



COMPARING PUBLIC AND PRIVATE EMPLOYEES' JOB SATISFACTION AND TURNOVER INTENTION

Snezana Mihajlov

Visoka poslovna škola strukovnih studija, Blace, Serbia

Nenad Mihajlov

Faculty of Business and Industrial Management of the "Union – Nikola Tesla" University in Belgrade, Belgrade, Serbia

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Abstract

This study compares the job satisfaction and turnover intentions of private- and public-sector employees in Serbia. Questionnaires were used to collect data from employees of various private enterprises and one public organization. The results show that the general job satisfaction and turnover intentions of public employees are different from those of private employees'. Public employees in Serbia have higher extrinsic job satisfaction and lower turnover intentions compared to their counterparts in the private sector. This satisfaction derived from interpersonal relationship, work organization and information within the organization. The reasons for this result can be fostering fundamental values national culture. Classifying the order culture with a high degree of collectivism, not surprising Serbian workers need to close and harmonious relationships with colleagues, especially need for information within the organization which reducing their uncertainty, insecurity and foster feelings of identification with the organization.

Keywords: job satisfaction, turnover intention, intrinsic satisfaction, extrinsic satisfaction.

1 INTRODUCTION

Why employees leave or intend to leave current job is the dilemma faced by almost every organization, especially because they succeed in adapting to changing market forces to retain key

employees. Theories of employee turnover have long suggested that job satisfaction plays an important role in the processes leading to turnover (Boswell, Boudreau, & Tichy, 2005; Steel, 2002). In particular, central to most turnover theories is the notion that job satisfaction directly and negatively relates to employees' intentions to quit their jobs (i.e., turnover intentions), which in turn positively relate to actual turnover. Indeed, meta-analyses of over 100 empirical studies (Griffeth, Hom, & Gaertner, 2000; Hom, Caranikas-Walker,

Address of the corresponding author:

Snezana Mihajlov

snezanamihajlov@hotmail.rs



Prussia, & Griffeth, 1992; Tett & Meyer, 1993; Yücel, 2012; Wang, Yang, & Wang, 2012) have documented the negative relationships of job satisfaction with turnover intentions and actual turnover.

Many empirical studies concluded that public employees have a greater need for job security than private employees do. A higher need for job security could result in a lower turnover rate in the public sector. The literature on general personnel management suggests that a lower turnover rate can save personnel costs in the recruitment, selection, and training of replacement personnel, and can induce the individual employee's loyalty and commitment to the organization, in turn leading to better organizational performance. It can be inferred that with a stronger need for job security, public employees' turnover intentions are lower, which results in a lower level of turnover rate that dampens the public sector's productivity. Another purpose of this study is to compare public and private employees' turnover intentions. The higher need for job security in public employees also hampers organizational performance through influencing the job satisfaction-turnover relationship. In the literature, job satisfaction is found to be negatively associated with turnover intention. When employees are dissatisfied, they think more of quitting their jobs. For public employees, dissatisfaction may stimulate less of an intention to quit because of their greater need for security. If those who are dissatisfied continue to stay on in their jobs, their low work motivation will decrease the overall performance of the organization. There have been no empirical studies conducted to compare the differences in the strength of the job satisfaction-turnover intention relationship between the public and the private sectors. The third purpose of this study is to examine these differences in Serbia.

2 HYPOTHESES

2.1 Comparing job satisfaction between public and private employees

Recent empirical research indicates significant differences in the levels of job satisfaction among employees in the public and private business sector (Table 1). Despite the fact that the degree

and sign of the gap between the private-public job satisfaction can be justified by specificities of the institutional framework of the country, employees in the public sector are more satisfied than their colleagues in private enterprises (for example, Germany, Greece, Italy, Great Britain). By examining different job dimensions, a certain number of those that affect the creation of sector satisfaction difference were identified (Kumari, Pandey, 2011). Research conducted in Greece shows that employees in the public sector are more willing to accept a decrease in salary of 4.5% in order to avoid a job in private enterprises (Kioulafas, Donatos, & Michailidis, 1991), while in Italy, public employees are more satisfied with their jobs 3.5% on average than their colleagues in the private sector due to largely better working conditions (Ghinetti, 2006). According to the study results, greater salaries, financial and non-financial benefits, as well as the possibility of bribery affect a higher degree of job satisfaction among employees in the public business sector (Demoussis & Giannakopoulos, 2007; Luechinger, Meier & Stutzer, 2008; Papapetrou, 2006).

Among the employees in public sector banks in India 1.5 percent of them have state that the job satisfaction is low; 38.5 percent of the employees have stated that the job satisfaction is medium and 60 percent of them state that the job satisfaction is high. At outset it is implied that majority of the employees perceive high level of job satisfaction, very few employees perceive medium and low level of job satisfaction. It is interesting to note that only minimum percent of the employees low level of job satisfaction. It is a good sign and it indicates that the organization has better environment for the public bank employees to job (Mallika, Ramesh, 2010). Among the employees in private sector banks, 32.5 percent of the employees have state that the job satisfaction is low, 66.5 percent of the employees have stated that the job satisfaction is medium and 1 percent of them state that the job satisfaction is high. At outset it is implied that majority of the employees perceive medium and low level of job satisfaction, very few employees perceive high level of job satisfaction (Mallika & Ramesh, 2010).

Job security is also stated as an important determinant of sector differences in job satisfaction, especially during economic recessions or unstable economic situations in the country. Job security as a subjective, psychological phenomenon is characterized primarily by the feeling of uncertainty about future employment. Unlike real job loss, job unsafely refers to the anticipation of a stressful event, in such a way that the nature and the continuous existence of the job are considered risky (Sverke & Hellgren, 2002).

The public and the private sector differ significantly according to the objective job security for the following reasons (Clark & Senik, 2006):

1. Employees in public enterprises are often legally protected from being dismissed. For instance, in Germany, job contracts for public employees are defined by a special Law according to which the employed have a very

strict business protection since they can be dismissed only if they are convicted of a crime;

2. The decreased sensitivity among the employed in the public sector about economic shocks is the consequence not only of the precisely made job contracts, but also the weaker financial pressure on the need to decrease the unemployment rate in this sector. While private enterprises can go bankrupt, this is not easily the case with the public ones, despite maintaining high employment rate which is most often justified as a countermeasure for the economic crisis. Beside the fact that the line-ups for finding a job in the public enterprises during recession are getting bigger, a high rate of unemployment which implies a lower degree of business certainty leads individuals to look for a more certain (that is, public) job.

Table 1 The list of economic studies about the differences in the public-private job satisfaction

Study	Country	Results
Heywood, Siebert, Wei (2002)	Great Britain	greater salary satisfaction among the employed in the public sector
Clark, Senik (2006)	France and Great Britain	greater salary satisfaction among the employed in the public sector
Demoussis, Giannakopoulos (2007)	Greece	greater general job satisfaction and satisfaction with all job aspects among the employed in the public sector
Ghinetti (2007)	Italy	greater salary satisfaction among the employed in the public sector and all non-financial job aspects
Luechinger, Stutzer, Winkelmann (2006)	20 countries in central and eastern Europe	greater salary satisfaction among the employed in the public sector
Luechinger, Meier, Stutzer (2008)	25 European and 17 South-American countries	in most countries, greater salary satisfaction among the employed in public enterprises
Luechinger, Stutzer, Winkelmann (2010)	Germany	negative selection of the employed in the public sector

In accordance with this idea, a research which included French people between the ages of 20-30 showed that three quarters of the young are looking for a job in the public sector at times when the unemployment rate of younger people is much higher than the already high general rate of unemployment of 10%. The respondents explicitly stated that the only reason for employment in public enterprises is a greater job security (Clark & Senik, 2006). Young people in Serbia are also

looking for safety and certainty in business. According to a research *Citizens' initiative*, around 40% of the respondents would choose a safe, even a worse paid job, 33% would choose to own a business, while 27% of the respondents would choose a well-paid and less safe job. Nevertheless, job safety is recognized by both in the public administration that is the public sector. Therefore, 57% of the respondents think that employment in public administration is safe, that

is 44% consider it to be the best professional experience (TNS Medium Gallup, 2008). On the other hand, due to a general belief that entrepreneurs do not earn enough in comparison to the invested work and the risk they undergo, 37% of young people would not leave the public service under any circumstances.

At the same time, research of the labour market shows the significant differences in the salaries in the private and the public sector. Employees in Greek public enterprises earn significantly more than their colleagues in the private sector, whereby the discrepancy in the salaries cannot be attributed to greater education or experience of public sector workers (Kioulafas, Donatos & Michailidis, 1991). Data shows that men in public enterprises earn 19% more than their colleagues in the private sector on average, while the difference in salaries among women reach even 42% (Kanellopoulos, 1997). Because the salaries in the public sector, especially in public administration, are increased by different types of bonuses for the realized productivity, reimbursements for work in committees of work groups and/or social work, the interest for jobs in public enterprises goes beyond the realistic capacities of this business sector (Papapetrou, 2006). Salaries in the public sector do not undergo great oscillations in relation to the unemployment rate, which furthermore loads the great state apparatus (Clark & Postel-Vinay, 2009).

Public sector workers (including federal, provincial, and local) enjoyed a 12.0 percent wage premium, on average, over their private sector counterparts in Canada. When unionization status is factored in, the wage premium for the public sector declines to 9.5 percent. Public sector workers seem to enjoy better non-wage benefits than those in the private sector, too. For example, 88.2 percent of public sector workers were covered by a registered pension plan compared to 24.0 percent of private sector workers. Of those public sector workers covered by a registered pension plan, 94.0 percent were covered by a defined benefit pension compared to just over half of private sector workers. In addition, public sector workers retire earlier than their private sector counterparts—about 2.5 years, on average—and are less likely to lose their jobs (3.8 percent in the

private sector versus 0.6 percent in the public sector)(Clemens & Palacios, 2013.)

Salaries in public enterprises in Serbia grew more than two times in comparison to the salaries in private enterprises and the general public sector. The increase was caused by freeing salaries in the end of 2010, after which bonuses, regresses and delayed salaries followed. However, even before this increase the earnings in public enterprises were bigger than the ones in the private sector. Although there is no empirical proof, anecdotal evidence suggests that individuals with equal qualifications receive much greater earnings in public enterprises than the employed in the private sector. This says a lot about the dual character of the Serbian labour market, that is, the existence of a sector with relatively safer and better paid jobs (public enterprises) and the private sector with unstable and less paid jobs and weak protection of workers' rights. A great difference in the standards of employees in the public sector and the private sector represents a source of not only fiscal problems, but also distinct negative effects on the economic growth and economic activity. This situation creates a negative system of incentives which hampers private initiative and entrepreneurial spirit as basic sources of sustainable economic growth and development. Especially as employees in the public sector, beside financial privileges, also have other great advantages in comparison to the private sector, such as job safety or strict respect of the guaranteed workers' rights. Accordingly it is possible to set the following hypotheses:

Hypothesis 1: Employees in public enterprises are more satisfied with their jobs than employees in the private sector.

Hypothesis 2: Employees in public enterprises are more satisfied with their salary than employees in the private sector.

2.2 Comparing turnover intentions between public and private employees

Although Baldwin found that the need for security had no negative effect on the work motivation of public employees, he did not fully explore the implications of a greater need for security on the

work behaviour of public employees. A greater need for security could lead to a lower turnover rate in the public sector. According to Shore and Tetrick (1994) an employee seeking long-term employment is more likely to form a relational contract with his or her employer. The relational contract stabilizes the employment relationship and results in lower turnover intentions among public employees. In addition, Hammer and Tassell (1983) noted that public employees' stronger need for security often reflects a higher level of risk aversion. This can make them more reluctant to meet the uncertainty involved in changing jobs, and they will be less likely to leave their jobs than private employees.

According to National reports for 2013 labour turnover in the public sector in Germany is much lower than in the private industry (6.3% compared to 10.5% in the first half of 2008). The turnover in the public sector is highly concentrated on the employees with a temporary contract. The high employment protection of permanent employees and their low voluntary mobility explains why the burden of numerical flexibility has moved to temporary employees (Bosch, Mesaros, Schilling, Weinkopf, 2012). In line with the need for security argument, we propose that:

Hypothesis 3: Public employees have a lower level of turnover intention than private employees.

2.3 Comparing the satisfaction-turnover intention relationship between public and private employees

Schneider and Vaught (1993) argued that the intrinsic and extrinsic aspects of jobs moderate the sector-job satisfaction relationship. Public employees are more satisfied with intrinsic aspects of their jobs, but less satisfied with the extrinsic aspects than are private employees. Posner and Schmidt (1982) found that public administrators experience more satisfaction than private corporate administrators from the intrinsic aspects of their jobs—task variety, challenge, and worthwhile accomplishment. Employment in the public sector offers opportunities for serving the public, a significant intrinsic satisfaction that is not available in the private sector. In their empirical study Rainey and Bozeman (2000) concluded that

public employees were less satisfied with the extrinsic facets of their jobs because of restrictions imposed on their job autonomy and promotional opportunities by bureaucratic rules. In addition, public-sector employees are often rewarded less abundantly than private-sector employees are. Lower rewards could result in lower extrinsic satisfaction of public employees. Taking the moderating effect of the intrinsic and extrinsic aspects of job satisfaction into consideration, we propose that:

Hypothesis 4: Public employees have a higher level of intrinsic job satisfaction than private employees.

Hypothesis 5: Public employees' have a lower level of extrinsic job satisfaction than private employees.

3 EXPERIMENTAL

The purpose of this study was to not only advance our understanding of the relationships among the facets of job satisfaction and turnover intentions, but to measure which job satisfaction facets are most significantly related to turnover intentions among employees in the Serbian enterprises. In the period from November 2011 to January 2012, research was carried out by using a sample which encompassed several companies of different activates in private ownership and one enterprise in public ownership (Pension and Disability Fund of the Republic of Serbia). Research methodology was chosen in accordance with the defined research goal and it was based on a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods, as well as comparison with the relevant references and scientific knowledge. Data was collected through a survey, by using previously created questionnaires. The research was carried out on a random sample of 234 employees, 166 employed in branches of the Pension and Disability Fund of the Republic of Serbia in Belgrade, Kruševac, Niš and Zaječar, 68 employed in the private sector for informatics and publishing. In the sample have 68 men (13.9%) and 166 women (34%). The age range among respondents was from 26 to 58, the average age of the respondents was 41. The working year range among respondents was from 1 to 35, the

average working year of the respondents was 15 years.

The questionnaire was created in such a way to obtain information about the examined variables of certain aspects of employee satisfaction: direct cooperation with colleagues, manager's support, interpersonal relationships, opportunities for education and promotion, work organization, etc. The questions in the questionnaire primarily refer to the examination of the perception and attitudes of the employed about the organizational determinants of employee satisfaction, general job satisfaction and the turnover intention. These questions were rated on a five-point Likert type scales ranging from 1 - very dissatisfied to 5 - very satisfied. The first two answers (very satisfaction and satisfaction) can be seen as a statement of certain satisfaction factors and answered "dissatisfied" or "very dissatisfied" an expression of dissatisfaction. In accordance with Herzberg theory, the answer "undecided" reflects the zero position on the continuum with one pole means satisfaction and others dissatisfied. The turnover intention was examined by rounding one of the following responses: I changed a job -1; I would not change the job -2.

4 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The T-test was used to verify Hypotheses 1, 2 and 3 and hierarchical regression was applied to examine Hypotheses 4 and 5.

The starting hypothesis in research was that the employed in public enterprises were more satisfied with their jobs than their counterparts in the private sector. Based on the T- test (Table 2) we see that the distribution of responses to the question of general job satisfaction is not independent of the sector respondents, which sector affects how it fits (which is a common response). Difference in general job satisfaction between the public and private sector is statistically significant (public sector M=3.84, SD=0.654, private sector M=3.40, SD=0.929). Size differences between the mean values of general job satisfaction by sector (the average difference is 0.438, 95% CI: 0.215 do 0.661) was moderate (eta squared = 0.06). We can conclude, looking at the table that were employed in the public enterprises generally satisfied with their jobs than their counterparts in the private sector which represents a general trend characteristic for countries where research of this type was carried out. Hypothesis 1 was supported.

Table 2 Group Statistics

Sector		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
General job satisfaction	Public	146	3,84	,654	,054
	Private	88	3,40	,929	,099

Table 3 Independent Samples Test

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Differ.	Std. Error Differ	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
General job satisfaction	Equal variances assumed	21.002	.000	4.220	232	.000	.438	.104	.233	.642
	Equal variances not assumed			3.880	139.31	.000	.438	.113	.215	.661

Based on the T- test (Table 4) we see that the distribution of the answers the question of salary satisfaction are no statistically significant differences by sector respondents. Difference in salary satisfaction between the public and private sector is statistically random (public sector

M=3.09, SD=1.105, private sector M=2.78, SD=1.198). We can conclude, looking at the table that was not employed in the public enterprises satisfied with their salary than their counterparts in the private sector which represents. Hypothesis 2 was not supported.

Table 4 Group Statistics

Sector		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Salary	Public	145	3.09	1.105	.092
	Private	88	2.78	1.198	.128

Table 5 Independent Samples Test

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Differ.	Std. Error Differ	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
Salary	Equal variances assumed	1.841	.176	1.982	231	.049	.306	.154	.002	.609
	Equal variances not assumed			1.943	172.26	.054	.306	.157	-.005	.616

Table 6 Group Statistics

Sector		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Turnover intention	public	146	1.84	.366	.030
	private	88	1.45	.501	.053

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Differ.	Std. Error Differ	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
Turnover intention	Equal variances assumed	72.961	.000	6.821	232	.000	.388	.057	.276	.500
	Equal variances not assumed			6.322	143.00	.000	.388	.061	.267	.509

As shown in Table 6 public employees' turnover intentions were significantly lower than those of private employees'. Hypothesis 3 was supported. The difference in the mean values of the turnover intention between the public and private sectors is statistically significant (public sector $M = 1.84$, $SD = 0.366$, private sector, $M = 1.45$, $SD = 0.501$). Size difference between the means of turnover intention in sectors (mean difference 0.388, 95% CI: 0.267 to 0.509) was exceptionally large (eta squared = 0.14).

Descriptive statistics (Table 7) shows that only 15.8% of public sector employees' intention to leave a job, while 84.2% was determined to retain existing business. On the other hand, more than half of employees in the private sector intend to change jobs, while 45.5% want to stay in the present work.

Hierarchical regression analysis was used to test Hypotheses 4 and 5.

Table 7 Cross tabulation

			Would you have changed jobs		Total
			I changed jobs	I would not change a job	
Sector	public	Count	23	123	146
		% within Sector	15.8%	84.2%	100.0%
		% within Would you have changed jobs	32.4%	75.5%	62.4%
		% of Total	9.8%	52.6%	62.4%
	private	Count	48	40	88
		% within Sector	54.5%	45.5%	100.0%
		% within Would you have changed jobs	67.6%	24.5%	37.6%
		% of Total	20.5%	17.1%	37.6%
Total	Count	71	163	234	
	% within Sector	30.3%	69.7%	100.0%	
	% within Would you have changed jobs	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	
	% of Total	30.3%	69.7%	100.0%	

The data in Table 8 show that the important role of public employees in order to remain in the organization play extrinsic factors satisfaction (interpersonal relationships $b=.282$, $p<.05$; work organization $b=.412$, $p<.05$; information within the organization $b=.297$, $p<.05$) rather than intrinsic factors. Public employees were more likely than private employees to consider leaving their jobs when they were dissatisfied with the extrinsic aspects of their jobs. Hypothesis 5 was not supported. On the other hand, interaction intrinsic satisfaction with private sector on turnover intention was significant (opportunities for advancement, $b=.423$, $p<.05$; choice of personal way of working, $b=.294$, $p<.05$), thereby indicating

that private employees had greater intentions to leave their jobs when they were dissatisfied with the intrinsic aspects of their jobs. Hypothesis 4 was not supported.

5 CONCLUSION

The purpose of this study was to compares the job satisfaction and turnover intentions of private and public sector employees in Serbia. This study confirmed that public employees will have significantly greater levels of job satisfaction and significantly lower levels of turnover with regard to private employees.

Table 8 Coefficients ^a

Sector	Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.	Correlations		
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Zero-order	Partial	Part
Public	(Constant)	.309	.194		1.592	.114			
	Direct cooperation with colleagues	-.022	.049	-.039	-.459	.647	.278	-.040	-.029
	Time for work completion	.089	.035	.227	2.546	.012	.273	.217	.160
	Support of the managers	-.057	.038	-.164	-1.511	.133	.273	-.131	-.095
	Interpersonal relationships	.107	.036	.282	2.968	.004	.407	.251	.186
	Choice of personal way of working	.087	.038	.228	2.324	.022	.479	.199	.146
	Work organization	-.139	.039	-.412	-3.537	.001	.301	-.295	-.222
	Information within the organization	.106	.030	.297	3.559	.001	.366	.297	.224
	Working area	.035	.023	.124	1.514	.133	.341	.131	.095
	Opportunity for education	.019	.031	.051	.609	.543	.426	.053	.038
	Opportunity for job promotion	.036	.034	.086	1.058	.292	.229	.092	.066
	Salary	.010	.026	.031	.396	.693	.357	.035	.025
	Presenting ideas to managers	.023	.035	.071	.668	.505	.440	.058	.042
Private	(Constant)	-.250	.278		-.899	.372			
	Direct cooperation with colleagues	.057	.068	.090	.834	.407	.327	.096	.066
	Time for work completion	-.026	.059	-.049	-.440	.661	.294	-.051	-.035
	Support of the managers	-.151	.073	-.271	-2.062	.043	.327	-.233	-.163
	Interpersonal relationships	.031	.058	.061	.539	.592	.276	.062	.043
	Choice of personal way of working	.164	.069	.294	2.375	.020	.498	.266	.187
	Work organization	.080	.070	.152	1.135	.260	.455	.131	.090
	Information within the organization	.023	.051	.043	.450	.654	.249	.052	.036
Private	Working area	.073	.043	.172	1.680	.097	.264	.192	.133
	Opportunity for education	-.121	.058	-.209	-2.081	.041	.166	-.235	-.164
	Opportunity for job promotion	.250	.066	.423	3.786	.000	.385	.403	.299
	Salary	-.087	.045	-.207	-1.935	.057	.146	-.219	-.153
	Presenting ideas to managers	.058	.064	.112	.905	.368	.401	.105	.071

a. Dependent Variable: Turnover intention

The results of this study show that public employees in Serbia have a higher level of extrinsic job satisfaction but lower intrinsic job satisfaction than private employees do. Higher extrinsic satisfaction of public employees is not consistent with what has been shown in literature

elsewhere. This satisfaction derived from interpersonal relationship, work organization and information within the organization. The reasons for this result can be fostering fundamental values national culture. Classifying the order culture with a high degree of collectivism, not surprising

Serbian workers need to close and harmonious relationships with colleagues, especially with information within the organization which reducing their uncertainty, insecurity and foster feelings of identification with the organization. Nevertheless, the lower intrinsic satisfaction of public employees in Serbia indicates that there is an opportunity to

increase public employees' motivation by addressing the intrinsic aspects of their jobs.

The findings showed that the extrinsic factors were sources of satisfaction rather than dissatisfaction. This is reversal of Herzberg study with concluded that extrinsic factors are sources of dissatisfaction rather than satisfaction.

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