

THE INFLUENCE OF THE EMPLOYMENT STATUS OF PUBLIC EMPLOYEES ON THEIR WORK EFFICIENCY, SATISFACTION AND PUBLIC ORGANIZATION PERFORMANCE IN ISRAEL

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Abstract: Since the 1980's, there was a growing interest into the privatization of public sector in Israel, under the influence of New Public Management. The present study analysis the influence of the employment status of public employees in Israel, on their work efficiency, satisfaction and on their organization performance. Using a quantitative research approach, 11 hypotheses were tested on a sample of 550 public employees with different employment status in the local authority of Givat Shmuel Municipality in Israel. The results show that there is a strong relationship Cramer's $V = 0.441$ and significant correlation between an efficient employee (including/excluding causes of absenteeism) and employees with the different status of the employment ($P < 0.05$, $388.44 = (44) 2\chi$). Also, the results indicate that between an efficient employee, excluding the factor of absenteeism, and status of employment there is a strong relationship, but weaker than the employee efficiency when including the factor of absenteeism: Cramer's $V = 0.394$ ($P < 0.05$, $309.73 = (56) 2\chi$). A positive correlation was found between employees' quality of service and the local authority's performance ($r_s = 0.541$, $p < 0.05$). An important finding is that an employee who is satisfied with his job, despite the tension arising from the different employment status as well as a low level of commitment among the other contract workers, is a motivated employee who will still contribute a higher level of performance of the public authority. Several recommendations for public managers are also formulated.

Keywords: public employees, public administration, employment status, work efficiency, Israel

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1. INTRODUCTION

What is the public sector in Israel?

There are at least three different definitions. The first definition is by the Central Bureau of Statistics, which includes all government ministries, government companies, local authorities, and almost all public institutions, such as universities, health funds, municipal corporations, the Jewish National Fund (JNF), The Jewish Humanitarian Organization (JDC), The Israel Defense Forces (IDF), etc.

The second definition of the public sector in Israel is given by the payroll commissioner in the Treasury and is limited to a range of organizations including local authorities, government companies, statutory corporations, religious councils, and supported bodies.

The third definition is given by the Civil Service Commission, which refers to public sector employees and includes government employees, but excludes Ministry of Defense employees, police officers, IPS personnel, and veteran teachers, who receive their salaries from the State of Israel.

Since there is no single, agreed-upon, precise definition, we shall define in this study the public sector as "any organization established for public purposes and intended to provide services, mostly funded by the taxpayer and not for profit." This definition includes government ministries and the Knesset (Israeli parliament), local authorities, commissioners, and supervisors responsible for a variety of issues, government-owned companies that exist for the purpose of providing some public needs, social security, and both formal and informal education, primary or higher education, health services, such as health funds and hospitals, and other infrastructure.

Long before Covid-19 pandemic crisis, way back in the 1980s, the Israeli governments implemented policies of privatization in fields such as infrastructure, housing, health, welfare, education and security-an area initially considered the sole responsibility of the state. These policies are based on the idea of the doctrine of "New Public Management" which believes in the efficacy of the "free market" and claims that the public sector is characterized by the wasting of resources and inefficient management. "Increasing the flexibility of the labor market", by producing products and providing services through business organizations promotes competition, more efficiency, and less corruption, and as a result, "efficiency" becomes itself a value, and hence one can be complacent with the economic efficiency criterion due to the increasing business orientation of the public administration. Assets are systematically transferred from public ownership to private ownership in a variety of ways, such as selling companies and factories owned by the government to private entities, reducing the percentage of the control of government assets, provision of services and/or public infrastructure by private entities and rolling the cost of public services from the state to consumers for a limited period or unlimited period of time. Ultimately, the previous method of privatization is draining the budgets of public services. It results in a lack of resources to meet the needs of citizens, which in turn, creates the provision of inferior quality of public services. Subsequently, the public sector has built their own new manpower scheme characterized by flexible working hours, the contract of employment, salary and roles within the public system. At the same time there is a change in the status of the employment of employees in the public sector. This change is characterized by hiring workers who are not employees of the civil service, such as contract workers, working as subcontractors, experts in unique jobs, consultants, external researchers and so on. This policy is considered by some to be a form of exploitation, a renunciation of employers and especially the state's shrinking its commitment to public employees representing a circumvention of laws to protect employees which the state itself had passed before (Barkan, 2014).

Other researchers consider that it is precisely the social legislation providing employees with excessive rights and benefits, as the cause for employers, mainly those in the public sector, to turn to indirect employment models, which do not require providing those benefits to employees (Cohen & Moav, 2008).

These structural changes of the employment status of workers in the Israeli public sector have significant implications on the job security of the workers, on the accountability in the public sector, the effectiveness of employee's work, the economic savings of the public municipality which supposedly derives as a result of the situation, on the performance of local municipalities and on the quality of public service received by Israeli citizens. Existing economic models usually measure the purpose of public service as maximum productivity and minimal input, assuming that these steps create organizations which are less wasteful and more efficient in providing services to citizens. In contrast, opponents often argue that privatization "effectiveness" is achieved by reducing the level of quality of the public service provided.

Israel's labor relations are changing. There is a policy of replacement of public workers directly employed, having tenure, with workers employed through manpower and service contractors. The government reduces the public sector by reducing support for it, and through privatization and a change to an autonomous administration on a commercial basis (Stiglitz, 2002). If in the 1980's contract workers were employed only in

certain areas such as secretarial and other services, in the 1990's employees' outsourcing developed significantly in Israel. Contract workers were even employed at the heart of public service. Recently, the employment through contract workers has been reduced, yet it has been replaced by a service contractor because organizations can transfer budgetary funds for the paying the purchased personnel to the purchase of services provided by a private entity, for profit or not for profit, too.

Even among strong supporters of the privatization policy there is an increased awareness regarding the existence of a range of problems of public, social and legal forms of employment. These prevalent differences are increasing with time, due to outsourcing, contract workers and freelancers. These differences are parallel with the numerous risks inherent in the globalization of financial markets and in order to increase the transparency required for additional levels of policy compliance which are not intended to replace the laws of the state but provide an additional step (Conchon et al., 2015).

Privatization in local authorities has many implications over workers' wages and their working conditions, on the situation of minorities and women in the labor market, and on the structure of labor relations in general. These are reflected in changes in the range of employment, social conditions, employment security, trade unions, pensions, training and enrichment programs, occupational flexibility, and dealing with a dynamic work environment. Some of the units providing service within local authorities have been privatized, some are still undergoing privatization processes, and some will not be privatized.

As a result, there are five types of employees: a) tenure employees; b) contract employees; c) short- or long-term contract employees; d) temporary workers employed by the local authority; and e) temporary and permanent employees working in the private entity which provides public services paid by the client, which is the local authority.

2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This article examines the following assumption: if a more flexible labor market, expressed in the form of changes in the employment status of public workers, will increase employee productivity and ultimately improve efficiency and produce savings in the Israeli public service. It examines whether worker productivity increases if privatized, the impact of privatization on the labor market from the perspective of the individual employee and the recipient of the service employee in different employment statuses within an organization and how personal effectiveness at work affects the organization's performance in general and in particular how it affects the local municipalities in Israel.

We deal with the following research questions: 1) Is there a difference in the quality and efficiency of the services provided by workers who have a different employment status and provide the same service? 2) To what extent does satisfaction with his employment status affect his efficiency and thus provide a better quality of the service provided to the citizens?

The research method was quantitative through a survey based on a closed multiple-choice questionnaire made of 61 questions. The questionnaire was designed to study the degree of satisfaction of employees with their employment status, their motivation to work and what it stems from. In addition to some demographic details, respondents were asked about their feelings concerning the organization where they worked, questions concerning their feelings about their present employment, and questions concerning their feelings about relationships between employees themselves and between the various units, departments and management (consistency and reliability of the questionnaire $\alpha=0.902$). The researchers had to conduct a random convenience sample of workers who agreed to cooperate, as well as those citizens who received service from these employees of Givat Shmuel Municipality. More than 915 employees agreed to cooperate but only 500 civilians did as well. I therefore sampled 500 employees from 22 different departments of the local authority, and the civilians who got services from these workers. The research population size was large enough for a 95% reliability test. The structure of the sample is presented in Table 1 and Table 2, below.

Table1. Distribution of the sample by employment status and education

Variable	No. of respondents	%
Employment Status	500	100%
Temporary, employed directly by local authority	82	16.4%
Permanent, employed directly by local authority	187	37.4%
Personal Contract	106	21.2%
Service entirely by outsourcing	63	12.6%
Contractor workers	62	12.4%
Education	500	100%
Elementary School	161	32.2%
High School	198	39.6%
Post-High School	113	22.6%
Academic	28	5.6%
Management Position	500	100%
Managers	99	19.8%
Regular Workers	401	80.2%

Table 2. Distribution of the sample by employment status and salary

Employment Status	Interval Salary (Shekels)							Total
	4300	4301-6000	6001-8000	8001-10000	10001-15000	15001-20000	Above 20000	
Permanent, Local authority	13	90	33	11	11	3	8	191
HR Contractor Worker	13	31	16	0	0	0	0	61
Service by Contractor	8	19	25	3	3	1	1	65
Personal Contract	3	43	37	3	3	0	6	103
Temporary, Local authority	4	39	27	2	2	0	2	80
Total	41	222	138	59	19	4	17	500

The first research variable is "The Average Efficiency of the Worker", defined as the extent to which the worker is considered to be efficient on a scale of 66% to 140%, according to what is accepted among the state workers, when 100% is a worker who performs what is expected of him, which is in essence the norm, as the worker whose mean efficiency is less than the norm is considered less efficient and as the mean efficiency is above the norm the worker is considered more efficient. The mean efficiency is a quantitative variable, a pure number without units, and a dependent variable in the relationship between employment status and satisfaction with the employment and independent variable between it and the performances of the local authority. The mean efficiency includes three categories of the score that the worker received from the service recipient, which is in essence the quality of the service at a weight of 50%, the worker output weighted at 40%, and the absenteeism of the worker during the time of research at 10% weight. The mean efficiency of the worker after the weighting of the three categories is what was inputted into SPSS version 21. Information Sources were the following: the weight of the different categories was collected from the Head of the Givat Shmuel Municipality and other senior

workers in the municipalities. The category of quality of service of the researched worker who provides service in the local authority was collected from the questionnaire of the research. The researchers calculated this efficiency after we performed multi-observational research and the results that were obtained surprised us, relative to what we expected to obtain. At the highest rank, the temporary workers who are employed by the municipality the average efficiency is found above 1.2, then the workers who are employed by personal contract have efficiency of 1.2, then the workers employed in the unit where the service entirely is performed by the contracting unit has efficiency above 1.1, then regular workers who are employed by the local authority has efficiency above 1 and under 1.1. At the bottom of the list in terms of efficiency are the contracting workers, whose efficiency is above 0.7 and under 0.9, namely, under the norm.

The second variable is "Employees' Motivation and Satisfaction with their Employment Status", defined as the degree of satisfaction of the worker with his employment status in the local authority. A 61 questions questionnaire was composed, related to employees' satisfaction with their salaries, job security, position scope, promotional options, the level to which their education serves them in their job, level of responsibility, the extent to which they can initiate things, their sense of achievement and challenge, feelings of deprivation in comparison to other colleagues, the possibility of learning new things, the extent to which the social atmosphere at work is pleasant, pride in their work, satisfaction from working environment's comforts, the degree of satisfaction with direct superiors, the extent to which employees shares things with their superiors and seeks advice in making decisions, the degree of independence at work, and occupational prestige of the research subjects in their present work, as perceived by them. The questions were grouped in 8 categories representing employee satisfaction and what it stems from. The categories represent the importance employees place on each of the following: 1. Wages; 2. Job security; 3. Promotion options; 4. Social standing; 5. Belonging to a group; 6. Self-fulfillment; 7. Social or public influence; 8. Learning new skills.

The questionnaire used a Likert scale, when 1 is 'do not agree at all' and 5 is 'agree to a large extent' (Vigoda-Gadot & Fany, 2002), with some adaptations for the purpose of this study and the environment of local authorities.

The third variable is "Performance of the Local Authority", defined as attitudes and perceptions of the resident who receives the service towards the local authority. The operational variable was determined based on 37 statements, collected together into 5 categories, measuring 1. Purposefulness – measuring the level of achieving an activity goal, unrelated to financial aspects. 2. Effectiveness – measuring optimization level between service recipients' satisfaction and local authority's policies. 3. Equity – measuring the level of equality. 4. Manageability – measuring the difficulties in implementing a complex application. 5. Political Legitimacy – measures to what extent the local authority's policy is considered legitimate by the public; are all expressing the degree of citizens' satisfaction with local authority's performance, and the level of service provided as seen from the citizen's point of view. After the citizens received the service from the local authority's employee, they were requested to provide a score on three main subgroups – satisfaction with the level of service provided by the local authority, the degree of trust in the local authority, and finally, attitudes and perceptions towards the local authority. This is a variable dependent on its correlation the variable of employees' efficiency, the variable of employees' satisfaction, and the variable of employment status. The questionnaire used a Likert scale, when 1 is 'do not agree at all' and 5 is 'agree to a large extent' (Salamon, 2002) with some adaptations to the environment of local authorities.

The fourth variable is "Employment Status", defined as the employment status of the worker. Operational Variable is based on a list of demographic variables, some qualitative variables and some quantitative variables, such as age, religion, age, education, work experience, years in Israel, and employment status. The variables are independent.

The following hypotheses were formulated about the relations between the defined variables: worker efficiency, employment status, performance of the local authority, worker job satisfaction, worker quality of service.

- Hypothesis 1 – There is a positive relation between the worker's efficiency (including/not including the factor of absenteeism) and the workers with different employment status: as the worker feels more employment security (permanent worker), the efficiency is higher.

- Hypothesis 2 – There is a negative relation between the worker’s efficiency (including the factor of absenteeism) and the worker’s quality of service: as the worker’s output is greater, the quality of his service is lower.
- Hypothesis 3 – There is a negative relation between the worker’s efficiency and authority’s performances: as the worker is more efficient, the local authority’s performance, according to the service recipient, is lower.
- Hypothesis 4 – There is a positive relation between the worker’s efficiency (including the factor of absenteeism) and the worker’s satisfaction with his employment: as the worker is more satisfied with his employment, he is more efficient in his work.
- Hypothesis 5 – There is a positive relation between the worker’s efficiency (including the factor of absenteeism) and the worker’s salary: as the worker is more efficient, his salary is greater.
- Hypothesis 6 – There is a positive relation between the local authority’s performances and the worker’s satisfaction with his employment status: as the worker is more satisfied with his employment status, the local authority’s performances are higher.
- Hypothesis 7 – There is a positive relation between the worker’s job satisfaction and his salary: as the worker’s salary is higher, the worker is more satisfied with his job.
- Hypothesis 8 – There is a positive relation between the worker’s quality of service and the local authority’s performances: as the quality of service that the worker provides for the citizen is higher, the local authority’s performances, as assessed by the citizen (service recipient), is higher.
- Hypothesis 9 – There is a positive relation between the worker’s quality of service and the worker’s satisfaction with his employment status: as the worker’s satisfaction with his employment status is greater, the quality of service that he provides to the citizen is higher.
- Hypothesis 10 – There is a positive relation between the worker’s quality of service and his salary: as the worker’s salary is higher, the quality of service that he provides to the citizen is higher.
- Hypothesis 11 – There is a positive relation between the worker’s salary and the local authority’s performances: as the worker’s salary is higher, the local authority’s performance is higher.

3. FINDINGS OF THE RESEARCH

The findings for each hypothesis are presented in Table 3, below.

Table 3. Research Hypotheses and Findings

Hypothesis	Confirmed or rejected	Findings
1. There is a relation between the worker’s efficiency (including/not including the factor of absenteeism) and workers with different employment status.	Confirmed.	A strong and significant relation Cramer’s V=0.441 was found between the two variables ($\chi^2(44)=388.44, P<0.05$). We again examined the hypothesis that there is a relation between worker efficiency without the factor of absenteeism and worker employment status. We again conducted the χ^2 test and found a strong and significant relation, but weaker than the worker efficiency including the factor of absenteeism, Cramer’s V=0.394 ($\chi^2(56)=309.73, P<0.05$).

Hypothesis	Confirmed or rejected	Findings
2. There is a negative relation between worker efficiency (including factor of absenteeism) and worker quality of service.	Confirmed.	A weak and significant negative relation was found between worker efficiency and quality of service that the worker gives the citizen ($r_p = -0.074$, $p < 0.05$). In other words, there is an inverse relation between the worker efficiency and quality of service: as the worker efficiency is greater, the quality of service he gives the citizens is lower.
3. There is a negative relation between worker efficiency (including factor of absenteeism) and local authority performance.	Confirmed	A negative weak and significant relation was found between worker efficiency and local authority performance ($r_p = -0.243$, $p < 0.05$). In other words, there is an inverse relation between the worker efficiency and local authority performance. As the worker efficiency is greater, the local authority performance as perceived by the citizen who receives the service is lower.
4. There is a positive relation between worker efficiency (including factor of absenteeism) and worker satisfaction with employment status.	Rejected	A negative, weak, and significant relation was found between worker efficiency and worker satisfaction with employment status ($r_s = -0.162$, $p < 0.05$). In other words, there is an inverse relation between worker efficiency and worker satisfaction with his employment status: as the worker's efficiency is greater, his satisfaction with this employment status is lower.
5. There is a positive relation between worker efficiency (including factor of absenteeism) and worker salary.	Confirmed	A positive and significant relation was found between worker efficiency and worker salary, non-category ($r_s = 0.32$, $p < 0.05$). In other words, there is a direct relation between worker efficiency and worker salary: as the worker efficiency increases, the worker salary increases.
6. There is a positive relation between local authority performance and worker satisfaction with his employment status.	Confirmed	A positive and significant relation was found between the local authority performance and worker satisfaction with his employment status ($r_s = 0.2$, $p < 0.05$). As the worker is satisfied with his employment status, the local authority performances are higher.
7. There is a positive relation between worker satisfaction with his employment status and worker salary.	Confirmed	A positive and significant relation was found between worker satisfaction with his employment status and his salary ($r_s = 0.102$, $p < 0.05$). As the worker's salary is higher, the worker is more satisfied with his employment status.
8 – There is a positive correlation between employees' satisfaction and the local authority's performance	Confirmed	A positive correlation was found between employees' quality of service and the local authority's performance ($r_s = 0.541$, $p < 0.05$).
9. There is a positive relation between worker quality of service and worker satisfaction with his employment.	Rejected	A significant difference was not found between worker quality of service and worker satisfaction with his employment ($r_s = -0.02$, $p > 0.05$).
10. There is a positive relation between worker quality of service and worker salary.	Rejected	A significant difference was not found between worker quality of service and worker salary ($r_s = -0.014$, $p > 0.05$).

Hypothesis	Confirmed or rejected	Findings
11. There is a positive relation between worker salary and local authority performances.	Rejected	A significant difference was not found between worker salary and local authority performances ($r_s=0.023$, $p>0.05$).

5. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

In recent years, in Israel, due to the changing situation of the labor market and the development of careers, there is also a growing recognition of commitment centers. Centers of commitment are specific entities (individuals or groups) which the employee is related to. Amongst these entities are members to the organization, peer groups, direct supervisor, managers of the organization, teams, the organization itself and the professional union. The importance of this distinction is due to the fact that the employee himself is becoming increasingly aware of the between the different centers of commitment and rates the level of his commitment to each one separately.

A study that examined levels of performance among professional engineers found that engineers who demonstrated a high commitment to the organization and to the profession had higher levels of performance, while engineers with a high commitment to the profession but a low commitment to the organization had very low levels of performance. Accordingly, one may conclude that the worker can be more committed to more than one center of commitment without compromising performance (DeLoria, 2001). Such a high level could cause a transition towards positive manifestations, yet there are also negative effects, such as: lack of creativity, resistance to change, excess pressure, and excess stress. In addition to the symptoms mentioned excess commitment can also cause blind acceptance of the status quo in the organization, a lack of willingness to "speak out" when it conflicts with the interest of the organization and unethical behavior.

The study tested the hypothesis that there is a link between an efficient employee (including/excluding causes of absenteeism) and employees with the different status of the employment. In this hypothesis the researcher is in fact checking the excess pressure caused in the local authority as a result of employees with the different employment status. The researcher discovered a strong relationship Cramer's $V = 0.441$ and significant correlation between the two variables above ($P < 0.05$, $388.44 = (44) 2\chi$).

Additionally, the study examined the argument that there is a relationship between an efficient employee, excluding the factor of absenteeism, and status of employment. The researcher tested this hypothesis again with a 2χ test and the results disclose that there is a strong relationship, but weaker than the employee efficiency when including the factor of absenteeism: Cramer's $V = 0.394$ ($P < 0.05$, $309.73 = (56) 2\chi$).

When the researchers checked whether there is a negative correlation between the efficiency of the employee (including the factor of absenteeism) and quality of service of the employee, the results demonstrate that there is a negative and weak correlation between higher productivity of the worker and quality of service that the employee gives the citizen ($r_p = -0.074$, $p < 0.05$). This means that there is an inverse relationship between the efficiency of the employee and service quality; when worker efficiency is higher, quality of service the employee provides to the citizens is lower. It is possible to explain this finding by the suggestion that there is a continuous level of commitment of permanent employees or due to the different status of employment of the other employees who are not permanent employees, which are measured primarily by their output and not by the quality of workmanship. Thereby, quality is damaged for the sake of quantity.

Moreover, the researcher discovered a negative, weak and significant correlation between the relationship between employee efficiency and performance of the authority ($r_p = -0.243$, $p < 0.05$). In other words, there is an inverse relationship between employee efficiency and performance of the authority; when employee efficiency is higher, the authority's performance as it is perceived by the civil service, gets lower. This finding reinforces the researcher hypothesis that due to different employee status of the other workers, who are not permanent employees who are measured primarily according to their output and the quality of workmanship; these workers are willing to degrade quality in favor of output. This assumption reinforces the findings of further

research which was conducted according to the model of Becker (1992), about different bases of commitment among the population of Certified Public accountants in England and confirmed Becker's observation about the different bases of commitment.

This study proposes another focal point of commitment which is defined by employees who are not committed to any focus at all (Becker, 1992). It was also found that commitment to any of the various focuses (other than the employees who are not committed at all) will lead to an increase in performance. Indeed, the researcher tested this hypothesis and discovered that there is a positive correlation between the performance of the authority to the satisfaction if the employee from the employment status, also there is a significant positive correlation between the performance of the authority's satisfaction of the employee ($r_s = 0.2$, $p < 0.05$). This finding strengthens the hypothesis that when the employee is satisfied with his job, the higher the authority's performance. One can assume that an employee who is satisfied with his job, despite the tension arising from the different employment status as well as a low level of commitment among the other contract workers, is a motivated employee who will still contribute to a higher level of performance of the public authority.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR MANAGERS

The researchers formulate several practical recommendations for public managers in local authorities in Israel. First, assuming that employment status in local authorities is not bound to change soon, and in order to increase motivation among all local authority employees, the local authority must focus on categorization – teaching new skills, and salary, primarily in terms of gender equality for persons performing the same role at the same department.

Second, the efficiency of employees with permanent employment status directly employed by the local authority tends to be greater than that of employees of different employment status.

Third, the fiscal viability of employing non-permanent status local authority workers is questionable, given the high level of efficiency demonstrated by these employees, which can translate into financial gain and savings over time.

Fourth, the authorities must consider and confront the problem of excessive absence of permanent, directly employed workers; even though the sample was taken during regular reception hours, permanent employees were absent 36% of the time during the sampling. Regardless of their reason, the local authority would benefit both in terms of performance as perceived by the public, and in monetary savings on personnel. The local authorities must consider a different form of reward, one that links tenure to absence to the point of simpler dismissal procedures, as a means of coping with the phenomenon of permanent employee absence.

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