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IDENTIFICATION OF PROBLEMS IN THE MOTIVATION AND INCENTIVIZATION OF PUBLIC SERVICE PERSONNEL

The article examines the issues of motivation and incentivization of public service employees in Ukraine, identifies key factors affecting the effectiveness of their professional activities, and analyzes modern approaches to the formation of motivation systems in the public service. Motivation and incentivization of personnel are critical factors in the efficiency of public administration, as the level of employee engagement determines the implementation of managerial decisions, the quality of service delivery, and the achievement of strategic state policy goals. The study reveals that insufficient motivation and low levels of incentives lead to staff turnover, reduced productivity, workplace conflicts, and errors in decision-making processes.

The authors analyze both material and non-material means of incentivization, emphasizing the need for a comprehensive approach that considers the individual needs and professional values of employees. The article presents an analysis of current sociological research on factors motivating public service employees, highlighting: the desire to work for the benefit of the state and society, stable salaries, career growth opportunities, self-realization, and social status. The study also explores the influence of gender, age, and work experience on motivational priorities, as well as problems related to the lack of transparency in recruitment, performance evaluation, and reward systems.

The article concludes that improving the effectiveness of the public service is possible only through the creation of a transparent and flexible motivation system, adapted to modern requirements and employee needs. The importance of implementing a unified personnel policy, establishing a talent pool, and introducing measures to support a favorable socio-psychological climate is emphasized. The results of the study can be used to enhance motivation and incentivization systems in public administration and to increase citizens' trust in state institutions.

Keywords: motivation, incentivization, public service, efficiency, personnel policy, material and non-material incentives, professional activity, socio-psychological climate.

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ВИЗНАЧЕННЯ ПРОБЛЕМ МОТИВАЦІЇ ТА СТИМУЛЮВАННЯ ПЕРСОНАЛУ НА ПУБЛІЧНІЙ СЛУЖБІ

У статті досліджуються проблеми мотивації та стимулювання персоналу публічної служби в Україні. Аналізуються ключові фактори, що впливають на продуктивність, задоволеність роботою та кар'єрне зростання службовців. Проведено аналіз актуальних соціологічних досліджень щодо факторів мотивації публічних службовців, серед яких виділяються прагнення працювати на благо держави та суспільства, стабільна заробітна плата, можливості для кар'єрного зростання, самореалізація та соціальний статус. Визначено, що ефективна система матеріального та нематеріального стимулювання, адаптована до потреб працівників, підвищує якість виконання обов'язків і сприяє довірі громадян до органів публічного управління.

Ключові слова: мотивація, стимулювання, публічна служба, ефективність, кадрова політика, матеріальні та нематеріальні стимули, професійна діяльність, соціально-психологічний клімат.



Problem Statement. The system of motivation and incentivization of personnel in the public service in Ukraine remains one of the most vulnerable links in public administration. Despite the existence of legally established forms and methods of encouragement, actual practice shows their low effectiveness and misalignment with the current needs of employees. Insufficient material support, the absence of a transparent career advancement system, unfair distribution of rewards and recognition, as well as the low prestige of the public service profession, lead to increased staff turnover, demotivation, and a decline in the quality of job performance.

The problem is further exacerbated by the fact that traditional motivation methods are losing their relevance, while new tools have not yet acquired a systematic character. This creates a situation in which highly qualified personnel leave the civil service, while those who remain often experience dissatisfaction with working conditions and uncertainty about the future. As a result, the overall effectiveness of public institutions decreases, the quality of management decisions deteriorates, and public trust in authorities declines.

Thus, there is a need for a thorough study of the problems of motivation and incentivization of public service personnel, the identification of their root causes, and the search for modern tools and mechanisms that will increase employees' engagement in task performance, strengthen the prestige of public service, and ensure the efficiency of public administration.

Analysis of Recent Research and Publications. The issues of professional training, competency development, and the improvement of personnel management systems in the public service have been studied by domestic scholars such as, Bakumenko V.D. [1], Nizhnyk N.R. [2], Obolensky O.Yu. [3], Seryogin S.M. [4], and Shpak V.D. [5]. Their works explore the formation of professional qualities of civil servants, the modernization of personnel policy, and the implementation of a competency-based approach to staff development.

At the same time, certain aspects related to the creation of an effective mechanism for motivation and incentivization of public servants, the introduction of innovative human resource management methods, as well as the impact of digitalization on the effectiveness of their activities, remain insufficiently studied and require further scientific analysis.

The aim of the article is to substantiate the theoretical foundations and develop practical recommendations for improving personnel management mechanisms in the public service, taking into account the modern requirements of digitalization, enhancing professional competencies, and ensuring the efficiency of civil servants' activities.

Presentation of the main research material. Nowadays, many different tools for motivating and stimulating personnel have been created and implemented. There are also numerous methods of influence that affect employee motivation. However, these are not long-term solutions, as the methods used previously are now ineffective and outdated. The same applies today: factors that motivate a person today may become demotivators tomorrow and hinder work efficiency. Therefore, it is necessary to continuously study individual needs, desires, and perspectives in order to develop effective methods of motivation and stimulation.

In order for leadership to be as effective as possible, it is necessary to understand the motives and needs of public servants, as well as to correctly use incentives to improve work performance. For this reason, in recent years, motivation of public servants has been recognized as a key factor contributing to the development of their professional skills, career growth, and the overall efficiency of the public service [6].

Effective systems of motivation and staff incentives, based on understanding employees' motivational factors, are key to the successful functioning of institutions at all levels. These systems should be flexible, adapted to the needs and interests of employees, employ a variety of material and non-material incentives, and promote efficient personnel performance that aligns with societal interests.

It can be argued that motivation is a determining factor significantly influencing the performance of public servants, shaping their initiative, responsibility, drive to achieve goals, and the quality of task execution.

In this context, Seryogin S. and Sorokina N. conducted a sociological analysis in 2019, which involved 448 public servants aged 22 and older [7]. The aim of the study was to identify the problems faced by public servants and to analyze the features of personnel motivation and stimulation.

According to responses to the question «What attracts you to public service?», respondents clearly identified three key motivating factors for choosing work in public authorities:

- desire to work for the benefit of the state and society. This indicates a high level of awareness and patriotism among respondents, who wish to use their knowledge and experience to contribute to the country's development and improve citizens' lives.

- stable salary. This plays a crucial role in motivating individuals to work in the public sector. A guaranteed salary and social benefits provide financial stability and allow for future planning.

- combination of material and value-based motives. Most respondents chose both the desire to serve the state and a stable income. This shows that, for many, working in the public sector is not only a way to earn a living but also an opportunity to realize personal values and contribute to societal development.



Ukrainian public servants value not only material benefits but also non-material values. Public service is attractive to them due to factors such as:

- opportunities for development and self-realization;
- social protection (pension provision);
- ability to contribute to the country's development and improve people's lives;
- encouragement of initiative, allowing employees to express themselves and implement their own ideas;
- attaining a certain social status and working in a prestigious position.

An interesting finding by Seryogin S. and Sorokina N. is that women in public service prioritize economic motivation (stable salary, pension, etc.), whereas men tend to value moral-ethical motivation (self-expression, working for the benefit of the state and citizens) [8]. This can be explained by the fact that women in the modern world strive to be independent and self-sufficient. A stable salary allows women to feel financially independent from men or, in general, to support their family on their own.

Nowadays, it is necessary to develop a mechanism that guarantees women career advancement within the public service system, including a decent salary. Compared to women, for men, a successful career, social status, and self-realization are more important than salary. Traditionally, men have sought positions of power and occupy most key roles in public service. However, it is important to note that gender roles are changing significantly in the modern world. Women increasingly seek career growth and professional self-realization, while men are placing greater value on family life and are willing to take on more domestic responsibilities.

Thus, to enhance the effectiveness of public administration in Ukraine, it is necessary to improve both material and moral incentives. According to the survey, most public servants highlighted the importance of material motivation, recognition and understanding of the social significance of their work, the desire to perform well and not disappoint their supervisors, interest in career advancement, and moral encouragement from leadership.

As we all know, the system of personnel motivation and stimulation has always been divided into two components: material and non-material. However, for effective performance, they need to be applied together in a comprehensive approach. Material motivation satisfies the basic needs of employees, while non-material motivation ensures recognition and opportunities for personal and professional development.

Research on labor motivation of public servants in several regions of Ukraine has shown that employees' primary needs include a salary commensurate with their competence and experience, good working conditions, positive relationships with colleagues and management, and opportunities for career advancement. For public officials in both Ukraine and abroad, non-material motivational factors are also crucial, such as a positive psychological climate within the team, autonomy in organizing one's work, a sense of achievement and self-realization, as well as support and recognition from leadership.

Now, let us turn to the issues of motivation and incentivization of public servants. Staff turnover in the public service is a serious problem that threatens its effectiveness. Young and talented specialists often leave public service, which negatively affects its overall operational efficiency.

The main problems of motivation among public servants, which lead to decreased job engagement, include the following:

- poor reputation and low prestige of the «public servant» title;
- risk of dismissal during changes in government or political leadership;
- lack of clear rules and guarantees;
- non-transparent promotion system;
- unfair incentive and reward system.

Let us consider each problem separately. The low prestige of the title «public servant» and the low social status lead young and promising employees to refuse to work for the state and choose a career in the private sector, where the perception of the profession and development opportunities are more attractive. This creates a shortage of qualified personnel in the public service.

The lack of clear rules and guarantees for public servants can be illustrated by the current law on public administration, which states that «the remuneration of civil servants should ensure sufficient material conditions for the independent performance of official duties, encourage the staffing of government bodies with competent and experienced civil servants, and promote their diligence and initiative in work» [8]. However, the remuneration of public servants remains relatively low. For example, the National Agency of Ukraine for Civil Service conducted, for the second time, an anonymous survey from August 1–21, 2023, titled «Organization of Work and Remuneration of Civil Servants under Martial Law.» A total of 55,820 civil servants representing all categories of positions – «A,» «B,» and «C» – participated. According to the results, 53.6% reported a decrease in their salary, 35.8% saw no change, and only 7.6% experienced an increase. Salary reductions affected all categories of positions. Overtime pay is almost nonexistent, as evidenced by 84% of respondents answering «No» compared to



only 9% answering «Yes.» Overall, the vast majority of public servants – 93.1% – are dissatisfied with their salary level. At the same time, 79% of respondents understand the mechanisms of salary calculation and payment, with understanding increasing with age and experience. Most civil servants consider it fair that employees with more experience receive higher pay for the same work [9].

The remuneration of public servants has several specific features:

- the stated salary already includes mandatory deductions, so the actual salary received by a public servant is 21% lower;
- there are differences in pay depending on the agency or institution;
- salary levels are not strictly monitored, so managers across different sectors receive almost the same pay, which reduces the perceived value of work in public administration.

Because, in most cases, salaries do not depend on final results, people stop focusing on improving work efficiency; for them, receiving material rewards and various perks becomes the main priority [10].

Only 28% of employees feel secure, while the majority feel partially or not secure at all (Zaporizhzhia, Kherson, and Mykolaiv regions). The level of happiness among public servants is an important indicator of their motivation and job satisfaction. This level can be influenced by factors such as salary, working conditions, and career opportunities. However, it should be noted that as the position grade and level of the public institution decrease, this indicator also declines.

Considering gender, the level of satisfaction with being a public servant is as follows (Table 1):

Table 1

Level of satisfaction with being a public servant, by gender

Gender	Satisfied	Partially	Not satisfied
Female	60,4 %	34,5 %	5,1 %
Male	55 %	37 %	8 %

Source: compiled by the authors.

Thus, women tend to be happier working in the public service than men. However, job satisfaction in the public sector is not determined solely by gender, as it is influenced by a variety of factors, including personal values, career aspirations, working conditions, and the balance between work and personal life.

However, some studies suggest that women in public service may experience higher levels of job satisfaction compared to their male counterparts, owing to a more favorable work-life balance, greater flexibility, enhanced opportunities for career advancement, and a stronger perception of their impact on societal well-being. The existing system of motivation and incentives for public servants demonstrates limited effectiveness, as evidenced by several key issues. First, the absence of interest-free housing loans in current state budget legislation represents a missed opportunity to provide meaningful incentives for high-performing employees. Second, the allocation of awards and recognitions is often inequitable. Although legal frameworks establish formal mechanisms for acknowledging public service contributions-such as presidential awards, certificates from the Verkhovna Rada, and honorary certificates from the Cabinet of Ministers-these benefits are predominantly conferred upon senior-level managers. Ordinary public servants typically receive only regional or local commendations, thereby limiting the perceived fairness and motivational impact of the reward system.

Thus, there are challenges in the implementation of rules and guarantees for public servants concerning the provision of financial assistance:

- the payment of material aid for addressing social and everyday expenses depends on the availability of funds in the budget, making it unstable and unreliable;
- the amount of monetary compensation for continuous service can be reduced or deferred for a certain period due to austerity measures.

All of this leads to public servants experiencing uncertainty, as they cannot rely on receiving assistance when they truly need it. Additionally, it results in decreased motivation or its complete absence; employees lack the desire to strive for better results in the long term. This situation also contributes to conflict, stemming from the perceived unfairness of a payment system that is neither transparent nor clearly defined.

The presence of a clear career advancement system in the public sector serves as a strong motivating factor for both experienced employees and those just beginning their professional journey. In public administration, many individuals are driven by the desire to attain high status or achieve a senior position that is authoritative and prestigious. Therefore, motivation related to career growth remains highly relevant and significant.

At present, starting a career in the public service represents a significant challenge, as the recruitment and appointment system lacks transparency and objectivity. Unfortunately, personal connections are often prioritized



over competence and experience. Without prior work experience, it is very difficult for candidates to secure a position in their field, as they struggle to demonstrate their knowledge and skills. Employers, on the other hand, often lack the time to train new employees, preferring experienced specialists who already know how to perform tasks efficiently, saving management time. Furthermore, there are no clear selection criteria, and candidates frequently do not understand which qualities and skills are expected for a particular position. The absence of explicit selection standards can lead to subjective evaluations by employers, where personal preferences or connections may play a decisive role.

Such conditions can result in positions being filled by individuals who lack the necessary knowledge and skills, negatively affecting the quality of work within public institutions. Talented and qualified professionals may be unwilling to work in the public sector if they perceive that promotion depends not on merit but on personal connections. Additionally, a non-transparent recruitment system can create opportunities for corruption and abuse of power.

Ukrainian legislation establishes rules and criteria for career advancement; however, in practice, personal connections, political views, or the subjective opinions of supervisors often play a decisive role. Individuals should have the opportunity and all necessary conditions to plan their careers, meaning that the legal framework must not only exist formally but also be effectively implemented in practice.

Referring to A. Maslow's theory of the hierarchy of needs, when an individual's material needs are not met, it leads to demotivation and prevents them from realizing their potential. In other words, public servants concerned with low income cannot be motivated for creative work, initiative, or professional development. Low salaries and insufficient social benefits result in the outflow of specialists, who move to other sectors offering better working conditions and adequate pay. Consequently, staff shortages, low motivation, and demotivation lead to a decline in work quality and slow down the pace of reforms.

The system of evaluation and material incentives for public servants in Ukraine also exhibits several shortcomings:

- in many cases, the results of attestation and annual performance evaluations do not correspond to the actual level of work performed by public servants. This may be due to the subjectivity of evaluations, influence of personal connections, or political considerations. An unfair evaluation system demotivates employees, as they do not see a clear link between their results and the rewards received.
- certification, which is an important component of the evaluation system, is often conducted formally, without proper monitoring of employees' knowledge and skills. This renders certification uninformative and does not allow for an objective assessment of the level of public servants' preparation. For many, certification is perceived as a tool for dismissal, as its results may subsequently be used for this purpose.
- it is crucial for motivation that employees' work is properly assessed and that rewards correspond to their results. This is supported by S. Adams' equity theory, which states that people are inclined to work honestly and proactively when they see that their results are fairly evaluated and rewarded. An unfair system of assessment and reward is a key reason for low motivation among public servants.
- many employees do not understand how their salaries and allowances are calculated, creating an atmosphere of distrust and leading to demotivation. Therefore, it is important to clearly and transparently explain to employees the principles of calculating their remuneration.

Thus, issues of motivation and incentives are present at all levels of the public service, making the search for solutions extremely relevant. This matter should be addressed by the National Agency of Civil Service, as the main body overseeing the civil service, along with other authorized agencies regulating public service in Ukraine. Their joint efforts should focus on improving existing methods of motivation and incentives, developing and implementing new motivational tools, and creating a favorable work environment.

It is important to note that addressing the problems of motivation and incentivization of public servants requires a comprehensive approach. Therefore, the measures taken must be systematic, consistent, and aimed at creating a genuinely motivating environment for work.

Conclusions. The conducted study made it possible to identify the features of motivation and incentivization of public servants based on the identification of key factors influencing their work efficiency.

According to the results of the study, it can be concluded that the formation of a unified personnel policy in the public service should focus on:

- staffing positions with qualified and motivated specialists;
- creating a transparent system of career advancement and a personnel reserve;
- adapting the system of material and non-material incentives to the needs of public servants and contemporary challenges;
- ensuring a favorable socio-psychological climate within public service teams.



The prospect for further research lies in developing a comprehensive system of motivation and incentivization for public service personnel, which will contribute to increased efficiency, higher quality of managerial decisions, and greater public trust in government bodies.

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