

CHARACTERISTICS OF PUBLIC SERVICE IN ROMANIA*

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Abstract

The reform of government's institutions must be a priority for the Romanian State. This process cannot be achieved without a proper development of public service. This paper outlines a number of features of the public service related to civil employee satisfaction, features of competitions to occupy and promote employment in the public service and the vertical and horizontal mobility of civil servants. For the purposes of calculating statistical indicators, data series have been utilised, obtained from the application of a statistical survey at the level of a sample from the public administration.

Key words: *public administration; public service reform; statistical survey; sample; questionnaire.*

An important component of public administration reform process is the reform of public service. In the current context we cannot achieve a wide-ranging reform of the state without an adequate professional capacity of employees from the central and local public administration.

To identify some aspects of the civil service, in November 2009 there was held at the public administration level a statistical research based on statistical sampling.

To obtain statistical information, this was applied to a statistical survey at a statistical sample level consisting of 550 employees. The maximum permissible error is $\pm 2\%$. In the questionnaire have been introduced questions covering the following themes: the management of government institutions, civil service, the transparency in the government institutions, the characteristics of the decentralization in public administration, the quality of public administration reform, corruption and its implications on economic and social development.

* Analysis of the results of statistical surveys organized - random - among employees of central and local government

Within the questionnaire other questions were introduced to determine some further characteristics for the civil service in relation to features such as: the average seniority of employees, the level of training, the political opinion of the person etc.

In the following discussion there will be presented the most important issues concerning: the satisfaction degree of employees from public administration in relation to issues of income obtainable for their work, the respect they enjoy inside the institution, the operating conditions in which they activate and the pressure which they are exposed to from the political environment; the correctness of conduct of the professional competitions for recruitment and promotion in civil service; the identification of the characteristics related to public office.

Thereafter, there are enumerated the questions that the questionnaire contained that were defined for the evaluation of important issues related to the degree of satisfaction, the organization of competitions for employment and promotion in the public service and employees mobility within the public administration.

For each question there are presented the measurement scales used, primary and aggregate variables defined on the basis of questions and descriptive statistics calculated on the basis of the questionnaire.

Analysis of employee's degree of satisfaction

To assess the degree of satisfaction of government employees, in the questionnaire were introduced two closed questions to examine their opinion in relation to their satisfaction degree against nine criteria and the quality of service of an employee in relationships with different people.

Based on responses to the first question there were defined nine primary variables, and then, based on the second question, there were defined six other primary variables. Finally, the defined primary variables are presented and a number of descriptive statistics are calculated based thereon.

The first question concerns the measurement of the degree of satisfaction of employees from public administration in relation to each of the following nine evaluation criteria: average monthly income, the respect received from colleagues, the respect of citizens, the respect from the direct manager, the respect from the management head office in the institution in which they operate, computer desk facilities, internet connection and pressure from the political system. To assess the opinion in relation to each criterion, a measurement scale was defined with the following values: I'm not satisfied at all, I am satisfied to a lesser extent, I am moderately satisfied, I am satisfied to a great extent and I am fully satisfied.

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Based on information provided by answers to these four questions there were defined nine primary variables: B_{11} - the satisfaction degree regarding to monthly income; B_{12} - the satisfaction degree regarding the respect from colleagues; B_{13} - the satisfaction degree regarding the respect from citizens; B_{14} - the satisfaction degree regarding the respect of the direct manager; B_{15} - the satisfaction degree regarding the respect from management institution; B_{16} - the satisfaction degree regarding the relation with the office in which they operate; B_{17} - the satisfaction degree in relation to the office with computer equipment; B_{18} - the satisfaction degree in relation to internet connection; B_{19} - the satisfaction degree in relation to pressure made by the political system.

To define these nine characteristics a measurement scale was applied as defined by the following values: 1-total dissatisfaction, 2-low satisfaction, 3-moderate satisfaction, 4-increased satisfaction, 5-total satisfaction. By processing the data sets recorded for the nine variables in the sample were obtained the results in the table below. Distribution of responses to these primary variables and their means are presented below:

Characteristics of the degree of satisfaction

Table 1

Variable	B_{11}	B_{12}	B_{13}	B_{14}	B_{15}	B_{16}	B_{17}	B_{18}	B_{19}
Distribution of responses (%)									
1	17,80	2,00	6,50	3,30	2,80	2,20	5,00	7,20	20,60
2	27,60	6,10	10,90	5,80	8,70	9,60	11,10	10,80	24,50
3	45,10	35,80	40,10	24,50	29,30	26,70	29,50	21,00	24,50
4	8,20	41,40	34,00	39,90	34,90	37,30	32,70	35,30	17,60
5	1,30	14,50	7,80	26,50	24,30	23,90	21,20	25,40	11,90
NR	0,00	0,20	0,70	0,00	0,00	0,20	0,60	0,40	0,90
Variables' mean									
Mean	2,48	3,60	3,25	3,80	3,68	3,70	3,54	3,61	2,75

Using the primary variables from above, there are then defined two aggregate variables of first level, as follows:

- RES variable, for evaluating the respect enjoyed by employees of public institutions. This is a variable which is calculated as an arithmetic average of the primary variables B_{12} , B_{13} , B_{14} and B_{15} ;
- COL variable, characterizing the satisfaction degree of employees from public administration to the conditions of work (office, computer and Internet connection).

The two variables of the first level, as in fact as the primary variables B_{11} and B_{19} , are defined on the interval [1,5] In order to characterize the overall satisfaction degree of employees of public institutions an aggregate GSA variable of second level is defined based on application that is described below:

$$GSA : N \rightarrow [1,5], \quad GSA = \frac{1}{4}[B_{11} + RES + COL + B_{19}]$$

For the two categories of variables there were then calculated the mean, standard deviation and indicators to characterize asymmetry and kurtosis. The results are presented below.

Indicators for characterizing the variables used to describe employee’s satisfaction

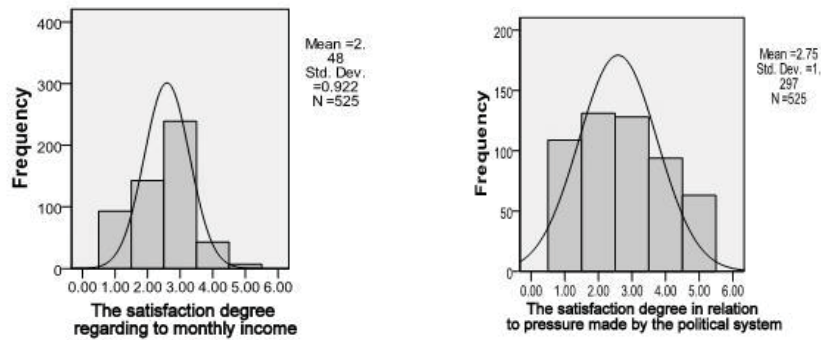
Table 2

Variable	Number of valid cases	Mean	Standard deviation	Skewness	Kurtosis
B ₁₁	525	2,48	0,922	-0,057	-0,386
B ₁₉	525	2,75	1,297	0,222	-0,103
RES	525	3,58	0,751	-0,489	0,454
COL	525	3,61	0,867	-0,399	-0,210
GSA	525	3,11	0,675	0,182	0,005

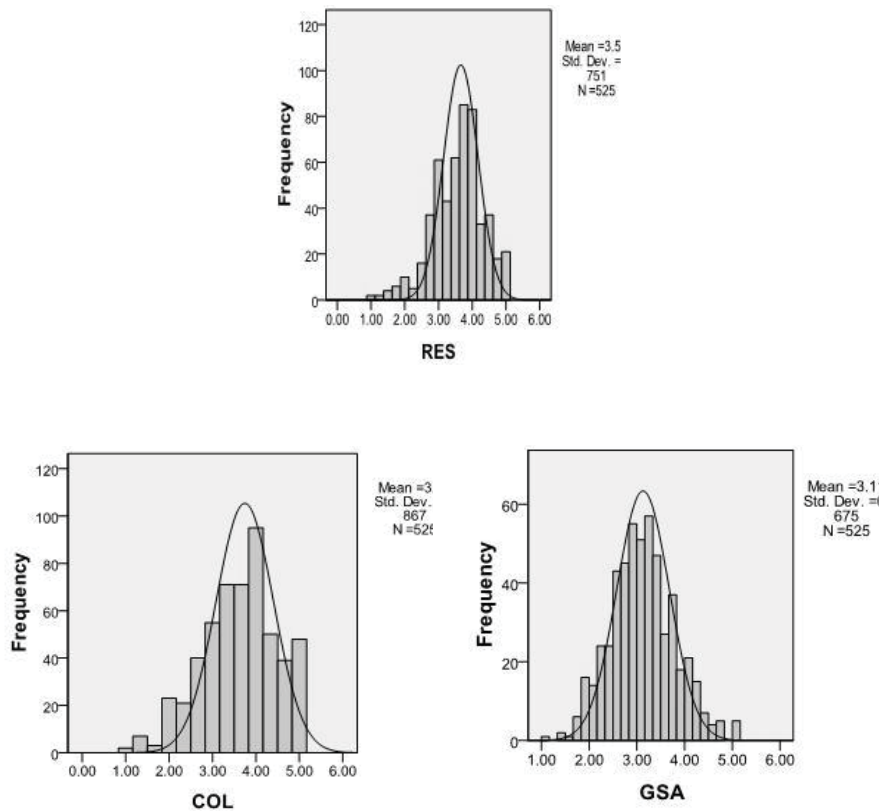
Distribution of values for the five variables (B₁₁, B₁₉, RES, COL and GSA) is shown in the graphs in Figure 1. The graph in Figure 2 represents the means of the five variables used to assess employees’ degree of satisfaction in public institutions.

Distribution of values used to characterize the degree of satisfaction

Figure 1

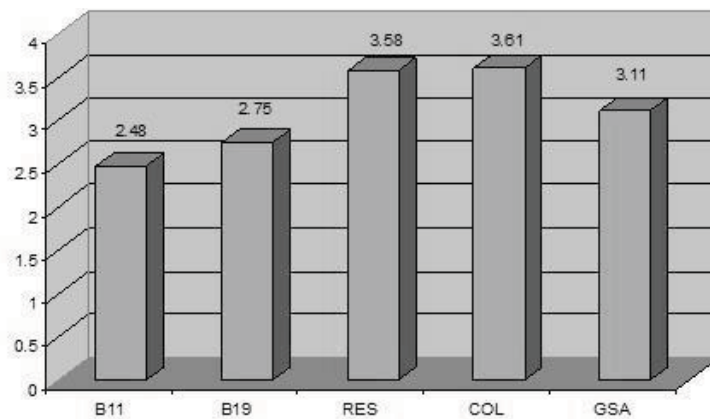


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Variables' mean used to characterize employee satisfaction

Figure 2



For evaluating the quality of service relationships there were considered six aspects: quality of service relationships with colleagues within the same department, quality relationships with colleagues from other departments, quality relationships with the direct manager, the quality of job relations with the institution's manager, quality relationships with customer's service and job quality relationships with employees of similar institutions. To assess the views of employees in relation to the evaluation criteria there was used a measurement scale with four levels: excellent, good, satisfactory and unsatisfactory. Using information obtained through application of the above questions resulted in six primary variables. For these variables the same measurement scales were used as with the following four values: 1-unsatisfactory, 2-satisfactory, 3-good and 4-very good.

The six variables are defined as: B_{61} -characterizing the quality of professional relationships with colleagues within the same department, B_{62} -characterizing the quality of professional relationships with colleagues from other departments, B_{63} -characterizing the quality of professional relationships with the direct manager, B_{64} -characterizing the quality of professional relationships with the director of the institution, B_{65} -characterizing the quality of relationships with clients and B_{66} -characterizing the quality of professional relationships with employees of other institutions.

Statistical indicators used to characterize the quality of professional relationships

Table 3

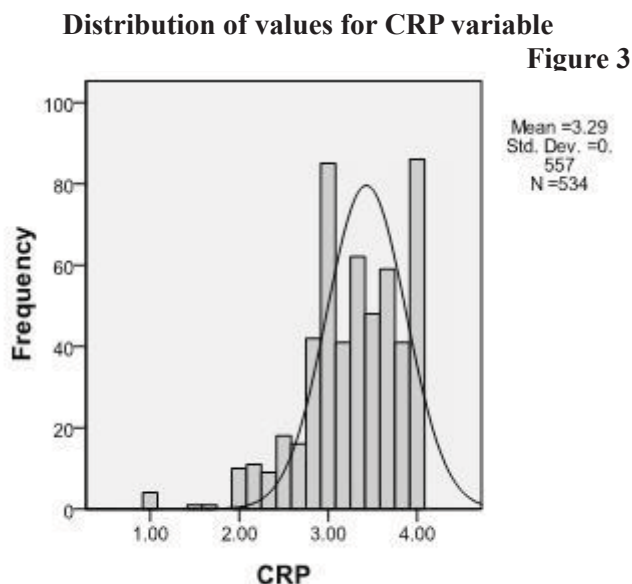
Variable	B_{61}	B_{62}	B_{63}	B_{64}	B_{65}	B_{66}
	Distribution of responses (%)					
Unsatisfactory	1,70	1,50	2,00	3,30	1,50	3,00
Satisfactory	6,90	12,40	10,80	11,70	8,30	13,20
Good	33,40	53,60	33,80	43,20	47,50	50,30
Very good	57,90	32,30	53,10	41,40	41,90	33,40
NR	0,00	0,20	0,40	0,40	0,70	0,20
	Variables' mean					
	3,48	3,17	3,39	3,24	3,31	3,15

To analyze the quality of professional relationships at the level of the government's institutions, a CRP variable is defined as an average of the six primary variables defined directly on the answers to the questionnaire:

$$CRP : N \rightarrow [1,4], CRP = \frac{1}{6}[B_{61} + \dots + B_{66}]$$

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For this variable a mean and standard deviation is calculated, but also the distribution of values of this variable as presented below.



Hiring and promotion in public administration

An important aspect of the modernization of public service is attracting in public service competent people, capable to respond favourably to competition with the private sector. In this regard, an important role is the proper conduct of the competition for employment or promotion in public office. In the questionnaire a question was submitted to assess certain characteristics of professional competitions for employment and promotion in the public service. Thus, we intended to assess to what extent, in a contest, the focus is on each of the following aspects: memorizing the facts, ideas, or methodology from manual or normative acts in order to repeat it in an unchanged form; analyzing the main elements of an idea, an experience or a theory, synthesizing and organizing ideas, information and experiences in new and complex interpretations and connections, determining the real value of information, arguments or methods of analysis (eg, examining how others have collected and interpreted certain data and assessing how strong are their conclusions), application of theories and theoretical concepts to practical problems or in new situations. To assess these issues a measuring scale was utilised with the following values: to a large extent, pretty much, moderate, insignificant extent and not at all.

Based on information obtained from this question were defined five primary variables: B_{21} - professional contests encourage memory; B_{22} - professional contests encourage analysis; B_{23} - professional contests encourage synthesis; B_{24} - professional contests encourage determining the truth value of information; B_{25} - professional contests encourage application of theories. The measurement scale used to define the five variables has the following five values: 1-not at all, 2- an insignificantly degree, 3-a moderate degree, 4-quite enough, 5- a large degree.

After processing the information at the level of the sample there were obtained the results as presented below.

Appreciation of the institution's budgetary performance compared with five elements

Table 4

Variable	B_{21}	B_{22}	B_{23}	B_{24}	B_{25}
Distribution of responses (%)					
1	8,90	3,50	3,70	4,80	6,10
2	11,10	15,60	10,80	13,20	12,40
3	30,60	37,10	36,40	39,10	38,40
4	28,40	28,90	29,10	26,70	25,40
5	20,60	14,50	19,30	15,60	17,30
NR(99)	0,40	0,40	0,70	0,60	0,40
Variables' mean					
Mean	2,59	2,64	2,50	2,65	2,64

Another important aspect for developing the public service is related to the right organization of competitions for employment and promotion in the public service. To assess the accuracy of the two categories of competitions in the questionnaire there were included two questions. With these two questions we wished to establish whether or not competition encourages each of the following five aspects: the professional training of candidates, the influence of persons within the institution, the influence of the political environment, gifts or money given by candidates and inappropriate conduct of the competition. For the two closed questions was used a scale of values with four possible answers: not at all important, slightly important, fairly important and very important.

Based on information from the first question that refers to the assessment of some issues connected with the competition of employment in public service, there were defined five primary variables: B_{31} - the importance

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of profession training the candidate for promotion; B_{32} - the influence of persons within the institution in promoting the candidate; B_{33} - the influence of the political environment to promote the individual; B_{34} - the importance of gifts or money offered by candidates for promotion; B_{35} - the improper conduct of the contest promotion. The measurement scale used to define the five variables has the following five values: 1-not at all important, 2-less important, 3-fairly important and 4-very important.

After processing the information at the sample's level there were obtained the results as presented below.

The correctness of contests for employing a person

Table 5

Variable	B_{31}	B_{32}	B_{33}	B_{34}	B_{35}
	Distribution of responses (%)				
1	2,80	33,60	41,90	69,80	33,40
2	9,80	26,70	26,90	15,20	16,00
3	32,70	24,90	17,40	9,50	25,20
4	54,50	14,50	13,40	4,30	24,70
NR(99)	0,20	0,40	0,40	1,30	0,70
	Variables' mean				
Mean	3,40	2,19	2,01	1,47	2,42

Based on the five primary variables was defined a CCP aggregated variable for assessing the fairness of professional competitions for employment in an institution of public administration. The aggregate variable is defined based on the application:

$$CCP : N \rightarrow [1,4], \quad CCP = \frac{1}{5}[(5 - B_{31}) + B_{32} + B_{33} + B_{34} + B_{35}]$$

A high value of the mean of this variable highlights major deficiencies in hiring a person in public administration from organizing a contest.

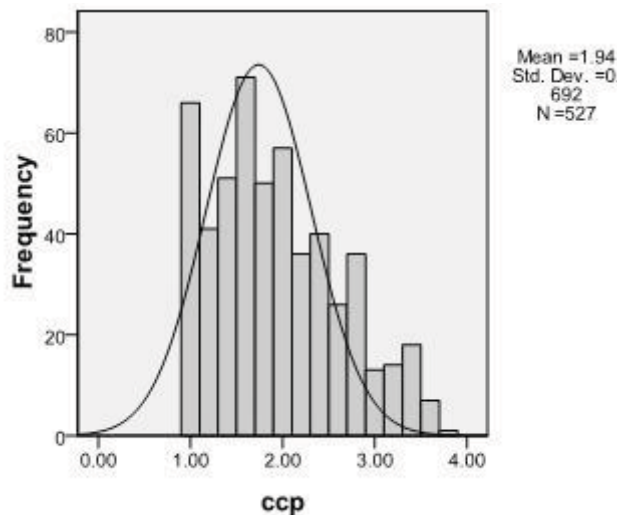
For this variable was calculated the mean and standard deviation, yielding the results as below:

- Mean is 1,94;
- Standard deviation is 0,692.

Distribution of values for this variable is shown in Figure 4.

Distribution of values for CCP variable

Figure 4



Based on the information recorded from the question of evaluating issues promoting fairness in competitions for public office there were defined five primary variable: B_{41} - the importance of professional training of the candidate for promotion; B_{42} - the influence of persons within the institution in promoting the candidate; B_{43} - the influence of the political environment to promote the individual; B_{44} - the importance of gifts or money offered to candidates for promotion; B_{45} - the improper conduct of the contest promotion. The measurement scale used to define the five variables had the following five values: 1-not at all important, 2-less important, 3-important and 4-very important.

After processing the sample information there were obtained the following results which are presented below.

The correctness of contests for promoting people

Table 6

Variable	B ₄₁	B ₄₂	B ₄₃	B ₄₄	B ₄₅
	Distribution of responses (%)				
1	4,10	30,60	43,00	69,00	35,80
2	9,10	24,50	28,80	18,00	19,70
3	28,40	32,30	16,10	8,50	21,90
4	58,30	12,40	11,90	3,90	21,90
NR(99)	0,20	0,20	0,20	0,60	0,70
	Variables' mean				
Mean	3,41	2,26	1,95	1,46	2,31

On the basis of the five primary variables there was defined an aggregate CPP variable for assessing the fairness of professional competitions for employment in an institution of public administration. The aggregated variable is defined based on the following application:

$$CPP : N \rightarrow [1,4], \quad CPP = \frac{1}{5} [(5 - B_{41}) + B_{42} + B_{43} + B_{44} + B_{45}]$$

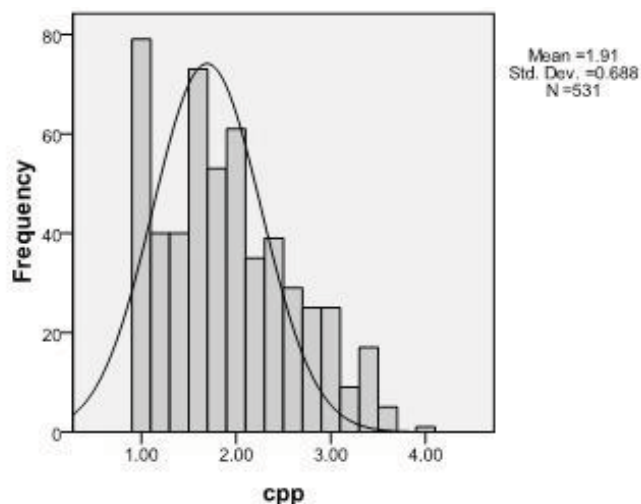
A high value of the mean of this variable highlights major deficiencies in hiring a person in public administration by holding a contest. For this variable there was calculated the mean and standard deviation, yielding the following results:

- Mean is 1,91;
- Standard deviation is 0,688.

Distribution of values for this variable is shown in the chart below.

Distribution of values for CPP variable

Figure 5



Mobility of persons from public administration

An important aspect to be considered in the analysis of how to characterize the persons employed in public administration refers to the mobility of employees. Thus, through the questions included in the questionnaire it was aimed to calculate some statistical indicators to characterize the following aspects: the average seniority of people from public administration, the average seniority of people within the same institution, the average seniority in the central public administration in the position currently held, the average seniority of a person subordinated to the same manager.

To highlight these criteria in the questionnaire a question was then introduced to determine if each employee worked a period (in years): in public administration, within the same institution, in their current position and subordinated to the direct manager.

Descriptive indicators as calculated for the characterization of the four dimensions of mobility of employees from public administration are presented in Table 7. In the four graphs in Figure 6 is shown the distribution of age groups compared with the four indicators used to analyze mobility of local government employees. Based on the results in Table 7 there were calculated three indices that are used to characterize the mobility of employees from local government on three levels: in public administration, the institution where the employee is currently working and in the management hierarchy.

Average indicators calculated for the four variables are presented in

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Figure 7. These average indicators are used to characterize three aspects of civil mobility in public service. The values of these derivate indicators allow the highlighting of important aspects of local government employees mobility on vertical (on hierarchical management structures) and on horizontal (at the level of the institution or between institutions).

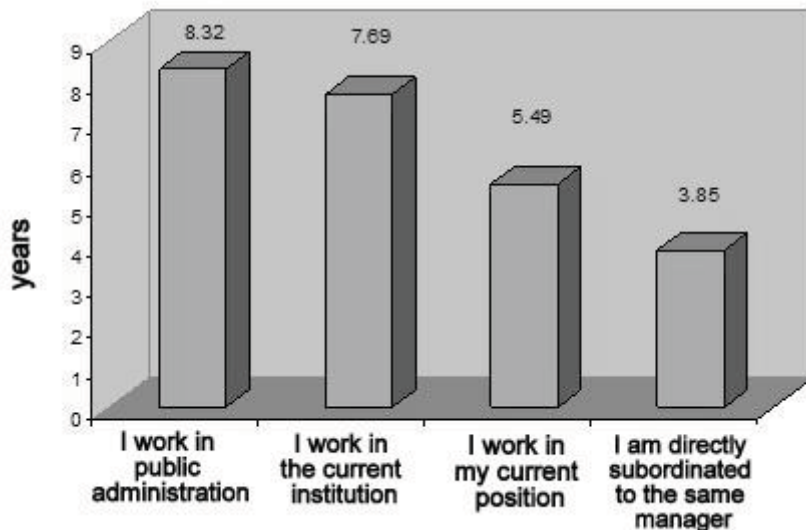
Descriptive indicators to characterize the employees' mobility

Table 7

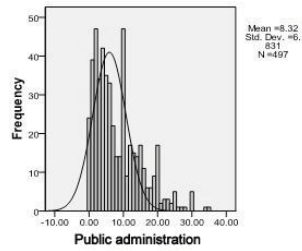
Indicator (years)	I work in public administration	I work in the current institution	I work in my current position	I am directly subordinated to the same manager
Mean	8,320	7,690	5,490	3,850
Minimum	0,000	0,000	0,000	0,000
Maximum	35,000	35,000	25,000	18,000
Standard deviation	6,831	6,166	4,616	3,574

Average years in public administration, in the same institution, on the same position and under direct subordination to the same manager

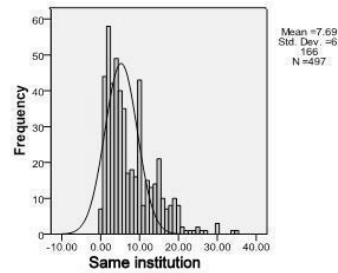
Figure 6



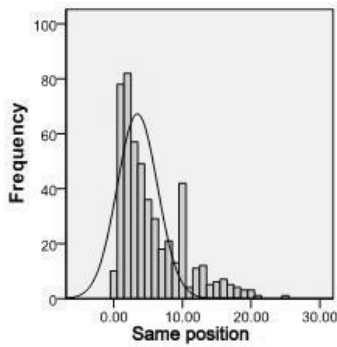
Age distribution of persons in relation to years in the public administration (a), in the same institution (b), in the same position (c) and under direct subordination to the same manager (d)



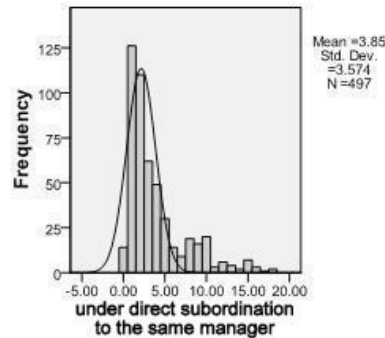
a



b



c



d

To assess the degree of mobility in the central public administration, the next three indicators are calculated as follows:

• **Functionaries' mobility between institutions**

$$k_1 = \frac{VM_2}{VM_1}$$

where:

VM_1 - average seniority in public administration and
 VM_2 - average seniority in the same public institution.

For data recorded at the sample level the results were obtained as below:

$$k_1 = \frac{8,15}{9,40} = 0,92.$$

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• Functionaries' mobility on positions within the institution

$$k_2 = \frac{VM_3}{VM_2}$$

where VM_3 - average seniority of the position.

Based on information recorded at the sample level the following value was obtained:

$$k_2 = \frac{6,17}{8,15} = 0,71.$$

• Functionaries' mobility in leading positions

$$k_3 = \frac{VM_4}{VM_3}$$

where VM_4 - average seniority of an officer directly subordinated under the same manager.

Based on recorded data at sample level the following value was obtained:

$$k_3 = \frac{4,46}{6,17} = 0,70.$$

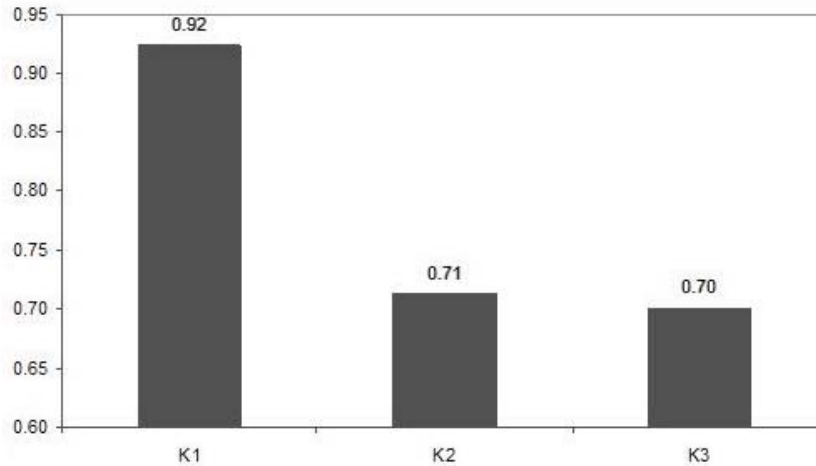
The high values of the indicators show a low mobility of central public administration's employees in relation to the three criteria:

- On average, 92% of the time while a person was employed in public administration was spent in the same institution;
- On average, 71% of the time while a person was employed in public administration was spent the in the same position;
- On average, 70% of the time a person was employed in public administration was spent at the same hierarchical level.

Values of the three indicators calculated above are represented in Figure 8.

Indicators used for the analysis of mobility

Figure 8



Conclusions

An important aspect to support the process of public service reform is the implementation of a modern wage system for the functionaries. According to government employee's qualifications, current revenues are not incentives for developing the public service. Implementation of the new public sector's wage system raises major problems for the following reasons: implementing the new system was carried out while the central and local public administration has been restructured; the economic crisis at international and national level creates major difficulties in the development of the reform process etc. The macroeconomic approach of reforming the wage system for the public administration, as a matter of fact from the entire public sector, should be an important coordinate of implementation of current wage system.

The reform of public administration process should encourage the development of new types of professional competitions for employment and promotion in the public service. Generally, state sector and, in particular, public administration, should attract the most competent people. It should not be forgotten that the state sector is in fierce competition with the private sector.

Another issue not at all to be neglected is to ensure a higher mobility on the vertical (in the professional hierarchy of training) and horizontal (between government institutions) of employees from the public administrations. Changes in the civil service in the last decade have stimulated increasing mobility of civil functionaries. This feature must also be motivated by state institutions in the near future.

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