

DIRECTIONS FOR STRENGTHENING PERSONNEL POLICIES TO INCREASE JOB SATISFACTION IN PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS IN THE REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA

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Abstract: *In a context marked by increasing pressures on public administration, this research analyzes the strengthening of personnel policies as a strategic premise for increasing job satisfaction in public institutions in the Republic of Moldova. The study has a theoretical-applicative character and uses the multiple case study methodology, based on the documentary analysis of the audit reports of the Court of Accounts on a representative sample of ministries. The results highlight a common set of structural dysfunctions, such as: planning insufficiently linked to institutional objectives, uneven application of evaluation criteria and salary incentives, limited functionality of internal audit and a low degree of digitalization in human resources processes. Based on these findings, an integrated application model for personnel policy reform has been developed, structured around three pillars: proactive HR policies, supportive organizational environment and monitoring and adjustment tools. Each pillar is associated with measurable strategic directions, linked to performance indicators and expected outcomes. The research supports the idea that job satisfaction can be treated as an institutional objective, measurable and integrable into the public management decision-making cycle. Personnel policies therefore become not just an administrative mechanism, but a vector of institutional coherence, efficiency and organizational resilience.*

Keywords: *personnel policies, job satisfaction, public administration, Republic of Moldova, human resources.*

JEL: J28, J45, H83

1. Introduction

In the context of a public administration under multiple pressures: economic, social and demographic, personnel policies play a strategic role in ensuring the functionality and sustainability of public institutions. Moldova is facing a systemic shortage of qualified human resources in the public sector, exacerbated by the migration of specialists, the demotivation of staff and persistent budgetary constraints. In this context, professional satisfaction can no longer be treated as a secondary issue, but must be addressed as an essential component of efficient public governance. The relevance of the topic stems from the increasingly pronounced discrepancy between the complexity of administrative demands and institutional capacity to attract, retain and motivate qualified and engaged employees. In the absence of an integrated vision of personnel policies, discontinuities and managerial deficiencies are perpetuated, as well as fluctuating professional commitment. These issues are reflected objectively in recent reports by the Court of Accounts (<https://ccrm.md/ro>). The present research aims to identify and justify the directions for strengthening personnel policies in the public sector, with a focus on those measures that can contribute to increasing professional satisfaction and improving the organisational climate. The study adopts a theoretical and applied approach, structured around multiple case studies, focusing on relevant ministries within the national public administration structure, for which official documentation is available regarding human resources, institutional performance and current personnel challenges. The research methodology is based on qualitative analysis of official audit reports, critical interpretation of institutional internal policies and extrapolation of strategic reform directions based on international best practices. By integrating a systemic perspective and correlating the dimension of satisfaction with human resource management mechanisms, the study contributes to the development of the theoretical and practical framework regarding the professionalisation of the public administration in the Republic of Moldova.

2. Research methodology

The present research adopts a theoretical-applied approach, focusing on the qualitative analysis of personnel policies and their impact on professional satisfaction in the public sector in the Republic of Moldova. The methodological structure is based on a multiple case study, applied to representative ministries in the architecture of the central public administration, selected on the basis of their functional relevance, the volume of personnel managed, and the availability of documentation on personnel policies and institutional performance. The selection of ministries as units of analysis in the study is justified by their central role in shaping and implementing public policies, the significant volume of human resources managed, and the advanced level of institutional formalisation. The ministries represent key links in the central public administration, where personnel policies directly influence operational efficiency, service quality and the level of professional satisfaction among employees. In addition, these institutions have relevant public audit reports and official documents available, which allow for a documented, comparative and contextualised analysis of structural disfunctions and institutional improvement opportunities.

The methodological tools used include:

Documentary analysis of public audit reports (Court of Audit, 2025), institutional activity reports and the current legal framework (Law no. 158/2008, Labour Code);

- Comparative analysis between ministries, focusing on human resource management practices, evaluation systems and organisational climate;
- Modelarea aplicativă, prin propunerea unui cadru conceptual integrat de reformă bazat pe piloni strategici și indicatori măsurabili ai satisfacției profesionale.

The research is qualitative and exploratory, and the results obtained focus more on formulating strategic directions and intervention models than on testing statistical hypotheses. Additionally, triangulation of official, theoretical and institutional sources is employed to ensure the validity of interpretations and conclusions. The chosen methodology allows for the identification of systemic issues and provides a coherent framework for developing personnel policies centred on employee satisfaction and the efficiency of public administration.

3. Theoretical basis of personnel policies in the public sector

Human resource policies define the set of rules, principles and institutional instruments through which human resources are managed in a coherent, efficient and adaptable manner. In public administration, they acquire a strategic dimension, since the quality of services offered to society depends directly on the competencies, motivation and professional satisfaction of employees (Perry & Wise, 1990; OECD, 2021). The literature on the subject provides a deep understanding of motivation in the public sector, which differs from that in the private sector. Perry and Wise (1990) propose an innovative conceptual framework – Public Service Motivation (PSM) – which highlights three fundamental dimensions of commitment to public service: rational motivation (interest in public policies), normative motivation (the desire to contribute to the public good) and affective motivation (based on empathy and social identification). The authors argue that individuals with a high level of PSM are more likely to opt for a career in the public sector. They are also more likely to demonstrate institutional loyalty and perform well in environments where these intrinsic motivations are supported by leadership and organisational culture.

In addition, Houston's (2000) study, based on data from the General Social Survey, confirms that public sector employees tend to value intrinsic rewards such as the meaning of work, social contribution and personal fulfilment – in contrast to those in the private sector, who place greater importance on extrinsic rewards such as salary and flexible working hours. These findings support the idea that job satisfaction in administration should be understood beyond the salary component and treated as an integral part of personnel policy. In the public sector, satisfaction is not influenced exclusively by the salary component, but also by factors such as decision-making autonomy,

professional development opportunities, merit recognition and organisational climate (Houston, 2000; Baird & Wang, 2010).

In a broader approach to public organisations, Rainey (2009) shows that they operate within a much more complex framework than private entities, being subject to political pressures, multiple objectives and specific bureaucratic constraints. In this context, professional satisfaction cannot be analysed in isolation, but must be correlated with leadership style, institutional design and organisational climate. Rainey emphasises that personnel policies must be contextualised and developed based on public service values, supporting systemic interventions that include participatory leadership, clarifying objectives and encouraging employee involvement.

At the national level, Cornea and Filipov (2009) highlight the need for a coherent personnel policy in the public administration of the Republic of Moldova, based on professionalism, meritocracy and continuous improvement. They emphasise the absence of an integrated system for motivating and evaluating public servants, which negatively affects the satisfaction of employees and the performance of institutions.

Recent contributions, such as those of Boghian (2022), highlight the importance of aligning personnel policies in the Republic of Moldova with European standards. In his analysis, the author highlights the need to reconceptualise human resource policies not just as administrative tools, but as drivers of institutional reform capable of attracting, developing and retaining competent staff. The integration of European principles of flexibility, competency-based orientation and adaptability is presented as a key element for modernising public administration.

This direction is also supported by Dulschi and Boghian (2021), who, in a comparative study of human resource management strategies in the Romanian public administration, highlight transferable good practices for the Moldovan context. Although the contexts are different, the recommendations regarding the digitalisation of HR processes, the professionalisation of HR services and the involvement of officials in decision-making processes are perfectly applicable in institutions in the Republic of Moldova, which are in a continuous reform process.

In addition to these approaches, Soroka (2019) proposes a systemic model for the development of human resource policies, based on a logical structure consisting of three stages: standardisation, programming and monitoring. This model involves hierarchising human resource objectives, aligning management mechanisms with organisational dynamics and respecting the principle of balance between economic and social interests. The relevance of the proposal lies in its adaptability to public institutions characterised by procedural rigidity and a lack of participatory culture, offering a framework for systemic reform of personnel policies.

In summary, the literature on the subject suggests that personnel policies in the public sector must move beyond the traditional administrative logic and be based on principles such as: value-based orientation, employee involvement in decision-making, intrinsic motivation support, professionalisation of civil servants and continuous performance evaluation. Strengthening these policies is not only an internal efficiency measure, but also an essential condition for improving governance quality and developing a modern and resilient public administration.

4. Basic content

The national legal framework for human resources in the public sector is defined by a diverse body of legislation with general or specific applicability.

An analysis of the provisions of Law No. 158/2008 on public office and the status of public officials reveals a complex and structured legislative vision of human resource management in the public sector. The law establishes essential principles such as legality, transparency, stability, professionalism and non-discrimination, emphasising the central role of the public servant in achieving the public interest and exercising public authority. The relevance of this legislation to our research is significant, as it provides both the theoretical framework and the normative support for evaluating the impact of

personnel policies on professional satisfaction. The law not only establishes institutional obligations regarding the recruitment, evaluation, professional development and motivation of public officials, but also introduces monitoring and reward mechanisms that, if applied efficiently, can generate a positive organisational climate and stimulate individual performance. Furthermore, the regulations relating to performance evaluation, continuous training, remuneration, social guarantees and functional mobility reflect a modern understanding of human resources as a strategic element of good governance. However, the research highlights that the implementation of these provisions often remains formal or inconsistent between different public authorities, which limits their real impact on employee satisfaction and administrative efficiency. Therefore, the fundamental conclusion is that Law No. 158/2008 provides a solid normative framework, but requires strengthening in terms of implementation, through integrated, contextualised and results-oriented personnel policies. Only in this way can the stated objective of the law be achieved: the creation of a stable, professional and motivated public service, in which the satisfaction of civil servants becomes a real and measurable institutional priority.

The Labour Code of the Republic of Moldova (Law No. 154/2003) regulates the contractual aspects and working conditions applicable to all employees. In addition, autonomous institutions have internal regulations regarding performance evaluation, promotion, sanctioning and motivating staff, aspects that are often not harmonised inter-institutionally.

At an international level, the directions promoted by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD, 2021) and the European Commission (2020) encourage governments to adopt human resource models based on competence, adaptability and performance orientation. Additionally, contemporary approaches emphasise the digitalisation of HR processes, the participatory evaluation of employee satisfaction and the flexibility of organisational structures, with the aim of attracting and retaining talent in public institutions.

Thus, the consolidation of personnel policies should not be viewed merely as a specific administrative intervention, but as an integrated institutional transformation process. In which professional satisfaction becomes both an indicator of the quality of governance and a condition for the efficiency of public services. Without a systemic approach, the fragmentation of measures, the lack of impact indicators and inefficiency in implementation risk perpetuating a rigid, demotivating and poorly adaptable system to societal changes.

5. Evaluation of the institutional context in the selected ministries of the Republic of Moldova

The evaluation of human resource policies in the central public administration requires a contextualised approach, based on documentary analysis, audit reports and existing institutional mechanisms. For this study, several Moldovan government ministries were selected based on data availability, access to Court of Accounts reports, and relevance to the human resources theme. These ministries reflect, in a differentiated manner, challenges related to strategic personnel planning, performance evaluation, managerial control and organisational climate. Their analysis provides an integrated framework for structural dysfunctions and a solid empirical foundation for formulating strategic directions for consolidating human resources policies in the Moldovan public sector. *The Court of Accounts Report No. 40*, dated 25 April 2025, provides valuable insights into the current human resource management challenges faced by the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection (<https://ccrm.md/ro>). It highlights several areas in need of improvement, including the requirement for integrated strategic HR planning, the consistent and well-founded use of salary incentives, and the stabilisation of managerial structures. These findings suggest that personnel policies are a key factor in the functionality of institutions and the professional satisfaction of public sector employees. Furthermore, the report emphasises the importance of consolidating evaluation, reward and organisational support mechanisms, including internal audit and managerial control. In this context, the report substantially contributes to our understanding of how to strengthen institutional capacity

and create a professional, performance-oriented and equitable environment that motivates employees. *Audit Report No. 38/2025*, prepared by the Court of Accounts, provides a detailed overview of the institutional challenges faced by the Ministry of Justice and its subordinate entities. It highlights procedural discrepancies and system limitations in the management of financial and property resources (<https://ccrm.md/ro>). The analysed issues include difficulties in recording cultural and patrimonial assets, coordinating capital investments, and ensuring the effective operation of internal control mechanisms and performance-based salary criteria. While some previous recommendations have been partially implemented, the report emphasises the ongoing need to consolidate administrative capacity and financial governance mechanisms. The report's relevance in the context of the research lies in highlighting the correlation between the functionality of the institutional system and the organisational climate. Factors such as the uneven distribution of performance bonuses or inadequate staffing of internal audits can impact employees' perceptions of fairness and professional recognition, affecting their motivation and commitment to public service. In this regard, the report provides an objective framework for analysing and recalibrating human resource policies.

The Court of Accounts Report No. 35/2025 confirms that, despite some irregularities, the consolidated financial statements of the Ministry of Environment provide, on the whole, a true and accurate picture in accordance with the accounting regulations applicable in the public sector (<https://ccrm.md/ro>). From the perspective of the present research, the relevance of this report goes beyond the strictly financial dimension, reflecting structural aspects relating to the management of human resources and institutional efficiency. Thus, the recommendations formulated by the external auditor emphasise:

- the need to consolidate inter-institutional coordination between the ministry and its subordinate entities, in order to strengthen administrative responsibility and rigorous asset management;
 - the importance of strategic planning of resources – both human and material – as demonstrated by the initiative to include the forestry fund in the accounts gradually;
 - the need to review the organisational structure and personnel policy, reflected in the adjustment of job descriptions and the updating of the staffing plan for 2025;
 - the institutional commitment to transparency, compliance and efficiency – dimensions that contribute directly to shaping the professional climate and the staff's perception of institutional integrity.
- Therefore, the report supports the research hypothesis that effective personnel policies are correlated with the level of administrative maturity and institutional governance. Consistent implementation of audit recommendations becomes not only an indicator of compliance, but also a tool for strengthening professional satisfaction in public institutions.

The Court of Accounts report no. 36 din 17 aprilie 2025, referitor la situațiile financiare consolidate ale Ministerului Sănătății, oferă o imagine amplă asupra gestionării patrimoniului public, a proceselor contabile, a controlului intern managerial, precum și a modului în care sunt folosite resursele financiare în entitățile din sectorul sănătății (<https://ccrm.md/ro>). From the perspective of research dedicated to consolidating personnel policies, the information presented highlights a series of systemic challenges with a direct impact on the organisational climate and the motivation of employees. Thus, the need for a strategic approach to human resource management emerges, with clear correlations between professional performance, continuous development and equitable resource allocation. Consolidarea politicilor de personal nu reprezintă doar un demers administrativ, ci devine o condiție esențială pentru sustenabilitatea instituțională. It promotes a culture of responsibility and transparency, and creates an environment conducive to the engagement and retention of qualified employees.

The Court of Accounts Report No. 33 of 15 April 2025 provides a comprehensive overview of the current level of institutional and financial governance in the defence sector (<https://ccrm.md/ro>). This report is relevant to the present research in that it highlights the relationship between institutional governance maturity and the efficiency of personnel policies. Operational limitations, a low level of digitalisation and difficulties in implementing audit recommendations can influence employees' perception of stability, recognition and development opportunities. In this context, the report supports

the idea that effective personnel policies must be analysed as part of an institutional ecosystem oriented towards performance and accountability.

The audit report no. 31 of 11 April 2025 on the Ministry of Economic Development and Digitalisation provides significant benchmarks for analysing institutional governance and financial management mechanisms in the public sector (<https://ccrm.md/ro>). From an integrative perspective, the report highlights aspects with the potential to impact the organisational climate: uneven application of accounting rules, absence of an updated accounting policy, difficulties in consolidating financial information, and a low level of functionality of control and internal audit mechanisms. These findings highlight the need for increased procedural coherence and institutional development oriented towards predictability and professional stability.

Addressing these challenges requires not only technical corrections, but also cultural changes in terms of transparency, accountability and organisational learning. In this sense, promoting performance-based personnel policies and organisational support becomes a strategic component of public governance reform. Thus, the report provides a valuable analytical framework for understanding the interdependencies between institutional efficiency, internal control and the professional satisfaction of public servants.

Recent external public audit reports by the Court of Accounts on the activities of key ministries in the Republic of Moldova reveal a common set of structural and operational challenges that directly affect the efficiency of personnel policies, the quality of institutional governance and the level of professional satisfaction of employees in public administration.

Table 1: Typology of structural dysfunctions in personnel policies: results from the analysis of audit reports on the ministries of the Republic of Moldova

Affected area	Common types of dysfunction
Human Resources Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lack of a coherent strategic vision. - Recruitment plans that are not updated or aligned with institutional needs.
Internal control and audit.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Underdevelopment of internal audit structures; - Formal application of managerial control. - Lack of institutional self-regulation.
Performance evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Performance bonuses applied unevenly; - Criteria for evaluation that are unclear or insufficiently aligned with institutional objectives.
Inter-institutional coordination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Poor communication between ministries and subordinate entities; - Processes that are fragmented.
Organisational culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A rigid institutional climate; - Perceptions of unfairness, instability and professional recognition.
Digitalisation and transparency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Limited digitalisation of HR processes and financial records; - Limited transparency in the implementation of audit recommendations.

Source: prepared by the author

A transministerial analysis of structural dysfunctions in personnel policies highlights a systemic fragmentation of essential human resources functions, reflected by a lack of coherence in planning, evaluation, control and coordination. The absence of an integrated strategic approach, coupled with persistent vulnerabilities in organisational culture and digitalisation of processes, affects not only administrative efficiency, but also the internal professional climate. In this context, the identified dysfunctions cannot be treated as mere isolated deficiencies, but rather as signals of insufficient institutional maturity. Thus, the urgent need for coherent and interconnected strategic directions emerges, aimed at consolidating institutional capacity, professionalising human resources and creating an environment conducive to performance and professional satisfaction in the public sector.

6. Strategic directions for strengthening personnel policies in public institutions

This section aims to identify and formulate strategic directions for consolidating personnel policies, based on empirical findings highlighted in the financial, operational and compliance audits conducted in Moldovan ministries. The analysis is based on the premise that human resources are an essential factor in institutional performance, and that personnel policies must be approached not only as instruments of bureaucratic administration, but also as levers of structural and cultural transformation in the public sector.

Table 2: Strategic directions for strengthening personnel policies in public institutions

Adjusted strategic direction	What does it involve?	Implementation mechanisms:
Promoting the continuous professional development of public sector personnel.	It involves increasing the skills, adaptability and retention of employees.	These include programme development and implementation, budget allocation for human resources, partnership development with training institutions and the integration of post-training evaluation into human resource processes.
Review and operationalisation of human resource planning.	It also involves optimising the implementation of existing plans.	This includes annual evaluation of real needs, updating of staffing plans and integration of demographic and budgetary forecasts.
Consolidation of the functional audit and managerial control.	Making existing processes more efficient.	Responsibilities of audit structures are clarified, training staff is provided and the implementation of recommendations is monitored.
Improving performance evaluation mechanisms.	Aligning criteria with the realities of the activity.	Specific post-related indicators are being introduced, and managers are being trained in evaluation with direct correlation to the reward system.
Strengthening inter-institutional communication.	It also involves increasing decision-making coherence.	Procedures are being developed for common processes, digital reporting platforms, and periodic thematic meetings between structures.
Developing a proactive organisational culture.	Staff involvement and perceived equity.	Programmes of professional recognition and organisational climate evaluations are being introduced, as well as participatory leadership.
Accelerating the digitalisation of HR processes.	Reducing bureaucracy and increasing efficiency.	An integrated e-HR system is being implemented, staff are being trained and it is being integrated with performance evaluation.

Source: prepared by the author

By applying these strategic directions, public institutions in the Republic of Moldova can transition from a reactive and rigid administrative culture to one that is people-oriented, performance-driven and committed to institutional innovation. Thus, professional satisfaction will no longer be a by-product, but an explicit and measurable objective of modern governance.

7. Proposal for an applied model to strengthen personnel policies in the public sector.

Based on the previous findings and the proposed strategic directions, the need for an integrated, adaptable model is evident, tailored to the specific needs of public institutions in the Republic of Moldova. This model aims to transform personnel policies from formal administrative instruments into dynamic mechanisms oriented towards performance, equity and sustainability. The proposed model is based on a systemic approach, in which professional satisfaction results from the interaction between proactive HR policies, a favourable organisational environment and functional monitoring and adjustment mechanisms. The model is based on three interdependent pillars, as shown in Figure 1.

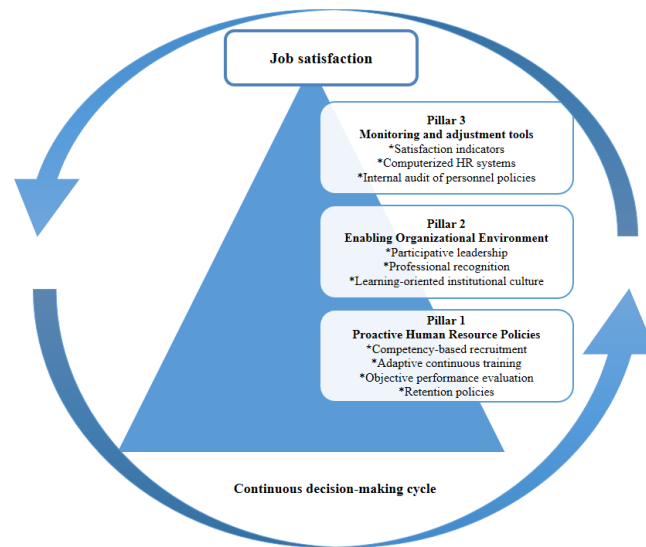


Figure 1. Integrated model for consolidating personnel policies in the public sector

Source: Author's own work

The figure illustrates a conceptual structure based on three interdependent pillars: proactive human resource policies, a favourable organisational environment and monitoring and adjustment tools. These pillars are integrated into a continuous decision-making cycle that ultimately increases the professional satisfaction of employees. The model proposes a systemic approach, in which human resources become a vector of institutional efficiency and organisational sustainability.

Based on the three conceptual pillars integrated in Figure 1, it is possible to operationalise strategic directions by associating them with measurable indicators and anticipated concrete effects. In this sense, a correlation matrix has been developed which details how human resource policies can be translated into monitorable actions, thereby contributing to the consolidation of institutional performance and professional satisfaction in the public sector.

Table 3: Matrix of correlation between pillar, directions, indicators and anticipated effects

Pilon correspondent (see Figure 1).	Strategic direction	Associated indicators:	Anticipated effects:
Pilonul 1	Continuous professional development	Number of training hours per employee per year	Increased competence and motivation.
Pilonul 1	Objective evaluation and recognition	Rate of employees promoted internally	Stimulating meritocracy and loyalty.
Pilonul 2	Participative organisational climate	Satisfaction score (internal questionnaire)	Greater commitment and reduced staff turnover.
Pilonul 1 and 3	Flexible and digitalised HR	Number of HR processes automated	Administrative efficiency and adaptability.
Pilonul 3	Measuring satisfaction and retention	Staff turnover rate (%)	Efficient personnel policy planning.

Source: prepared by the author

The strategic correlation between the intervention directions in personnel policies and the fundamental pillars of professional satisfaction highlights the need for an integrated, results-oriented approach. The proposed matrix demonstrates that proactive human resource policies, a favourable organisational climate and functional monitoring mechanisms can contribute synergistically to strengthening administrative capacity and stimulating professional engagement in the public sector. Consistent implementation of these strategies, supported by clear and quantifiable indicators, can transform professional satisfaction into a strategic objective, with a direct impact on the efficiency, stability and sustainability of public institutions in the Republic of Moldova.

The model can be applied gradually, starting with a pilot institution and subsequently extended to others, with adjustments specific to each context. It is essential that the process is supervised by an inter-institutional council for the development of human resources in the public sector, which will coordinate training, standardise the indicators and evaluate the impact.

8. Conclusions, limitations of the research and future directions

The personnel policies of the central public administration of the Republic of Moldova are increasingly emerging as a major influence on institutional capacity and the quality of services provided to citizens. The analysis of audit reports on a representative set of ministries highlights recurring challenges in human resource management, manifested by difficulties in strategic planning, uneven application of evaluation criteria, limited internal control, as well as variable levels of digitalisation and organisational coherence.

The results of the research support the idea of consolidating personnel policies through a systemic and continuous improvement-oriented approach. The proposed model, structured around three interdependent pillars, integrates proactive human resource policies, a favorable organisational environment, and functional monitoring mechanisms. This vision supports the transformation of professional satisfaction into a clearly defined objective of institutional policies, measurable and correlated with managerial efficiency.

Limitations of the research

The research relied primarily on the analysis of official documentation sources, which may limit the level of detail of internal and subjective perspectives of employees. Additionally, the institutional selection focused on a limited number of ministries, which requires caution when extending conclusions to the entire administrative system. Additionally, some dimensions such as organisational culture, perceived equity or degree of collective involvement require additional tools for a comprehensive evaluation.

Future research directions

To deepen understanding and validate the formulated hypotheses, the following areas of exploration are identified:

1. Using quantitative and qualitative instruments (questionnaires and interviews) to measure professional satisfaction among public officials;
2. Extending the institutional sample to include ministries with varied functional profiles;
3. Comparing personnel policies in Moldova with models from other European administrations to identify transferable good practices;
4. Developing a system of performance indicators in HR, calibrated to the specifics of the national public administration.

Strengthening personnel policies in the public sector is not just an administrative intervention, but a strategic opportunity for institutional development. Alinierea politicilor de resurse umane cu mecanismele de performanță, implicare și învățare organizațională poate contribui semnificativ la crearea unui climat profesional stabil, motivant și eficient, în linie cu obiectivele unei administrații moderne, transparente și orientate către cetățeni.

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