

**NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF PUBLIC SERVICE Doctoral Program of  
Public Administration**

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**COMPETENCE-BASED CAREER START IN THE PUBLIC SERVICE  
– OR THE RELATIONSHIPS OF CAREER MOTIVATION,  
COMPETENCE MATCHING AND MENTORING WITH PUBLIC  
ADMINISTRATION CAREER START –**

Doctoral (PhD) thesis

THESIS BOOKLET

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**Budapest, 2022**

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## **1. DEFINITION OF THE SCIENTIFIC PROBLEM**

Hungarian public administration organizations have been struggling with the problem of generational renewal for years. It can be seen from the university applications that young people's interest in public administration careers is showing a decreasing trend, and there is also a significant early career dropout among those who have obtained specialized degrees. This is supported by the data of the Graduate Follow-up System for recent years, according to which 60.49% of administrative students who graduated from the Faculty of Public Governance and International Studies of the National University of Public Service (NKE ÁNTK) in 2011-2012 are still working in the public sector today, at the same time, only 39.74% of the 2017-2018 year public administration organizing students are active in this sector (Graduate Follow-up System, 2022). In the case of those who obtained a master's degree, the situation is somewhat more favourable, since 67.57% of the public administration master's graduates in 2017-2018, and 57.14% of those who graduated from the international public service relations studies, were employed in the public service, and these values were very similar in previous years as well. However, it is important to mention that the majority of master's degree students already work in some field of the public service when they start university, so it is natural that proportionally more of them stay in this sector than the BA students who typically obtain their first degree. The "turning away" of entrants with a BA degree from public administration can already cause difficulties in the medium term (5-10 years), especially in regional public administration. The picture is further shaded by the fact that the young people choosing public administration will mostly work in the ministries. The danger of "aging" is therefore even less perceptible in the entire public administration – this is also indicated by the data presented in the 2019 Good State Report – but especially in rural and regional organizations, the provision of adequately prepared supply is becoming an increasingly tangible problem.

In my thesis, I undertake to explore the possible reasons behind the above statistical data. In order to understand the root of the supply problems that are already perceptible in the public service and are expected to increase in the future, and to find potential solutions during my work:

- I present the motivational factors influencing career choice and staying in the career and their effectiveness among students participating in further education in public administration;

- I provide an overview of the effects of the sense of competence and the competence match on career motivation;
- I analyse the competence expectations related to public service entrants, the extent and nature of their compliance, as well as the correlation of all this with career motivation;
- I examine how mentoring, as a method, affects the competence development of public service entrants and, through this, the strengthening of their career motivation.

The research presented in the dissertation was carried out in the framework of the project KÖFOP-2.1.5–VEKOP-16-2016-0000 "*Strategic support for the personnel replenishment of the competitive public service*". In order to ensure the "quality" supply of civil service personnel, the project aimed to support recruitment, career start and retention with human resource management tools. In order to effectively manage the recruitment problem, the project wanted to reach the diverse target groups with several HR activities and tools, among which I highlight the mentoring field in my thesis. The choice is also strengthened by my personal connection, since as an employee of the National University of Public Service I was the specialist coordinator of the mentoring project part between 2017 and 2019, and I also carried out the research presented in my thesis in this capacity. As the coordinator of the mentoring field, my duties included:

- planning and professional management of the research establishing a mentoring system supporting the organizational integration of public service entrants; planning the research establishing a mentoring system supporting the organizational integration of public service entrants and its professional management;
- developing the methodology of the mentoring system based on the lessons learned from the research;
- the professional foundation of the mentors' training;
- participation in the preparation of mentors and trainers who train mentors;
- professional supervision of the conduct of law enforcement and public administration pilot programs;
- participation in processing the experiences generated during the pilot program (see the analysis of the program documentation, conducting satisfaction measurements, summarizing the results of monitoring studies);
- revision and finalization of the methodology of the mentoring system based on the experiences of the pilot programs.

My choice of topic was largely motivated by my research and expert work in the project. However, it is important to point out that in my thesis I present the results of the mentoring project in a new light, and I mainly focus on the connections related to the competence development and career motivation of entrants.

## **2. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES**

In order to deal with the problem summarized in the previous point, i.e. to ensure the quantitative and qualitative labour supply of the public service, it is essential that the entrants entering the organizations meet three basic conditions:

- on the one hand, they have the professional training necessary for high-level task performance;
- on the other hand, through their personal and social competences, they should be able to fit into the organizational environment and work effectively;
- finally, they should be characterized by strong internal career motivation.

In the absence of any of these three factors, entrants will either not be able to perform their work at an adequate level or will do it reluctantly and frustrated. A direct consequence of all this can be leaving the job within a short period of time or burnout. In addition, as I will point out later, the two factors are closely interrelated, since the sense of competence strengthens internal motivation, and conversely, internal motivation contributes to the development of competence. In other words, if any of the three is missing, it can have a destructive effect on the other factors as well, thus escalating the aforementioned negative processes (Deci et al., 1982).

That is why, during my research, I was primarily interested in how to strengthen the internal motivation of graduates entering the public service and, in interaction with this, develop the competencies required for work. The focus of my research is therefore the exploration of the career motivation factors that determine the successful career start of graduates entering the public service, mainly the public administration, the knowledge of the competencies required for the performance of tasks, and the analysis of the effects of the mentoring program aimed at their development.

Accordingly, I formulated the specific research goals listed below, as well as the corresponding research questions:

1. **research objective** –Getting to know the career motivation of those preparing for a career in public administration, as well as exploring what factors influence the career choice of those concerned, and how their interest in a career in public administration develops from the time they start university to the time they start working.

I examined the first research objective along the following main questions:

- How do the students of the Faculty of Public Governance and International Studies of the National University of Public Service (hereafter: NKE ÁNTK), i.e. potential entrants in public administration, think about their future careers?
- How do extrinsic and intrinsic career motivation factors influence their career choice?
- How does their interest in the public service career change from the beginning of their studies to the start of work?
- How do public administration organizations see the career motivation of entrants? What extrinsic and intrinsic motivational factors do they attribute to the career choice of entrants?

2. **research objective** – Understanding the correlations between compliance with basic organizational competencies and a successful career start among public administration entrants. Accordingly, I will examine the organizational basic competence expectations related to entrants, their actual compliance, as well as the interaction between career motivation and the sense of competence.

Regarding the second research objective, I formulated the following research questions:

- How do NKE ÁNTK students evaluate their basic competencies required for public service work?
- How do public service organizations see the basic public service competencies of entrants?
- To what extent do entrants meet the organizations' expectations regarding basic competencies?
- What is the relationship between the nature of entrants' motivation and their perceived competence match?
- How does the sense of competence and competency compliance of public service entrants affect their career motivation and their interest in the career?

- 3. research objective** –Using a comparative analysis of the results of the Public Service Mentoring Pilot Program that took place in the framework of the project 2.1.5 of KÖFOP, showing how the mentoring method can contribute to the increase of the competency compliance and sense of competence of entrants in the public service and to the internalization of their career motivation.

The research questions related to the third research objective are the following:

- According to what conditions and principles is it worth creating a mentoring program that supports the integration of entrants, so that it effectively serves the development of the basic public service competencies of entrants, their organizational socialization, and the internalization of their career motivation?
- How can mentoring as a method support the development of the public service competence of entrants?
- How does mentoring contribute to successful workplace socialization and through this to the internalization of career motivation?

### **3. HYPOTHESES OF RESEARCH TOPIC**

In my research, I examined the following hypotheses:

- 1. hypothesis (H1)** – I assume that one of the bases of a successful public administration career choice is the development of autonomous motivation for the career (identification, integration, and internal motivation). I assume that the interest in public administration and the career choice of NKE ÁNTK students – i.e., the potential graduate labour supply for public administration – are basically determined by the methods of controlled motivation (external and introjected motivation), and that autonomous motivation (identification, integration, and internal motivation) plays a smaller role in the career motivation of those involved. I also assume that due to the dominance of controlled motivation, the interest of NKE ÁNTK students in public administration careers already shows a decreasing trend during their university years, and this negative effect is confirmed by the work experience (traineeship) gained in public administration organizations
- 2. hypothesis (H2)** – I assume the basic public service competencies of those entering the public service fall short of the level of competence expected by the organizations, and the sense of a competence deficit goes hand in hand with controlled motivation. I

assume that different competence profiles can be identified based on the sense of competence of entrants, and that the profiles interact with the nature of career motivation in public administration.

- 3. hypothesis (H3)** –I assume that mentoring is a suitable method for the development of the professional and public service basic competencies of entrants in the public service and contributes to the partial or complete elimination of the competence deficit of those starting a career. I also assume that the mentoring program effectively supports the development of the autonomous motivation of entrants. I assume that the key to the success of the mentoring program is a sufficiently flexible methodology adapted to organizational needs, as well as the preparedness and attitude of the mentors involved in the implementation.

#### **4. RESEARCH METHODS**

I examined the research hypotheses defined in point 3 using both primary and secondary research methods. During the secondary research, I examined the following by comparing the relevant background literature:

- the self-determination motivation theory with special regard to its aspects related to work and career motivation;
- the extrinsic and intrinsic motivational factors that determine career motivation and career choice and how they influence the career choice of young people in other areas of the public service (see: education, national defense);
- the concept of competence, its components and the different competence models;
- the civil service basic competence system, which forms the basis of the competence expectations related to new civil service entrants;
- the concept system of workplace socialization, the concepts of workplace orientation, onboarding and socialization;
- the effects of conscious workplace integration on the competency development and career motivation of entrants;
- the different mentoring methods and the effects of mentoring on the workplace socialization and competence development of entrants;



- the methodology of the mentoring pilot program supporting the integration of public service entrants and its nature that strengthens autonomous motivation and aims at competence development.

I carried out the primary, empirical research that forms the backbone of the thesis in the framework of the project KÖFOP-2.1.5 – VEKOP-16-2016-00001 "*Strategic support for the personnel supply of the competitive public service*", between July 2017 and September 2020, as the head of the research group investigating professional practice in public administration. as the subspecialty coordinator of the mentoring project, and then From July 2021, as the head of the research group examining public administration traineeship. In order to clearly distinguish my own research, in the last column of Table 1 (see below), which summarizes the research methods used, I have precisely specified the percentage of my independent contribution to the results, as well as its content. To verify the research hypotheses, I used the empirical research results contained in Table 1.

*Table 1: Summary of research methods*

Research sub-themes and related hypotheses	Target group	Number of participants	Research method
H1 – Examination of the career motivation and career vision of NKE ÁNTK students, i.e., future entrants in public administration H2 – Competence self-assessment of NKE ÁNTK students	NKE ÁNTK full-time and part-time students	114 people	Questionnaire
H1 – Examining how public service organizations think about the motivational factors of entrants H2 – Getting to know the competence expectations of public service organizations regarding entrants and evaluating the competencies of entrants	Leaders of public administration and law enforcement bodies, HR experts and staff	1967 people	Questionnaire
H3 – Examination of the effects of the mentoring	Public administration mentors and mentees	A total of 65 people:	Satisfaction questionnaire

Research sub-themes and related hypotheses	Target group	Number of participants	Research method
pilot program supporting the organizational integration of civil service entrants on career motivation and competence development	of the mentoring program that helps the organizational integration of civil service entrants	34 mentors 31 mentees	
H3 – Examination of the effects of a mentoring program supporting the organizational integration of civil service entrants on career motivation and competence development	Public administration mentors of the mentoring program that helps new civil service entrants fit into the organization	38 people	Document analysis of mentoring diaries, as well as analysis of the evaluation questionnaires forming part of the diaries

*Source: author's own editing*

## 5. SUMMARY CONCLUSIONS - VERIFICATION OF HYPOTHESES

About the most important research questions, I set up a hypothetical explanatory model at the beginning of my thesis, which I treated as a framework for the entire research. Based on the secondary and primary research results, I see that the model has proven to be fundamentally correct, although it needs to be clarified both in relation to the assumed effects of mentoring and staying in the organization.

Both the relevant theoretical literature and my own test results proved that the nature of motivation basically determines the interest in the field. My results showed that the autonomous – i.e., internal or internalized – motivation is a more stable predictor of career interest than controlled – i.e. external or introjected – motivation. The results of the secondary research also proved that autonomous motivation correlates with long-term staying in the organization, but – in the absence of longitudinal research – I could not confirm this empirically for the time being. I came to a similar result in relation to competency compliance. The review of theoretical literature (Henci, 2008; Kiss, 2010) as well as my own empirical research results showed that the feeling of meeting organizational competence expectations increases, and the perception of a competence deficit decreases interest in the career. However, I have not yet verified the effect of the feeling of competence on actual staying in the organization. Therefore, I modified the two assumed output effects in the model (see upper green and lower red text boxes). In the original model, the joint output of competence match and intrinsic motivation was "an increase

in the chance of **staying** in the organization and the profession", while in the new version it is "increased **interest** in the organization and the profession". Accordingly, I also changed the joint result of external motivation and the competence level below the expected from "decrease in the chance of **staying** in the organization and the profession" to "decreased **interest** in the organization and the profession".

It is also important that, in accordance with my preliminary assumption, my empirical research results confirmed the interaction between the nature of motivation and the perceived level of competence conformity. It follows that in order to develop and maintain interest in the field, both areas must be dealt with in a targeted manner.

Knowing the empirical research results, I also described the role of mentoring in a more differentiated way in the modified explanatory model. My investigations related to the public service pilot program proved that the mentoring contributed to the development of the basic public service competencies and the internalization of motivation, too. At the same time, it was also revealed that while the competence development and the related effects can be directly grasped by the participants, so they are manifested in the goal setting, in the feedback between the mentor and the mentee, as well as in the actual work, the motivation becomes internalized in a less conscious way for those involved and is realized indirectly. Therefore, from the point of view of motivation, the creation of an environment that supports the satisfaction of needs has a decisive role, which is primarily determined by the attitude of the mentors, the nature of the mentor-mentee relationship, the helpful attitude of the organizational actors, and the observance of the principles contained in the mentoring methodology. Depending on these lessons, I distinguished the indirect and direct effects of mentoring.

At the beginning of my work, I set up three hypotheses, the truth of which I examined with the help of secondary and primary research. In the following, I will reflect on the validity of the hypotheses depending on the presented results.

### *Verification of the first hypothesis (H1).*

**I assumed that one of the foundations of a successful public administration career choice is the development of autonomous motivation for the career (identification, integration, and internal motivation).** – The first part of hypothesis H1 was confirmed by both secondary and empirical research. The relevant international and domestic research (Deci et al., 1994; Gagné – Deci, 2005; Deci – Ryan, 2000; Deci, Connell, Ryan, 1989; Fényszárosi et al., 2018)

proved the assumption of the self-determination theory that autonomous, i.e. internal or internalized, motivation has many positive benefits, one of the most important of which is an increase in interest in the profession and the organization, as well as a decrease in the desire to migrate from the workplace. On the other hand, controlled – i.e., external or introjected – motivation positively correlates with a decrease in interest in the profession and an increase in the intention to leave the profession.

In my own research, based on the career motivation factors evaluated by the students of NKE ÁNTK, I could identify three types of motivation as: **strong motivation, identification and external motivation**. Based on the factors that make up the individual motivational modes, the most intense and at the same time the most autonomous type was represented by the strong, while the least intense and most controlled motivation was represented by the external method. The identified type was located between these two extremes, both in terms of intensity and autonomous nature. The mode of motivation was significantly correlated with the interest in the public administration career, but as expected, strong motivation showed the strongest association, and external motivation showed the weakest correlation. From this, we can conclude that entrants who are more characterized by autonomous motivation find the public administration career more attractive than their peers who have basically controlled motivation. And this can also determine their persistence on the field. However, it is important that the investigation of the relationship between actually staying in the profession and autonomous motivation requires further research, as we currently only have empirical data on interest in the profession.

**I assumed that the interest in public administration and the career choice of NKE ÁNTK students – i.e., the potential graduate labour supply of public administration – are basically determined by the methods of controlled motivation (external and introjected motivation), and that autonomous motivation (identification, integration, and internal motivation) plays a smaller role in the career motivation of those involved.** – The second statement of the first hypothesis (H1) was confirmed by my empirical research results. Among the entire group of respondents, the students of NKE ÁNTK rated the motivational role of career safety and the forced career the highest. Both factors capture controlled motivation. The arrangement of the examined motivational factors according to motivational modes also showed that external motivation was the students' strongest mode of regulation, while internal motivation proved to be the second weakest mode. The role of the external motivation method in relation to the motivation of entrants was similarly judged by the respondents of the public

administration organizations, although they also rated the importance of internal motivation higher. If the group of respondents of the NKE ÁNTK is divided according to departments and ages, this part of the hypothesis is even more confirmed. Full-time students under the age of 25, who can actually be considered entrants, rated the role of the forced career significantly higher in relation to career motivation than the part-time students and respondents over 26 (see Figures 18 and 19). In the comparison of departments, there was also a significant difference in the judging of "interesting work", "social prestige" and "work environment". These variables can be linked to the autonomous motivation rather than to the controlled one, and the part-time students evaluated all the relevant factors significantly more positively than the full-time students. Analyses related to the types of motivation defined with the help of factor analysis also indicate that the career choice of the full-time group under the age of 25 is basically determined by controlled motivation. Among the three types of motivation, "external motivation", which showed the most controlled marks, characterized full-time students under the age of 25 more strongly than part-time students over the age of 26. In addition, part-time students and respondents in the 36-50 age group rated the role of "strong motivation" including autonomous characteristics significantly higher than full-time students and respondents under the age of 25. The verification of the hypothesis is refined by the fact that the respondents of the public administration organizations evaluated the motivational factors differently by type of organization. In relation to the motivation of entrants, the interns working in the state administration attributed significantly more importance to the factors capturing autonomous motivation than the respondents in the local governments (see: Figure 24). From this, we can conclude that controlled motivation is more characteristic of entrants in the local government than their peers who work in the state administration. Overall, it can be seen that the career motivation of the students participating in the survey is determined more by factors belonging to the controlled mode of motivation than by factors related to autonomous motivation. In addition, this statement applies mostly to the study group who are actually starting their careers, studying full-time and under the age of 25.

**I also assumed that due to the dominance of controlled motivation, the interest of NKE ÁNTK students in public administration careers already shows a decreasing trend during their university years, and this negative effect is confirmed by the work experience (traineeship) gained in public administration organizations.** –The last finding of the first hypothesis (H1) was partly supported by my research results. The empirical results confirmed

the assumption that the interest in the public administration career decreased significantly in the years following the start of the university. The analysis of the data according to departments shows that even before starting university, full-time students found the career in public administration significantly less attractive than part-time students, and their interest was also tended to be lower when answering. There was also a difference in the age comparison between the three participating age groups. The oldest respondents were significantly more positively interested in the field than the youngest, and their motivation did not change during university. On the other hand, the interest of the youngest decreased between the start of university and the traineeship, and then stagnated. The attraction of the middle age group (26-35-year-olds) towards a career in public administration has slightly increased over the years. From all of this, we can conclude that, in accordance with the hypothesis, the career motivation of respondents who are actually entrants, full-time students and under 25 years of age really decreases during their university years, but it seems that the experiences gained during traineeship do not confirm, but rather slow down this trend. One of the possible reasons for this is that, based on the results obtained, the traineeship can satisfy the students' need to "belong somewhere", but it contributes only to a small extent to increasing their sense of competence and satisfying their need for autonomy. The results also proved that the decrease in interest in the public service career is mostly characterized by the "externally motivated" type, which can be described with controlled characteristics.

### *Verification of the second hypothesis (H2)*

**I assumed that the basic public service competencies of those entering the public service fall short of the level of competence expected by the organizations, and the feeling of a competence deficit goes hand in hand with controlled motivation.** – The first part of the second hypothesis was proven by my empirical research results. The competency self-assessment of NKE ÁNTK students fell short of the assumed organizational basic competency expectations for most competencies (see Figure 30). In the case of two competencies – that is, emotional intelligence and independence – the students evaluated themselves more positively than the organizational expectations, but overall, the respondents considered these two competencies the least important from an organizational point of view (see Figure 27). The picture is further coloured by the fact that the organizational respondents rated the entrants significantly lower in all competencies than they rated themselves (Figure 29). In practice, this means that, upon joining the organization, new employees may be faced with the fact that their

colleagues consider them even less capable than they expected. And all of this can make them even more uncertain and can further strengthen the feeling of competence deficit. It is also significant that, according to the comparison of the self-assessment of competence by department, the competence deficit typically affects full-time students. Based on the results presented in Figure 31, part-time students rated themselves significantly higher than full-time students in several competencies (determination, self-confidence, effective work, communication skills, problem-solving skills). In addition, the part-time students overestimated themselves in most competencies even compared to the assumed organizational expectations. I got a similar result when comparing the age groups. Respondents under the age of 25 rated themselves lower in all competencies than older respondents, and, in addition, they showed a significant gap in several competencies from the assumed organizational expectations (see: Figures 32 and 33). Overall, the results draw attention to the fact that the competency deficit mostly affects the group of real entrants, that is, full-time students under the age of 25.

The results of the research also confirmed that the sense of a competence deficit goes hand in hand with the controlled nature of career motivation. Based on the data presented in Table 25, the "externally motivated" type, which mainly combines controlled traits, was negatively correlated with self-evaluation of seven of the twelve basic competencies, and, in three cases, the degree of association was significant. From this, we can conclude that the more extrinsically motivated respondents experience competence deficits in relation to more competences than the respondents characterized by the marks of the other two motivational types. We have already seen in connection with the verification of the previous hypothesis that in the case of external motivation, the degree of interest in the public administration career is the lowest. Overall, the results show a connection between the competence deficit and controlled motivation, but we do not know whether the motivation becomes controlled as a result of the perceived deficit, or vice versa, whether the respondents do less to develop their competencies because of the already existing controlled motivation.

**I assumed that different competence profiles can be identified based on the sense of competence of entrants and that the profiles interact with the nature of career motivation in public administration.** – Based on the results of the empirical research, I also consider the second statement of the second hypothesis (H2) to be justified. Based on the competence self-

assessment of NKE ÁNTK students, I could separate three competence profiles: autonomous, sociable and implementing type. The correlation studies carried out proved that there is a connection between the individual types of competence and the motivational modes. Accordingly, we can say that the applicants characterized by an autonomous profile have the lowest interest in a public service career, and at the same time, their motivation is the least controlled. People belonging to the sociable type are intensely interested in public service, but their motivation is basically external and controlled. Respondents who can be described with the marks of the implementing profile see the career as the most attractive and their motivation is highly autonomous. From all this, we can conclude that it is more difficult to "invite" people with an autonomous profile into the public administration, but if they are included in the organization, they will most likely be active there. People belonging to the sociable type are open to employment in public administration, but at the same time there is a chance that they will quickly turn away from the field due to strong external motivation. Finally, it is certainly the implementers who find the most value in public administration, and presumably they stay the longest. A comparison of the results of the respondents by department and age also revealed that the oldest age group can be characterized mostly by the features of the autonomous and implementing profiles, the majority of the 26-35-year-olds belong to the autonomous type, and in the case of the youngest, the characteristics of neither profile really prevail. This result confirms the assumption that younger people find public administration less attractive than older people.

### *Verification of the third hypothesis (H3)*

**I assumed that mentoring is a suitable method for the development of the professional and public service basic competencies of public service entrants and contributes to the partial or complete elimination of the competence deficit of entrants.** –The first statement of the third hypothesis (H3) was proven by the empirical research results. According to the lessons of the mentoring diary, in most cases the participants made the development of effective work or other basic public service competencies the focus of the mentoring process, and based on the feedback, they achieved the goals related to competency development in almost all cases. Accordingly, during the program, the professional competence, communication skills and cooperation skills of the mentees improved the most. According to the evaluation of the mentors, the mentees showed significant improvement in all twelve basic competencies. The



same was confirmed by the feedback of the mentees, 75 percent of whom stated that the program supported the development of their professional and organizational core competencies.

**I also assumed that the mentoring program effectively supports the development of the autonomous motivation of entrants.** – Based on the satisfaction measurement of the public service mentoring pilot program and the mentoring diaries, I was able to partially verify this statement of the third hypothesis (H3). The results showed that the impact of the process on autonomous motivation was evaluated differently by mentors and mentees. The former considered the strengthening of autonomous motivation to be one of the most significant successes of the program, while the latter felt that this was what they missed the most from mentoring. In my opinion, the background of the different evaluation lies in the less tangible nature of the change in motivation. Therefore, I saw that mentoring did not directly, but indirectly, by providing a need-supporting atmosphere, affect the internalization of the mentee's motivation. Based on the results, the positive attitude of the mentors, the equal, trusting relationship between mentors and mentees and the helpful attitude of other organizational actors also strengthened the need-supporting climate during mentoring. Overall, the mentoring program was suitable for satisfying the basic psychological needs, and through them contributed to the internalization of motivation.

**I assumed that the key to the success of the mentoring program is a sufficiently flexible methodology adapted to organizational needs, as well as the preparedness and attitude of the mentors involved in the implementation.** –The last assumption related to the third hypothesis (H3) was confirmed by the results of the secondary research and the empirical results as well. Based on the literature on formal and informal mentoring (Bozionelos, 2004; Kram, 1985; Allenés et al., 2004; Kozák, 2014b, Baugh and Fagenson-Eland, 2007), it can be concluded that formal mentoring has many organizational advantages (e.g. traceability, recognition of mentors, validation of organizational goals, etc.), but at the same time, informal mentoring is more suitable for creating a needs-supporting atmosphere, and thus can more effectively help both the development of autonomous motivation and the development of the mentee's competence. Therefore, ideally, the characteristics of informal mentoring should be implemented as much as possible within the framework of formal mentoring. This primarily requires a flexible program and targeted selection and preparation of mentors. During the

development of the methodology of the public service mentoring program, we took these aspects into account, and during the empirical research, the feedback related to the mentors' assessment (see Figure 39) and the assessment of satisfaction with the program showed that it really succeeded in laying the foundations of an equally well-adapted system which meets the needs of the participants and the organizations.

## **6. NEW SCIENTIFIC RESULTS**

In the course of my research related to career motivation in public administration, the matching of basic competencies of entrants, and the mentoring program supporting these two areas, I achieved the following new scientific results:

- 1. I proved the applicability of the self-determination theory of motivation to new public administration entrants.** –My research results showed that three types of controlled and autonomous motivation can be identified in the target group as: strong, identified and external motivation. Based on the results, these motivational modes characterize the subgroups of the entire study group according to the independent variables (meaning: department and age) to a different extent. In accordance with the self-determination theory, I also proved that the highly controlled "external motivation" mode is associated with a lower interest in the public administration career, while the basically autonomous "strong motivation" is associated with an increased interest in the career.
- 2. I proved the existance of competence deficit between the perceived competence level of public administration entrants and the assumed organizational competence expectations.** – According to the results of the research on competence matching, students preparing for a career in public administration – especially full-time students under the age of 25 – underestimate themselves in most basic competences compared to the organizational competence expectations they assume, which means that they see they do not meet the competence requirements formulated for them. It is important to emphasize that all of this is the subjective perception of the respondents, as we have no data on the actual competency expectations of the organizations, nor on the objectively measured competency level of the students. At the same time, according to the study results, interest in the field is already negatively influenced by the perceived competence deficit.

- 3. I identified the relationship between the competence profiles of public administration entrants based on the competence self-assessment, the career motivation methods, and the interest in the public administration career.** – Based on the results of the conducted empirical studies, it was possible to define three student competence profiles – that is, the autonomous, sociable, and implementing types. According to the correlation analyses related to the competence profiles, the individual competence profiles can be characterized by different motivational factors and, accordingly, motivational modes. In the light of the lessons already presented in relation to motivational modes, this also means that entrants with different competence profiles have different attitudes towards the public administration career, which may predict the stability of their stay in the career. According to my results, the "implementation type" is the most likely to stay in a long-term career, because this profile was most correlated with the mode of "strong motivation" and interest in a career in public administration.
- 4. I proved that the public service mentoring program is a suitable method for strengthening the autonomous motivation of public administration entrants, as well as for developing basic public service competence.** –The analysis of the results related to the public administration mentoring program proved that the mentoring methodology tested during the pilot contributed directly to the development of the basic public service competencies of the participants, and indirectly influenced the development of the autonomous motivation of entrants by creating a need-supporting atmosphere. Accordingly, the extension of the public service mentoring program can be an effective tool for maintaining and increasing the interest of entrants in public administration.
- 5. I included in an explanatory model how career motivation, competence matching and mentoring affect the interest in the public administration career, and then I proved the correctness of the model with empirical results.** –At the beginning of Chapter 8, in the light of the empirical data, I modified the theoretical explanatory model outlined in Chapter 2. According to the modified model, which is also supported by empirical results, competence matching, and career motivation interact with each other. Accordingly, compliance with organizational competencies is associated with autonomous motivation, while a deficit related to organizational competencies is correlated with controlled motivation. The joint consequence of the competence match and autonomous motivation is an increase in the interest in the field. At the same time, the combination of competence

deficit and controlled motivation leads to a decrease in the interest in the field. And mentoring is an external, organizational force that can positively influence both factors with a direct effect on competence development and an indirect effect on motivation.

## **7. SUGGESTIONS FOR THE USE OF THE RESULTS**

My research results can be used in several practical areas of organizational HR. In the following, I summarize the possible forms of the application.

1. **University education** –The empirical research results showed that the motivation of the interviewed full-time students of the NKE ÁNTK is basically controlled, and their public service competencies fall short of the assumed organizational expectations. We also saw that full-time students' interest in public administration careers decreases during their university years, and this trend is especially strong among respondents who perceive a competence deficit. Therefore, I believe that it would be worthwhile to carry out further investigations in relation to both areas and, depending on the results, to develop an intervention program that could be suitable for strengthening the autonomous nature of motivation, as well as for the targeted development of basic public service competencies. Based on the positive lessons learned related to mentoring, for example, it would be worthwhile to consider how the program could be introduced in some way into university education. In addition, it could be assessed to what extent the content of the taught subjects correspond to the basic competencies, and to what extent the teaching methods are suitable for the practical development of the basic competencies. Knowing these data, it would be advisable to initiate changes both in relation to the content of the training program and the educational methodological solutions. The results related to the change in interest in the public administration career also pointed out that the tendency to lose interest slowed down after the traineeship. From this, we can conclude that gaining practical experience has a positive effect on students' motivation. It would therefore be important to develop a closer relationship between the university and the traineeship organizations, as well as other public administration organizations, and for students to have a greater insight into the professional work in public administration. This is also interesting because among the autonomous motivational factors, the full-time students rated career-building and relationship-building opportunities the highest, so in my opinion, the autonomous motivation of the target group could be strengthened through these factors.

2. **Extension of the mentoring program** – According to the results of the public service mentoring pilot program, the methodology is suitable both for strengthening the autonomous nature of motivation and for developing basic public service competencies. Therefore, it would be worth taking the positive results of the pilot further and expand them. Currently, a new mentoring pilot program is underway under the direction of the Ministry of the Interior, within the framework of which mentoring is taking place in 75 public administration and 75 law enforcement organizations. So, I think the first step forward has been made to make mentoring mainstream. In addition, it should also be seen that the application of the mentoring methodology is still done in an isolated manner, basically on a central initiative. It would therefore be important for organizations to increasingly see the potential of mentoring and, taking advantage of the system's framework nature, adapt the methodology to their own needs. For this, of course, they would need professional support and advice, which the Public Administration Personnel Development Directorate could give them.
3. **Attracting, recruiting, selecting** – The results related to competency profiles and motivational modes could also be used for the more conscious recruitment and selection of entrants. Following the pattern of competency-based selection already used in law enforcement, it would be worthwhile to create competency profiles for different organizations and different work areas, and to introduce the competency measurement of applicants and the examination of their motivations. By knowing these, it would be possible to create a more accurate picture of the applicant's competency compliance, on the one hand, and on the other hand, his interest in the work area, as well as his motivational background, which determines his long-term stay in the field. I would also consider that part of the university career orientation discussion should be the assessment of motivations, or even, similar to the law enforcement faculty, the competence measurement of incoming students. Of course, all of this would require the further development of the self-assessment scale used in the research to measure motivational modes, and the introduction of the Basic Competence Examination test system already used in law enforcement.
4. **Employer branding** – Employer branding has become one of the defining areas of HR's responsibility over the past decade. Not by chance, since the competition for qualified employees is increasing in the private sector as well. Based on the relevant literature

(Szabó, 2017), the basis of a successful employer brand is credibility. It is therefore important that the employer's marketing reflects reality, so that it can address employees who are likely to find their match in the given field. I think that by further examining the competence profiles of entrants and motivational modes identified during my research, we could get closer to knowing what kind of employees feel at home in the organizational environment of the public administration, and this information could be used in the construction of a conscious employee brand of the public administration.

## **8. FURTHER RESEARCH OPPORTUNITIES OF THE TOPIC**

The new scientific results summarized in the previous sections, as well as the possibilities of their practical use, also determine the direction of further investigations. Accordingly, it would be worthwhile to continue researching the topic in the following areas.

- 1. Development and testing of a tool suitable for even more accurate measurement of motivational modes.** – During the preparation of my dissertation, I worked with a simple self-assessment scale, but with the knowledge of the already analysed data and the motivational modes identified in the target group, a measuring method could be developed that is suitable for a more precise mapping of the motivational modes. The development of such a tool would make it possible to measure the motivational modes during university training, selection, or career guidance.
- 2. Measuring the competency profiles of entrants and the organizational competency profiles** –In this case, there is no need to develop a new measurement procedure, since the Basic Competence Examination test system is already available, but at the same time, it would be necessary to introduce the use of this test system, and with the help of it, both the competence profiles of new careers and the organizational competence expectations can be measured more accurately.
- 3. Measuring the relationship between career motivation and staying in the career of university students** –With the career motivation survey of NKE ÁNTK students, I was only able to reveal the correlations between motivational modes and interest in the public administration career, but I did not collect data on how the motivational modes affect the actual career retention. Based on the background in the literature, it can be assumed that highly motivated students stay in the field the most, but the verification of this hypothesis would require further investigations. It would also be worthwhile to expand the circle of participants, and to assess the motivation of students from other universities for a career in public administration.

**Follow-up of the mentoring pilot program** –In my dissertation, I examined the results of the mentoring program based on the satisfaction measurement and the mentoring diary. Thus, the relevant research results were generated during or immediately after the mentoring, so I did not get an idea of the long-term effects of the mentoring. However, to prove the real success of the program, it would be necessary to see how the careers of the employees participating in the pilot program developed. It would be good to know to what extent they found their way into the public administration, how many are still in the organizations, and how they judge the effects of the program afterwards. Therefore, it is worth carrying out a follow-up study involving the mentors and mentees participating in the pilot, the experiences of which could be incorporated into the development of the program.

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