

Human Resource Management in Public Administration: The role of Leadership in motivating employees of a Tourism Public Sector Authority

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The motivation of human resources is related to organizational results. By adopting an effective leadership style, employees are better motivated to achieve maximum work efficiency and effort. Motivation in public organizations is directly linked to the existing institutional framework. Despite the fact that the literature shows that there is a direct positive correlation between motivation and job satisfaction, research shows that a negative leadership at all levels of hierarchy has a negative effect on employee's incentives. The present qualitative study examines the motivational factors and the leadership's role in Tourism related Public Body. The research reveals the difficulties in applying modern management tools in the specific body that, in turn, they are resulting in internal organizational problems and low-quality services to the public. An interesting finding is that employees seem to be satisfied with internal rewards such as recognition, prestige, support and administrative development.

Keywords: HRM; Leadership; Public Tourism Body.

1. Introduction

Public bodies operate in an ever-changing environment and in a highly standardized context, while enforcing the transparency of procedures. They are called upon to be updated to these changing conditions by adopting management principles and practices. Despite their bureaucratic structure, they need to become more efficient and economical. The Management as a notion or a science for them is now the legitimizing reason for administrative change. With the Management the Public Sector Bodies forms a new anthropocentric culture and manages human resources by focusing on the development of its capabilities and on the strengthening of the positive relations between them, ultimately achieving the improvement of the provided services and the organizational climate. Human Resource Management becomes a popular field receiving considerable attention from other disciplines, particularly in hospitality and tourism (Belias and Trihas, 2022). Because labor-intensive organizations are directly dependent on workforce performance the exchange relationship between leadership and employees is important as it is related with employees' performance (Voorde, Paauwe, and Veldhoven, 2012; Wang, Kim, Rafferty and Sanders, 2020; Michael and Fotiadis, 2022). Consequently, HRM philosophy and practices have gained priority for organizations with high customer-employee interaction (Belias and Trihas, 2022; Stylos et al., 2021; Christou, and Chatzigeorgiou, 2019).

The performance of employees, however, depends on two types of factors. The first one includes elements such as skills, qualifications and knowledge, which are necessary for their performance and the second one includes

elements that affect their willingness to work. Herein lies the effectiveness of managers, that is, the way they act so that their subordinates are in the mood for action. Therefore, it is necessary for the executives to identify the needs of the employees and by adopting the appropriate leadership style to try and motivate them, in order to achieve their mission (Zhao, Ghiselli, Law and Ma, 2016). The purpose of this study is to examine the practical implementation of human resource management practices and the factors that affect the employees' performance of a Public Body, particularly, the Public Tourism Authorities and Carriers.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Differences of Public and Private Sectors

Public bodies differ from private ones at various levels (Rainey and Bozeman, 2000; Boyne, 2002; Goulet and Frank, 2002). Private sector employees have different values, incentives, organizational and job attitudes (Kelman, 2007) in contrast to public sector employees. Significant differentiation occurs in their goals and objectives. Public bodies focus on serving the citizen while private individuals on profit maximization. The prevailing view is that in the public sector the issue of profit and loss is indifferent to bosses and employees, while in the private sector it concerns the individual (Perry and Rainey, 1988). Private sector employees are more interested in high wages than the employees on public sector employees who are paying more attention on an interesting work. The influence on job satisfaction regarding promotion, managers and conditions is greater in employees in public sector services than those employees in private sector (Brunetto and Farr-Wharton, 2006).

In reference to Coyle-Shapiro and Kessler (2003), the level of public employees' organizational commitment is associated with their psychological background, which seems to be lower than these from employees in private sector (Baldwin, 1991; Goulet and Frank, 2002).

However, according to Markovits, Davis and van Dick (2007) in Greece, working in a secure and stable working public sector environment leads to higher standards of commitment. Significant inhomogeneities are also observed related to the culture of employees, the working environment and the constraints that occur. In public organizations, concepts such as jurisdiction and responsibility are pervasive avoiding the assignment of responsibilities and duties to specific individuals (Perry and Rainey, 1988). Their administration is so closely linked to the current government policy that complete segregation is impossible. This fact combined with the lack of strategic planning leads to uneven staffing of services and irrational use of human resources (Lane, 2001).

An equally important difference is noted in the securing of resources, which are necessary for the survival of each institution and which affects the way management is exercised. In the public sector, the raising of funds comes from taxes and derives their power from the law, in contrast to the private sector, which derives them from business, focusing on the maximum conversion of inputs into outflows, as they risk being destroyed in case of non-profitability.

2.2 Public Administration and Public Management

According to Chandler (2003), public administration is defined as all the organizations and administrative mechanisms of a state, which operate at central, regional or local level and are fully responsible for the implementation of laws and governmental programs, such as determined by the respective political leadership, setting as their overriding goal the service of the citizens. We can therefore say that it is an alloy of public interest bodies with administrative and financial autonomy, who exercise public power, the donor of the Constitution, aiming to serve society and achieve government goals. Public Administration is the application of the principles of administration of private organizations to public ones with the only difference being its role, which is social and not economic, by seeking to reduce costs and not to maximize the profit.

Although the prevailing view is that the public services are bureaucratic organizations that are unable to overcome the chronic pathogens, public management aims to organize all public services based on the satisfaction of the general interest, applying the principles of modern management, based on the motivation and cooperation of employees, in order to achieve the goals of the state. As a result, concepts are introduced in public administration, such as clientele, productivity, efficiency and effectiveness, which until now they were used only in the private sector. The citizen is now treated like a customer to be satisfied. However, customer relations in combination with partisanship are the elements that influence the way staff is selected, with the result that the public administration is characterized by unworthiness, reduced efficiency, opacity, and lack of strategic planning.

2.3 Leadership in Public Bodies

Leadership is the necessary element that every manager of the public or private sector must have in order to be able to perform all the functions of the administration. The leader's influence comes from his institutionalized position within an organization, while in the emerging one from his particular characteristics. The key to the success of all organizations lies in the leadership ability to motivate employees to engage, to be receptive to change and to improve their performance with the ultimate goal of approaching their maximum performance (De Jong and Den Hartog, 2007; (Belias and Trihas, 2022). HRM is influencing the employment relations at the organization level (Lv and Xu, 2018). One of the most important tools for Human Resource Management is the selection of the appropriate leadership style, since with its proper use, it can strengthen the positive relationships of employees, to achieve an improvement of the organizational climate and consequently the services provided (Khuong and Nhu, 2015). It is well known that labor-intensive industries such as the public sector, the tourism industry, etc. depend on the performance of their employees, which means that the leadership should focus on the effective management of its potential. On the other hand, the employees should accept the goals of leadership, by adapting their needs to those of the organization (Arnold, Connelly, Walsh and Ginis, 2015). According to the literature, different leadership styles respond to different situations and characterize leaders based on how they perform their duties (Müller and Turner, 2007). Public bodies especially nowadays need leaders who inspire and motivate subordinates to work with faith, coordination and commitment to achieve high levels of productivity and not formal managers or supervisors. The leadership exercise in these bodies is influenced by the specific framework of labor relations, the perception of subordinates and their attitude towards work, and, the general inter-service climate.

In reference to Zeffane (1994) public sector employees answer more positively to a people-oriented leadership style than the employees of the private sector. Consequently, in the modern, uncertain and complex environment of public bodies, the effective leader must be aware of the current situation and have the ability of flexibility and systemic thinking, in order to contribute to the success of the body (Hooijberg and Choi, 2001). Creating a successful organization requires an emphasis on controlling, planning and adopting the quality criteria of processes and human relationships, cultivating collaboration and team spirit. It is necessary for the leader to focus on the empowerment of the staff, in order to participate in the effort to improve the procedures of the institution, as well as in the motivation of the existing ones, in order to harmonize with the existing conditions (Steers, Mowday and Shapiho, 2004; Yang, Wan and Fu, 2012). Effective leadership inspires employees and pushes them to increase their effort to improve their performance and achieve organizational goals (Becker and Gerhart, 1996; Naile and Selesho, 2014). According to Becker and Gerhart (1996) effective HRM augments empower and increase employee motivation.

Motivation are the forces that energize, direct, and sustain behavior and consists of the set of cognitive, biological, social and emotional forces, which activate the behavior of the individual. Motivation is also influenced by the expectations of the social environment, which concern the way services are provided and the interaction between citizen and employee (Franco, Bennett and Kanfer, 2002). Thus, it becomes clear that the motivation depends on

various factors such as the organizational framework of the organization to which it is applied (Zhao, Ghiselli, Law, and Ma, 2016).

The advantage of motivation is the improvement of employees' special skills, as it strengthens their commitment to the set organizational goals, while ensuring the desire to achieve these goals (Rfou and Trawneh, 2009; Nadiri and Tanova, 2010; Locke and Latham, 2004). It achieves greater organizational commitment of employees (Solinger, Hofmans, Bal and Jansen, 2015), which means identifying individual with organizational goals and consequently increasing job satisfaction (Choi and Dickson, 2009; Belias and Trihas, 2022). According to Castaing (2006), motivation in public sector had a substantial effect on affective commitment.

3. Methodology

The main objective of the research is to examine the current situation regarding the way of exercising human resource management, but also to investigate the factors that affect the working efficiency in the public sector and in particular in tourism-related governmental body, in an attempt to investigate the degree of influence of leadership on staff motivation, the level of job satisfaction of employees and their effectiveness. In particular, the following research objectives were formulated:

1. What are the motivation policies applied in the organization?
2. The degree of correlation between Leadership and Motivation with the performance of employees?
3. The degree to which employees' demographic characteristics are correlated with their motivation?

Introducing the different forms of leadership provided the means of identifying points of interest and therefore the research hypotheses are formulated as follows:

1st Question (Q1): Is there a relationship between the application of modern forms of leadership and the emerging attitude of employees towards their work?

2nd Question (Q2): What form of leadership combined with motivation contributes to improving the efficiency and quality of services provided?

3rd Question (Q3): Does *Leadership Empowerment* combined with motivation influence the attitude of employees at work?

It was chosen to carry out a qualitative methodological approach due to the open purpose of the research. Data largely consists of text or words, which should be analyzed in order to highlight the issues under consideration (Creswell, 2011). Qualitative researchers emphasize socially constructed reality, seeking answers to questions that emphasize how it is created, focusing on social experience. The sample was selected by purposive sampling, since, the subject under investigation requires homogeneity of the sample and common experiences of the participants. It was chosen to examine the attitudes and views of both employees and leaders. In the present research, the participation of 10 employees and 2 managers was considered a representative sample for the subject under study. The interviews were attended by people from all regions of the Region of Central Macedonia and specifically 2 from the region of Imathia, 1 from Pella, 5 from Thessaloniki, 1 from Halkidiki, 1 from Kilkis, 1 from Pieria and 1 from Serres, providing a multifarious geographical perspective to the sample.

The research tool chosen is the personal interview with open-ended questions, due to the detailed description of the personal data and the best reception of the experiences and opinions of the participants, who narrate them in their own words (Creswell, 2011). The research questionnaire was structured based on three categories of questions and the research questions were formulated based on the existing literature and the purpose of the

research. A pilot interview test was conducted to ensure that all interview questions were clear and comprehensible. The interviews were conducted in March 2020 amid a pandemic (limitation).

Table 1. Profiles of the participants

Coding	Gender	Age	Marital Status	Working Experience	Academic Background	Postgraduate Studies
M1	M	46-55	Married with Children	11 Years	Bachelor Degree	Yes
M2	M	46-55	Married with Children	17 Years	Bachelor Degree	No
E1	F	46-55	Married with Children	15 Years	Bachelor Degree	Yes
E2	F	46-55	Married with Children	10 Years	Bachelor Degree	Yes
E3	F	36-45	Married with Children	12 Years	Bachelor Degree	No
E4	M	55+	Married with Children	35 Years	Bachelor Degree	No
E5	F	46-55	Married with Children	14 Years	Bachelor Degree	Yes
E6	M	55+	Married with Children	6 Months	Bachelor Degree	Yes
E7	M	36-45	Married with Children	1 Year	Bachelor Degree	Yes
E8	F	36-45	Married with Children	6 Years	Secondary Education	No
E9	F	46-55	Married with Children	17 Years	Bachelor Degree	No
E10	M	36-45	Married with Children	10 Years	Bachelor Degree	No

4. Results and Discussions

The sample consisted of 10 employees and 2 managers (6 men and 6 women) coming from the seven sub-regions of the Tourism Directorate of the Region of Central Macedonia. 6 of them were from 46 to 55 years old, 2 over 55 years old and 4 were from 36 to 45 years old. All 12 are married with children, with years of service ranging from 6 months (1 employee), 1 year (1 employee) to 35 years (1 employee). Most employees have been working for 10-17 years in the service. Except for 1 employee, all employees are higher education graduates and 6 of them own a postgraduate level degree. The analysis of the answers is carried out in the order in which the interview guide’s questions were asked, and then it will be examined to what extent the research hypotheses that have been put forward are confirmed or rejected. Thus, first the motivation policies applied in the organization are presented, followed by the degree of correlation between leadership and motivation with the performance of employees and finally the results on the degree of correlation of demographic characteristics of employees with their motivation are presented.

4.1 Motivation policies in a public tourism organization

All answers to this question reflect the full acceptance that there are no motivational policies in the organization. On the part of the administration, it is typically stated that any kind of incentives except moral ones are prohibited. Specifically, a manager states that “in the public sector there is not much room for exercise against the will of motivational policies, because the possibilities are determined by laws, decrees and codes”.

As far as the views of the employees are concerned, all but two who refused to answer, converge on the fact that there are neither specific policies that are implemented, nor are they organized and planned. All officials acknowledged that any motivational policies could take the form of ethical rewards, good evaluation at the annual report or active participation in decision-making, but would rather have institutionalized financial incentives for greater motivation.

An employee stated that “most of the time you hear good words without reciprocation, while they are accompanied by the assignment of tasks with a greater degree of difficulty”. According to an employee, “a problem arises when the orders of the elected administration are involved in the project, intensifying a chaotic situation”. Concerning the recognition of their work by the supervisor, all the answers except one to the specific question were positive. An employee states that it does not realize that his work is particularly recognized, while four of the participants answered “very clearly that it is recognized by developing an excellent cooperation and mutual respect”. However, there were also responses of two employees that stated that “it is recognized by the administrative leader but not by the elected one”. Finally, of particular interest are three participants who argued that “although their work is recognized, the issue is how, when and if this recognition will be transformed into a morally, financially of by upgrading reward, due to the limited opportunities provided of the body.

Regarding the role of motivation in an extroverted public tourism organization, undoubtedly all the participants answered that motivation plays an important role in every tourism operator, on the one hand due to the extroversion of the industry and on the other hand due to the nature of the job and the body. In fact, the majority described it as a “necessary condition”, since through the recognition of their efforts, employees derive satisfaction and want to offer more and more.

Despite the lack of motivation in public bodies, an employee stated that “it depends on the character of the person and how everyone perceives it, because the small quantity of money that is offered by the boss, for example, does not mean that it will motivate the same for everyone. I certainly do not want to expose my service to third parties, but I do not have the impetus to do anything more”. There is a convergence of views on the part of the administration which, although it recognizes its importance, is unable to implement it. According to a manager, “motivation is clearly a kind of psychological support for the employee, since the recognition of their job works supportively, helping them to do their job better. Unfortunately, as I will say again, there is no room for us to operate voluntarily”.

4.2 Correlation between Leadership and Motivation with employees’ performance.

The majority of interviewees argued that having incentives capable of motivating employees would clearly improve employee productivity, as long as their particular needs and abilities were considered. The lack of organized incentive policies combined with the leveling logic of the Public Sector, such as the introduction of salary based on years of service and non-objective evaluation by supervisors, confirms the complete lack of any strategy that will help improve employee efficiency. This essentially proves the lack of communication on stimulus issues between the two parties. Regarding the existence of differentiation of employee motivation methods depending on the applied leadership style, all participants sought clarification on both leadership styles and who to consider as a leader, due to the specificity of local authorities with the involvement of elected leader. Thus, the elected leaders are presented, for example, Vice-Regional Leaders, Heads of Departments, etc., and the Administrative Leaders, such as Heads and Directors of Departments.

A common finding is the emphasis of the Democracy of the leadership, which, however, deeply hides an authoritarianism, especially on the part of the elected leaders. In addition, the election of a different Deputy

Regional Governor in each Region has the effect of differentiating the applied style in each Region, depending on the personality of each individual. Consequently, a manager and two employees responded that the elected leader applies authentic leadership, cultivating a healthy work environment by encouraging subordinates. On the contrary, two other employees concluded that the elected leaders apply authoritarian in combination with authentic methods, but lack administrative knowledge.

For the administrative leader, they argued that in the State there is no specific leadership style that is applied, as it varies according to the character and needs of the subordinates. But there are also answers such as those of two employees, who replied that the transactional leadership style is applied to carry out daily routine tasks, without pursuing innovative and long-term goals. So according to the answers it is confirmed that there is a combination of transformative, transactional and authoritarian leadership styles.

Regarding whether the applied leadership style and the empowerment by the boss, the prevailing answer to this question is that it clearly has to do with the applied leadership style. Thus, three employees who have authoritarian elected leaders, believe that they are not encouraged to improve their efficiency and consequently the quality of the services provided, which is exacerbated by the lack of objective evaluation in the State. Respectively, an employee states that “in an authoritarian style, empowerment does not make sense since there is lack of teamwork, initiative and innovative ideas, while other leadership styles obviously contribute to improving both the efficiency and the quality of the services provided”. In the opposite direction is the response of another employee who said that “I clearly take on more responsibilities and initiatives than I have to, due to the trust shown by my superiors and inevitably the quality of my services improves”. Finally, a manager stated that “it clearly improves both, quality of services and efficiency, but again on the specific elements of each personality and the degree of acceptance of the applied style. Otherwise I would have to change the way of administration”.

4.3 Correlation between demographic characteristics of employees with their motivation

Motivation is important for all employees, regardless of the degree of the hierarchy level. However, there is a difference of opinion in the answers between employees and managers. From the point of view of the administration, a manager considers that motivation is related to the recognition of the employee’s work, the results it brings to the respective organization and that it is identified with the recognition and praise, as provided by the Civil Service Code. From the employees’ side, the answers are more specific since almost everyone specializes in the inspiration and recognition of their efforts, by the person in charge. In a more general context, it is stated that it is the beginning and the end of being available for work, contributing to the improvement of the employee’s working life and consequently of their work performance. As an employee reports, “working alongside an inspired, conscientious boss with a knowledge in the field is a blessing. In addition, the ‘productivity premium’ incentive, although much discussed, was never implemented through evaluation”.

Both management and employee groups agreed that if remuneration as a form of incentive does not exist in public bodies, intangible forms of remuneration could be applied, such as managerial development, overtime or non-registered leave. It is a form of internal reward that is related to the personality of the individual and seems to be sought when securing external rewards. In the effort to understand the term, concepts such as “freedom of expression”, “understanding of objectives”, “encouragement to participate in the decisions of the organization” and “participation in training seminars” were suggested to the participants. Unfortunately, none of the above concepts were used, concluding that the above are probably not forms of motivation for them.

But there are also the views of others who identify it with the good working environment, not so much in terms of logistics infrastructure, but in terms of working relationships, good cooperation and pleasure so that time passes effortlessly. They place particular emphasis on camaraderie, the very nature of the work and the way it is chosen.

At this point there is a relative difference in what the two sides perceive as job satisfaction, resulting in the inability to increase employee satisfaction, on the part of management.

According to the answers, there is a universal acceptance of the absence of motivational policies in a Governmental-Public Body. Nine employees answered that although there is no motivation, the special characteristics of employees should be considered, namely their academic background, the personality, the family responsibilities, etc., because they greatly affect their satisfaction and efficiency. An employee states that “there is clearly a difference between the nature of the object handled by the employees with a higher academic background than the messenger”. “It is not possible for the messenger to negotiate an agreement with Aegean Airlines for example, nor for a mother with a minor to represent the institution at the tourist fairs”. Here comes another employee to add that the boss should recognize the employee’s knowledge and experience, in order to assign them actions that they will be able to perform in the best possible way. However, the Administration seems to have the opposite view, where a manager claims that “it is purely a matter of character and talent and not of formal qualifications”.

4.4 Examination of research hypotheses

1st Question (Q1): Is there a relationship between the application of modern forms of leadership and the emerging attitude of employees towards their work?

The key to the success of any organization is leadership. It is what motivates employees to be receptive to change, to engage and to strive to improve their performance by aiming to maximize their performance (De Jong and Den Hartog, 2007). Choosing the right leadership style, as it enhances the positive relationships of employees, it improves the organizational climate and the services provided (Khuong and Nhu, 2015). The first research hypothesis examines whether this correlation is valid. According to the answers of the participants in the research, the non-application of modern and organized methods of management leads the employees to stagnation and treatment of the work in a purely procedural way. They lose interest in the body and maintain a neutral attitude without any interest in improving. Thus, the first Hypotheses H1₁ is confirmed, since the lack of modern and organized methods of management results in lack of motivation on the part of employees.

2nd Question (Q2): What form of leadership combined with motivation contributes to improving the efficiency and quality of services provided?

The second research hypothesis relates leadership theories to improving the efficiency and quality of services provided. The success of a leader is associated with efficiency in middle management, proving that transformational leadership responds equally effectively in the public and private sectors regardless of bureaucracy. The application of transformational or transactional leadership styles, although different leadership styles can coexist in the same person, helps to develop a climate of mutual trust between employees and managers, motivating the former to higher performance (Day and Antonakis, 2012). It becomes clear that leadership styles with a fair, transformative and transactional nature present a substantially positive relationship with employee productivity. Authentic leadership is an effective form that builds healthy working conditions by emphasizing the strengthening of employee-leader relationships (Wong and Laschinger, 2013) having a positive effect on the satisfaction of basic needs of employees and consequently to better job performance (Leroy, Anseel, Gardner and Sels, 2015).

The results of the research confirm the second research hypothesis H2₁ that there is the type of leadership which, when combined with motivation, helps to improve efficiency and the quality of services provided. Thus, the adoption of a transformational, transactional or even democratic leadership style improves the performance of employees in a Public Tourism Organization Body, while the quality of services provided is achieved with

authentic-transformational leaders. It is clear that it cultivates a climate of cooperation and support motivating the employees and makes them more effective.

3rd Question (Q3): Leadership Empowerment combined with motivation influence the attitude of employees at work?

Most theories state that any effective leadership style is an inspiration for employees, pushing them to increase their effort to improve their performance and achieve the goals of the organization (Naile and Selesho, 2014). The answers of the participants confirm the third hypothesis H3₁, since motivation is characterized by the respondents as “everything” regarding the willingness to work, which improves their working life and performance. Here, moreover, the answers are more specific, specializing in the inspiration and recognition of their efforts by the person in charge.

5. Conclusions

The results of the research highlight the restrictions at the level of internal organization and inefficient management. Although contemporary management tools have been applied in Public Administration unfortunately the situation has not changed much. Weaknesses of this kind are an obstacle to the effectiveness of organizations. Public bodies are called upon to adapt to the ever-changing conditions by adopting management principles and practices in the field of administration. Employees, on the other hand, although recognizing the necessity of adopting these practices, are faced with a bureaucratic model of administration, which is characterized by strict administrative-organizational rules and the impossibility of their methodical application. The participants in the research mentioned motivations and stimulation methods capable of improving performance and increasing job satisfaction, and at the same time highlighted the willingness to implement them. It is stated that the administration must be characterized for its human-centered dimension at all administrative levels. The rational organization of the services of the Region of Central Macedonia Public Body is considered particularly important, emphasizing the staffing of the departments and the evolution of the employees with meritocratic evaluation methods. Concerning the correlation between leadership and motivation with the job satisfaction of employees in the examined Public Body, the motivation and the secure and healthy working environment have a great impact on the job satisfaction of employees. The results make it clear that the motivating factors of the public sector servants are not very different from those of the private sector. The first places seem to be occupied external motivations such as permanence, overtime pay, breaks, etc., while they seem to give special emphasis to internal ones such as leadership recognition and compromise, two-way communication, constructive commentary of employee performance and guidance, always guided by the creation of a healthy work environment.

Undoubtedly, the Greek Public Sector stays behind in terms of methods of administration and motivation in comparison to the private sector. The research also confirms that the concept of leader is not the same as that of the boss and especially, where elected bosses are involved, the situation becomes even more difficult. This, however, presupposes the recognition by the leadership of the importance between job satisfaction, organizational support and maintaining the balance between personal and professional life.

As far as the effect of the applied leadership style on job performance, the results of the research confirm the conclusions of the study of Suri (2016), which proves that the behavior of the transformational leader helps to maximize the commitment of employees to the organization. It therefore becomes clear that leadership empowerment has a positive effect on psychological empowerment and the intention to work creatively since employees claim that the leadership empowerment and the support do improve the attitude of the employees for

their work and consequently the quality of the provided services. Nevertheless, in the current situation there is no plan even for future implementation of improved management practices. In fact, it works with increased operating costs and low efficiency.

Equally important is the differentiation of employee motivation in relation to demographic characteristics. In addition, it is necessary to implement meritocratic performance appraisal systems, in conjunction with the provision of training aimed at improving their particular capabilities. The motivation of the employees in the Tourism Department of the Region of Central Macedonia governmental body clearly differs, depending on the demographic characteristics of the employees. It was found that men over 46 years old, graduates of universities and technical institutes, holders of postgraduate diplomas, have higher levels of motivation, compared to women employees.

The present study presented the relationship between leadership dimensions and employee motivation. Undoubtedly, the way of managing these bodies needs changes particular in those factors, internal and external, that motivate employees. More specifically, it should:

- Implement an objective evaluation of employees and promote to senior positions people with leadership skills and knowledge, with a collaborative culture and conflict management skills.
- Senior executives, who play a key role in strengthening internal motivation, should invest in enhancing communication, by fostering a positive workplace climate and encouraging incentives.
- Activate the provisions of Law which provide for the provision of incentives to achieve goals, to those who achieve them provided that the rewards will be clear and will be directly attributed to the employee. In addition, not only individual rewards should be provided, which motivate the employee more intensely, but also group rewards, which help to improve team cooperation and employee performance.
- Equally important is the enrichment of work, in the context of meeting the need of employees for continuous improvement. This presupposes the placement of employees in positions corresponding to their formal qualifications, as well as the assignment of tasks corresponding to their skills and interests.
- The training of employees is considered necessary through the introduction of mandatory training seminars.

Regarding the human resource management in public bodies, it would be particularly interesting to conduct a corresponding survey of a larger extent, such as in all the services of Region of Central Macedonia or even in all the Regions of Greece and worldwide, so that the sample is larger and therefore more reliable. A more specialized research could also be carried out, targeting specific management functions related to the way employees are hired or developed, their training, etc. Finally, it is considered appropriate to conduct a comparative research between public and private sector employees, in order to identify differences in specific HR applications. Moreover, the research was conducted during the COVID pandemic. As a result, it would be of great importance to examine the above research questions when the COVID implications end (Trihas, Vassakis, Kopanakis, Nikoloudakis, Kefaloukos, Pallis and Markakis, 2023; Del Chiappa, Bregoli, & Fotiadis, 2021; Tsalpara, Soulopoulos, Sklias and Grammalidis, 2021).

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