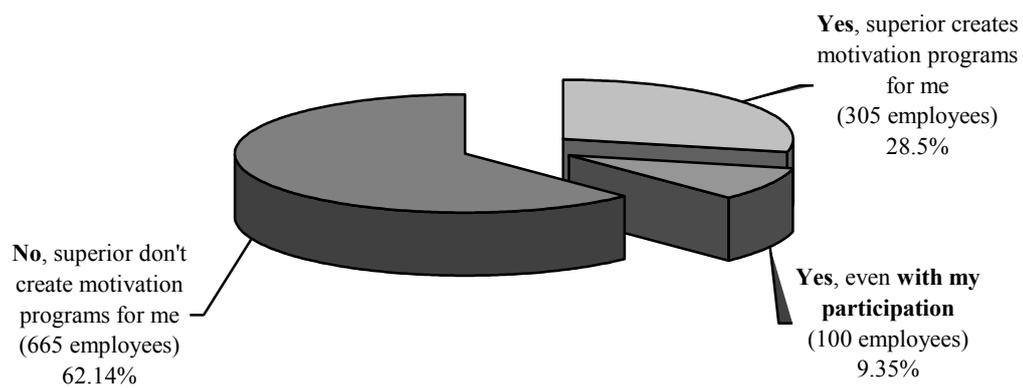
Figure 2: Average values of motivators efficiency: answers of private sector versus public sector in Slovak Republic



There are ranked to the most efficient motivator in the private sector organisations namely: an additional charge and reward, building good relationships, correctness of superior, interest of opinions, and praise. In the public sector organisations, the order of efficiency of motivators is a similar: additional charge and reward, building good relationships, correctness of superior, interest of opinions, and space for independence in work. Between these two sectors, we can see the biggest difference in efficiency of motivators in case of the providing educational activities (felt efficiency 5.85 points versus 6.4 points) and in case of the space for independence in work (6.68 versus 7.1). It especially indicates a higher need for intellectual and creative motivators in public sector.

A mentioned above results correspond with further information of realised survey: answers of the public sector employees confirm that the managers *do not work out any motivational program* for 28.5% of the employees (Figure 3). According to the survey results, only 9.35% of the respondents confirm that their manager creates motivational program even with their participation.

Figure 3: Public employees’ answers about creation of individualized motivation programs



The mentioned imperfections should be removed, especially with respect to the reality evident from following table (Table 3) which declares the willingness of respondents to improve the quality of their work performance – more than 83% of both sector employees and managers are willing to increase their total work behaviour.

Table 3: Willingness of respondents to increase their effort after more effective motivating

Expression	Employees + managers		Employees		Managers	
	Number	% of total	Number	% of employees	Number	% of managers
Private organisations respondents						

Yes, average increasing	1.760	83.22	1.507	82.76	253	86.05
	<i>of 40.77%</i>		<i>of 41.51%</i>		<i>of 36.35%</i>	
No	355	16.78	314	17.24	41	13.95
Public organisations respondents						
Yes, average increasing	1.009	83.18	899	84.02	110	76.92
	<i>of 38.73%</i>		<i>of 39.05%</i>		<i>of 36.14%</i>	
No	204	16.82	171	15.98	33	23.08

The motivation and willingness of the employees and the managers to increase their work performance (of 40.77% in case of the private organisations respondents and 38.73% in case of public organisations!), in situation if the motivational effort will be improved, can be a challenge for realization of modern forms of management and creation of motivational policies in public sector. As was mentioned in previous text, the improved motivation in private sector (apart from the systematic effort of government and local administration) can become a strong support of the motivation in public sector.

5. Contents of motivation policies and motivation factors for public sector

The motivation policy, as a system of principles, rules, and recommendations how to proceed in strengthening motivation of the employees and managers, would be necessarily accompanied by high-quality motivation programs also in the organisations of public sector. The creators would clearly define **a mission/intention of the motivation policy**. For example: to strengthen the level of public sector employees' motivation and increase the quality of services provided to the private sector and the inhabitants, improve the motivational behaviour and managers' approaches, increase the level of satisfaction of work done, etc.

On the base of existing knowledge, it is possible, even needed, to understand the motivation policies in public sector as:

- a) *the strategic motivational document defined, agreed, and supported by the government and parliament* which has the wider universal context (to strengthen the working and life motivation of inhabitants and private sector by means of the strengthened motivation in public sector),
- b) *the system of motivational documents concretised and enriched by the ministries, regional administration, institutions, or organisations of the public sector* which have the closer social context in every concrete public organisation (to strengthen the motivation of public sector

employees and managers, increase the effectiveness of their behaviour, develop the potential and capability of the individuals and groups within the public organisations).

The basic pillars and principles of every motivation policy in the public sector would be following:

- *To keep an absolute ethics and correctness* in relations towards the primary addressees (employees and managers of public administration) as well as to the secondary addressees of motivation policy (population, employees and managers of private sector, students, patients, passenger population, etc.).
- *To use an internal and external client approach* in implementation of the motivation policy, i.e. it is necessary to approach towards the employees and managers of public sector with maximal regard, respect, and support.
- *To combine permanently and conveniently a principle of non-compromise* (in relation towards the quality of public sector's own work and towards the quality of provided services and information) and *a principle of obligingness and openness* (in relation to inhabitants, i.e. addressees of services and outputs of the public sector).

The concrete contents of motivation policies and programs in the public sector must be permanently accommodated to the character of activities and processes which these employees deal with. It is needed to consider averagely higher qualification of the public employees (i.e. working in education, health service, and judiciary) in comparison with the productive organisations employees, higher sensitiveness flowing from a psychic difficultness of their work (safety services), eventual danger of their work (transport, police), etc.

From this point of the view, we can consider as the convenient motivational element, for example, the systems of high confidence. These systems enable employees to set the pace and also the contents of their work sometimes (within the framework of defined rules), (Soviar, J., 2009, p. 214). But the systems of high confidence have to be primarily harmonised with the effort for permanent improvement of the public sector employees' performance, level of services, and quality, time, and costs of information provided to the inhabitants as well as effective function of the state.

The efficient approaches for increase in motivation of the public administration employees can involve also *facilitation*. According to this approach, the managers act as the facilitators in relation towards the members of their team when they support and help employees by means of improvement of employees' skills and abilities (Armstrong, M. – Stephens, T., 2008, p. 75). At the same time, it is possible to help employees and managers in the mastering their work stress, the identification their latent needs, and the harmonisation these ones with organisational needs, the achievement of feeling of sufficiently high satisfaction from work done and engagement in the public sector, etc. The

facilitators can develop a value of these employees' potential by means of right *delegation, empowerment, participation* in goals setting, and simplification of goals achievement, determination of above the averagely demanding tasks by means of the *correct motivational challenges*, etc.

In the public sector, we can motivate employees and managers also by the planning and realisation of their *carrier*, the systematic management and development of their *talent*, the well thought out management of their performance, the building suitable conditions for their working behaviour, including *instigative social atmosphere* within the organisation, *the balance of working and private life*, the possibility to realise not only the *creative abilities* (invention, intellect skills), but also the *communicational and emotional needs and skills*.

The necessity in motivational policies and motivational programs of the public sector would become an intentional building a space for independence, a providing needed information in time and desirable form and relevancy, and especially a *positive and obliging approach* towards the employees, an accepting their opinions, solutions, and *new ideas*. It is needed to include highly competent utilisation of the communication skills, i.e. verbal as well as nonverbal. From the other communicational skills, we can propose the using *empathy and meta-communication* which can improve the level of communication-social climate and common understanding and can prevent needless tensions and conflicts.

Evidently, there exist a lot of further tools and events which can contribute to the strengthen motivation in public sector surely. But all motivational tools and measures have to be mutually harmonised always. A fact is extraordinarily important that the managers in role of **the motivators have to be flexible** – they have to carefully search any changes in motivational preferences of their employees and immediately adapt their own total motivational behaviour and decision-taking of topical mix of the most convenient tools, forms of communication, style of leadership, etc. which they will apply towards their employees. It means the principle of permanent flexibleness, dynamics, and activeness would be implanted into the motivation policies of public sector.

6. Conclusion

The surveys done in the field of public organisations management and the field of motivating human potential of these organisations indicate that it is important to deal with these topics systematically. We consider as a needed to work out the motivation policies in public sector. These policies would be worked out by representatives of the government and managers of the concrete public organisations. An opinion is true that it is not simple to define and implement the motivation policies in a sector which has universal (pro-social) dimensions and involves territory of all country. This effort will demand a sufficient engagement, high competency, great amount of information of the

quantitative and qualitative character, financial costs, removing the mistrust and slowness on the side of participating executives and bureaucratic mechanisms typical for the public sector.

On the other hand, efficiently created system of the motivation policies in public sector can become a valuable tool of increase in successfulness and effectiveness of not only the public organisations, but also competitiveness of the private organisations and all society, all country. As equally as sufficiently high and conveniently oriented motivation of the employees and managers is understood like the basis of strategic success in the private organisations, it is possible to accept this premise also in organisations of the public sector. Namely, in spite of many differences of both sectors which must be carefully respected, the basic component of their action is the same – people. It means the high performance and demanded results of the employees and managers of both sectors have an identical foundation, i.e. the felt satisfaction and permanently strengthened motivation.

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Motyvacijos politika Slovakijos respublikos viešajame sektoriuje

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Santrauka

Straipsnyje yra nagrinėjama Slovakijos respublikos viešojo sektoriaus darbuotojų ir vadybininkų motyvacijos didinimo problematika. Straipsnyje domimasi tuo, kaip viešojo sektoriaus organizacijos sprendžia ir naudoja motyvacijos politiką, kaip metodą, kuriuo remdamiesi viešojo sektoriaus organizacijų vadovai gali pasiekti didesnę darbuotojų ir vadovų suvokiamos motyvacijos ir pasitenkinimo darbu lygį. Motyvacijos politika gali būti suprantama kaip sistema apibrėžtų ir aptartų prioritetų, principų ir taisyklių, kurių tikslas yra sistemiskai didinti motyvacinės atmosferos patrauklumą organizacijoje bei stiprinti atskirų individų, grupių ir visos organizacijos motyvaciją. Straipsnio turinys yra grindžiamas apklausos, atliktos Slovakijos organizacijose 2008-2009m. rezultatais. Šioje apklausoje buvo tyrinėjama viešojo bei privataus sektorių darbuotojų bei vadybininkų motyvacijos dinamika atliktas šių sektorių rezultatų palyginimas..

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