



Consideration Regarding Motivation in the Penitentiary Administration System

Cosmin Gabriel Dincă

cosmin.gabriel.dinca@gmail.com

Valahia University of Targoviste, Romania

Penitentiaries cannot choose their inmates, but they can choose their staff. It is essential that staff are carefully selected and properly supported, as prison work is demanding, involves working with men and women who are deprived of their liberty, many of whom are likely to have mental disorders and many with reduced educational and social skills. Ensuring human resources suitable for the activity in such an environment, which fulfill the mission of the institution, cannot be done in a random way. The institution's objectives can only be achieved if there is a coherent human resources strategy, based on the premise that a quality and correctly valued staff can be the solution for the performance and efficiency of the system penitentiary. The mission of human resources is the fulfillment of duties and missions, as well as the transformation of the penitentiary administration into a performing public service, through the development of activities in the field of human resources management.

Keywords: human resources, motivation, penitentiary system

JEL Code: M52, J33

1. Introduction

The National Administration of Penitentiaries is the public institution with legal personality subordinated to the Ministry of Justice, which aims to coordinate and control the activity of the units that are organized and operate under its subordination (Law no. 254 of 19 July 2013 on the execution of sentences and measures ordered by the judicial bodies during the criminal proceedings). The National Administration of Penitentiaries and the subordinated units constitute the penitentiary police (Law no. 145 of 22 July 2019 on the Statute of prison guards) which has the obligation to ensure order and discipline within the places of detention, while maintaining a climate that respects the dignity of persons deprived of their liberty. The object of activity of the National Administration of Penitentiaries is to contribute to ensuring the defense, public order and national security by organizing the security, escorting, accompanying, supervising and applying the regime of execution of custodial sentences and measures that are executed in the preventive arrest centers and in the special pre-trial detention sections, by organizing the social reintegration activities of detainees, persons hospitalized and preventively arrested, as well as through activities of prevention of crime and terrorism in the penitentiary environment, carried out according to the law (Regulation on the organization and functioning of the National Administration of Penitentiaries).

2. Theoretical approaches regarding motivation

Human resource management includes all managerial decisions and practices that directly influence or affect the human resources that carry out their activity within an organization. Particular attention was constantly paid to the way in which organizations coordinate their human resources and it was concluded that their management has an essential

role in achieving the organization's objectives, the quality of resources, training, organization, coordination and motivation of resources being directly proportional to the organization's results (Constantinescu D.A. et al 1999).

The important areas of human resources management are: recruitment and selection, integration of new employees, employee performance evaluation, material and moral stimulation, as well as labor relations management. Each organization combines in different proportions material resources, financial resources, informational resources and human resources to produce goods and services. Of all these, human resources are essential for ensuring the success of any business. Human resources management is the consequence of the organization's concern to have quality employees and consists of a series of activities aimed at influencing the performance of the organization's personnel (Hăhăianu L. 2000).

Public management can be defined as the set of processes and management relationships, well structured, existing between components of the administrative system, through which the laws are fulfilled and/or planning, organizing, coordinating, managing and controlling activities that satisfy the public interest.

Public management tries to satisfy the public interest and increase the level of performance in the organization and operation of public institutions.

Human resources management establishes a certain set of procedures regarding:

- staff recruitment and selection;
- defining positions;
- staff motivation and development;
- evaluation and career development of staff.

Public institutions consider, among others, recruitment based on merit, hierarchical and functional structure, promotion based on efficiency, own salary system.

For the evaluation of professional performances, individual objectives and specific indicators are established. Managers must have a clear vision of the objectives and the means to achieve them, measure these performances in relation to the objectives, understand what are the resources and the most effective ways to invest them, and have information about positions, training and access to the specialized expertise.

2.1 The concept of motivation

Motivation has been called "a trigger of motivation, when the latter is needed" (Pânișoară, G, Pânișoară, I. O., 2005). A person can be motivated to undertake a certain activity by explaining the advantages of that activity, this being a process of motivation, and when he actually undertakes that activity, and feels attracted to that activity, for intrinsic or extrinsic reasons, we talk about motivation. Motivation "is the degree to which a persistent effort is directed towards the achievement of a goal" (Johns, G., 1988).

Motivation is a major component of management and one of the most frequently discussed subjects in specialist works. Two interpretations of motivation were stated, respectively:

- Motivation in the narrow sense, which refers to the classical vision of management and the organization, mainly considering the employees of the organization, being defined as "the correlation of the needs, aspirations and interests of the staff within the organization with the achievement of the objectives and the exercise of tasks, competences and responsibilities assigned within the organization" (Nicolescu, O., Verboncu, I., 1997). This perspective presides over both theory and managerial practice.

- Motivation in a broad sense, which has as its defining characteristic the stakeholders of the organization, those persons or bodies that have major interests in the performance, results and efficiency of the organization and includes "the set of decisions and actions by which the stakeholders are determined to contribute directly and indirectly to the achievement of functionalities and superior overall performance, based on the correlation of their interests in approaching and achieving the objectives of the organization and its subsystems" (Nicolescu, O., Verboncu, I., 1997). The main stakeholders are managers, employees, public service beneficiaries, unions, the local community, company owners, customers, suppliers, etc.

Through the lens of human resources management, of the first specified meaning, the concrete content of the motivation within the organization reflects the managerial and economic conception promoted within it.

Motivation at work has been the object of study for several specialists in the field of management theory and practice, but with regard to the motivation of the professional category analyzed, prison police officers from the Romanian prison administration system, the specialized works do not provide sufficient answers to offer management solutions for to keep the staff motivated.

Motivation starts with work organization and staff selection. For theoretical concepts of motivation to be effective, they must be convincing and demonstrable, so that behaviorists provide a clear model to be used as a guide by managers in their work (Montserrat, X., 2004).

2.2 Definition of motivation

To motivate is the action of motivating someone else, of giving them a reason for carrying out an action; motivation represents the totality of the motives that cause people to do certain things, to choose a certain behaviour from several options. Motivation (Latin *movere* - inner state that sets an individual in motion) is "a force that acts on a person to push him towards the achievement of an objective in a specific manner". Motivation represents the method by which the satisfaction of the individual needs and interests of staff is integrated in the achievement of the objectives of the institution - the stimulation of the employees in order to fulfill the tasks in a satisfactory way; motivation - individual needs and interests (Ciobanu L., 2015).

Motivation consists in "the action of motivating and its result" (Dicționarul explicativ al limbii române, 2009). The term derives from the Latin word "*movere*" which translates as "to move", "to act", "to progress". The definition of motivation from the Great Dictionary of Neologisms (Marele dicționar de neologisme, 2000) is "the set of reasons that explain an act, a conduct, but also the set of dynamic factors that determine the behavior of an individual" and according to the Explanatory Dictionary of the Romanian language, motivation means "the totality of reasons or motives (conscious or no) that causes someone to perform a certain action or to tend towards certain goals". Motivation has also been defined as "the source of internal and external energies that initiate and guide one's behavior toward a goal that, once achieved, will result in the satisfaction of a need." According to T.R. Mitchell, motivation represents those psychological processes that determine the stimulation, the impulse, the persistence of voluntary actions towards goals to be achieved" (Hinescu A., 2002).

Another definition of motivation is that "motivation is the general term used to denote the set of incentives, wants, needs, preferences and other similar concepts and when a manager motivates his subordinates he does something that the employees perceive as being able to satisfy the needs and their desires and to incite them to act in the desired direction" (Koontz, H, O'Donnel, 1980). Noting also the definition according to which "motivation

refers to the sum of the efforts made to achieve a goal" (DuBrin, A.J., 1978) it can be concluded that the term motivation in the analyzed sense is used to denote the process through which human behavior is oriented towards the achievement of certain objectives.

Effective human resource management is based on understanding their motivation. The success of an organization depends very much on the availability and intensity of the desire of individuals to work and engage in an activity. They will perform their tasks with the best results as long as management correctly understands what drives them to take action and what they tend to do when they perform a certain task

3. Data analysis and processing

The purpose of this research is to make theoretical and practical contributions in order to improve the motivation of prison administration staff and increase organizational performance.

The central objective is the development of a motivating organizational environment for attracting and keeping staff active, as well as increasing their level of involvement.

Specific objectives:

- identifying some directions of action to improve staff motivation;
- creating an organizational environment that encourages staff performance by improving motivation at the organizational level.

Hypotheses:

- salary (including other financial benefits) has a major impact on motivation and performance;
- the prestige/fame conferred by working in the central structure has a major impact on motivation and performance;
- working conditions have a major impact on motivation and performance;
- promotion conditions, based on competence criteria, have a major impact on motivation and performance.

The chosen investigative tool is an opinion questionnaire (Annex 1) distributed to the staff of the Human Resources Management Directorate of the National Administration of Penitentiaries.

The application of the questionnaire was carried out online between April and June 2022, through the computer application <http://survey.anp.ro>, under conditions of anonymity, respecting the conditions of confidentiality and was distributed to the entire staff, respectively 35 employees at which received 35 questionnaires.

The questionnaire was built starting from the premise that information can be obtained regarding the sources of motivation in the organization by identifying discrepancies between employees' expectations and the reality perceived by them.

For this, the difference between the level of motivation resulting from the level of remuneration, the prestige of the institution, the working conditions and the promotion conditions and the perceived levels of motivation in the work relations was evaluated.

The questionnaire includes two sections:

- a) the first section concerns the aspect of desirability (expectations) associated by the respondent to a type of motivation, the extent to which the respondent values / wishes to benefit from the presence of that aspect in his work environment - "Expectation";
- b) the second section concerns the extent to which the respondent perceives / feels that type of motivation present in his work environment - "Perceived reality".

As a way of evaluating the degree of motivation regarding the main aspects subject to analysis, questions were introduced that explicitly aim at the degree of its perception, under four aspects considered essential, respectively:

- motivation resulting from salary and other financial benefits;
- the motivation resulting from the prestige conferred by working in the central structure (National Administration of Penitentiaries);
- the motivation resulting from working conditions;
- the motivation resulting from the promotion conditions, based on the competence criteria.

At the same time, in addition to the above, a question aimed at the global perception of motivation at the organizational level was introduced.

The results of the statistical/quantitative processing of the data obtained following the application of the questionnaire in terms of the quantitative percentage gaps/differences between expectations and perceived realities, for each particular aspect subject to analysis, are presented in the table below:

Table 3.1. Hierarchy of gaps between expectations and perceived realities

	HIERARCHIZATION OF GAPS between expectations and perceived realities	Percentage difference
1.	The employee feels motivated by the level of salary and other financial benefits.	14,3%
2.	The employee feels motivated by the prestige of working in the central structure (National Administration of Penitentiaries).	23,5%
3.	The employee feels motivated by the working conditions.	12,1%
4.	The employee feels motivated by the promotion conditions, based on the competence criteria.	27,9%
5.	The employee feels motivated, globally, in the organization.	15,6%

Source: made by the author

From the data above, it can be seen that regarding the promotion conditions, based on the competence criteria, there is the largest gap between the employees' expectations and the actual perceived level (27.9%). This aspect may suggest that the respondents appreciate either that it is not possible to be promoted in the career in the current job, or that promotion is not carried out mainly on the basis of competence criteria.

Regarding the prestige/fame of working in the central structure, a gap of 23.5% emerged between expectations and perceived reality, which may suggest that staff do not feel such a desire to (anymore) work in the current place of work being interested in evolving in another organizational structure of the institution or another organization.

The motivation from the salary and other financial benefits has a level of 14.3% gap between the expectations of the respondents and the reality perceived by them. It should be noted that the salary is established by law and the employer does not have tools to make adjustments on this level. I appreciate that the answers provided by the surveyed sample can also be valid for other categories of employees in the public sector because the normative act that establishes the salary of penitentiary police officers is applicable to all personnel from public order and national security structures.

Global motivation, at the level of the organization in which it operates, as a whole, recorded a gap of 15.6% between expectations and perceived reality. This aspect is important

at least in terms of staff retention in this organization. The recorded gap is relatively small if analyzed in conjunction with the percentage of staff who leave the organization through resignation or transfer upon request to other institutions/organizations. It should be noted that approximately 12% of the staff left the organization in the previous year, but this percentage includes retirement and career advancement in positions as a result of passing a competition.

The working conditions that employees want and the existing ones, that they perceive, register the smallest difference, 12.1%. This result may be based on the efforts undertaken by the management to ensure sufficiently lighted and airy working spaces, the provision of furniture, supplies and quality work techniques, as well as the facilities in terms of the possibility of preparing/purchasing coffee or other drinks non-alcoholic beverages and food in a specially designed and arranged space.

Analyzing the collected data, the following findings can be made regarding the degree of general motivation expressed by the respondents regarding the considered levels:

- Most respondents, 89.75%, declare themselves satisfied to a large and very large extent with their current workplace in the organization they belong to, which signifies the presence of the premises of a motivating work atmosphere, conducive to achieving performance in the activity.
- The working conditions are rated as satisfactory to a large and very large extent by 84.65% of those surveyed.

Salary and other financial benefits are appreciated as motivating at a high and very high level by a percentage of 81.25% of the respondents.

The prestige/fame of working in the central structure is valued as motivating by a percentage of 75.2% of the respondents.

The motivation resulting from the promotion conditions, based on the competence criteria, is perceived as satisfactory to a large and very large extent by the lowest percentage of respondents (71.5%). A possible cause may be respondents' lack of confidence in the accuracy of the existing competition procedures and/or in the objectivity of conducting some competition tests.

Starting from the premise of the study, according to which the degree of motivation regarding the various aspects considered in the construction of the questionnaire results from the calculation of the difference between the evaluation of the desirability / expectation associated by the respondent to that aspect and the evaluation of its presence in the person's work environment, according to the person's perception , it was found that the most likely sources of motivation are:

- working conditions;
- salary and other financial benefits;
- the organization as a whole.

The most likely sources of demotivation could be represented by those aspects in which the largest gaps between the two evaluations were recorded:

- promotion conditions, based on competence criteria;
- the prestige/fame of working in the central structure of the prison administration.

4. Conclusions

The questionnaire applied to measure work motivation cannot exceed the limits related to the validity and fidelity of any measurement based on statements, meaning that the results of the study shed light on some possible sources of motivation and demotivation for



the personnel of the human resources structure of the central apparatus of the penitentiary administration system.

As for the sources of motivation, they are most likely to be found at the level of working conditions and, in second place, the salary and other financial benefits, given the fact that, according to the results obtained, at these levels the expectations are the most highly correlated with perceived reality.

The most important sources of demotivation can come from employees' appreciation/perception of deficiencies/deficits in the promotion segment based on competence criteria and the prestige/fame of working in the central structure.

References

1. Ciobanu L. "Motivations in the process of educational assesement" In: Modern School: Challenges and Opportunities, 2015.
2. Constantinescu D. A., Dobrin M., Niță S., Niță A., "Managementul resurselor umane", Ed. Colecția Națională, București, 1999.
3. Dicționarul explicativ al limbii române (ediția a II-a revăzută și adăugită), Academia Română, Institutul de Lingvistică, Ed. Univers Enciclopedic Gold, 2009.
4. DuBrin, A.J., "Fundamentals of Organizational Behavior", Pergemon Press, New York, 1978.
5. Hăhăianu L., (coordonator), "Managementul resurselor umane, Ed. Rentrop & Straton Grup de Editură și consultanță în afaceri, București 2000.
6. Hinescu A., "Managementul resurselor umane", Ed. Astra, Blaj, 2002.
7. Johns, G., "Organizational behavior: Understanding life at work (2nd ed.)" Scott Foresman, Glenview, Illinois, 1988.
8. Koontz, H, O'Donnel, "Management. Principes et Méthodes de Gestion", Mc. GrawHill, 1980.
9. Marele dicționar de neologisme, Florin Marcu, Ed. Saeculum, 2000.
10. Montserrat, X., "Comment motiver", Edition d' Organisation, Paris, 2004.
11. Nicolescu, O., Verboncu, I., "Management", Ediția a II-a revizuită și adăugită, Ed. Economică, 1997.
12. Pânișoară, G, Pânișoară, I. O., "Motivarea eficientă", Ed. Polirom, București, 2005.
13. Ristea, A-L, Ioan-Franc, V., Popescu, C., "Metodică în cercetarea științifică", Editura Expert, Ediția a doua, București, 2020.
14. Law no. 254 of 19 July 2013 on the execution of sentences and measures ordered by the judicial bodies during the criminal proceedings.
15. Law no. 145 of 22 July 2019 on the Statute of prison guards.
16. Order of the Minister of Justice no. 160/C of January 8, 2018 for the approval of the Regulation on the organization and operation of the National Administration of Penitentiaries published in the Official Gazette no. 127 bis of February 9, 2018.