

JOB SATISFACTION AMONGST PUBLIC EMPLOYEES WORKING WITHIN TAX ADMINISTRATIONS: ANALYZING THE CASE OF SPAIN

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Abstract. This article entails an analysis of the satisfaction with which the human resources in the employ of the Spanish tax administration carry out their work, offering the results of an empirical study grounded on the results of a survey taking in 1401 employees. The results indicate that these employees do not feel valued in their workplace, define their career expectations as unfulfilled and display very little initiative in terms of the tasks they carry out. However, they are aware of the objectives to be met and possess a certain degree of autonomy when engaged in their job. On a general level, employees within the Spanish tax administration are unsatisfied with the tasks they perform, which negatively impacts the fulfillment of the ends pursued.

JEL classification: J24, J28, H20

Key Words: job satisfaction, motivation, tax agency, tax revenue, survey methods, public administration.

1. Introduction

At the international level, tax administrations present varied organizational approaches, as they perform different operations and duties, design distinct policies for action and establish their own priorities, whether on account of their own basic principles or as a result of the influence of the political sphere. Nevertheless, intensive use of a workforce is a common element within all of these administrations, whereby expenditure in salaries is extremely high in relation to overall costs. This expenditure accounts for between 60% and 85% of the budgets they are allocated for the performance of their duties. Indeed, of the 40 countries analyzed in Table 1, 35 fall within this range. Argentina and Switzerland evidence a higher budgetary percentage allocated to salaries, at 94.17% and 90.6%, respectively, whilst the lowest portions of expenditure in this area are found in Cyprus, Slovakia and Singapore.

The direct salary costs borne by these administrations may be conditioned by the tasks they carry out (entailing one or all of the following: the management of internal taxes, customs duties and social contributions), the performance of functions beyond the sphere of taxation (social welfare, customs) and as a result of subcontracting and the provision of their services by institutions that do not pertain to the tax administration (Italy, Chile and Sweden, with regards recovery proceedings). All of this hinders

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comparison in homogenous terms and may undermine the information on the portion of overall expenses accounted for by salary costs presented in Table 1. Nevertheless, it is clear that human resources account for a large amount of the expenditure incurred in the task of managing and collecting taxes, irrespective of the bodies that assume these roles or the manner in which they are performed.

Table 1- Costs within Tax Administration and Surveys of Personnel in the Employ of Tax Administrations in the Selected Countries

Countries analyzed	Salary expenditure/ Total costs (%)	Periodic internal surveys on personnel satisfaction	Countries analyzed	Salary expenditure /Total costs (%)	Periodic internal surveys on personnel satisfaction
GERMANY	83.26	X	JAPAN	80.13	X
ARGENTINA	94.17	X	LATVIA	61.54	-
AUSTRALIA	71.28	X	LUXEMBOURG	81.77	X
AUSTRIA	82.02	X	MALAYSIA	67.27	X
BELGIUM	81.63	-	MALTA	64.43	-
BULGARIA	75.97	X	MEXICO	82.43	X
CANADA	82.96	X	N. ZEALAND	63.01	X
CHILE	78.07	X	NORWAY	63.06	X
CYPRUS	10.68	X	NETHERLANDS	63.97	X
KOREA	66.48	X	POLAND	71.85	X
DENMARK	68.48	X	PORTUGAL	79.37	X
USA	71.55	X	UK	61.24	X
SLOVENIA	68.21	X	CZECH REP.	78.67	X
SPAIN	66.89	-	SLOVAKIA.	49.64	X
ESTONIA	74.8	X	ROMANIA	76.58	-
FINLAND	65.16	X	SINGAPORE	57.91	X
FRANCE	79.13	X	S.AFRICA	60.87	X
HUNGARY	79.98	X	SWEDEN	69.65	X
IRELAND	71.51	X	SWITZERLAND	90.6	X
ITALY	69.49	X	TURKEY	68.45	-

Source: OECD (2008). Drawn up by the author.

In terms of the fulfillment of objectives, human resources represent the main asset of tax administrations. Therefore, the study of salary mechanisms, the design of professional careers, employee motivation and the division and coordination of labor become requisite. Analyzing these areas proves very useful in terms of providing efficient responses that contribute to improved performance in all tasks and, thereby, optimal results. As the sphere of operation of these administrations is tax collection, their role determines the extent to which a given government will achieve the objectives it has established.

Moreover, amongst the goals set by the majority of advanced tax administrations, taxpayer satisfaction when dealing with the institution is widespread and, to this end,

motivating personnel is a determining factor to ensure that their duties are performed correctly. An employee's level of commitment, the dedication and pride with which they carry out their work, are consequences of job satisfaction. A smile from the individual charged with managing our public finances is not incompatible with tax payment (Onrubia, 2010).

With regards to the quantitative results afforded by these administrations, the effective application of tax regulation is dependent upon the optimization of all resources utilized. The level of efficiency attained by the tax administration in terms of its objectives is, to an extent, determined by the degree of efficiency evidenced within its organizational behavior (Onrubia, 2010). Where organization proves ineffective, it can undermine fiscal policy (Faría & Yucelik, 1995), given that the manner in which the tax system is managed has bearing on its efficiency and, indeed, its capacity to collect (Rubio, 2010).

In short, a tax system should not be considered solely in terms of the structure of taxation or the quantification of taxable events, but rather, must also be approached with a view to the efficiency and efficacy of the tax administration charged with overseeing it (Jiménez and Barrilao, 2001). As the main asset of these administrations is the personnel of which they are composed, the results they offer will, to a large extent, depend upon the motivational levels of their human resources.

2. Review of the empirical literature

Whilst numerous studies are available on the culture, working environment and behavior of organizations at a general level, research of this nature in the context of tax administrations remains very scant.

To date, the majority of existing studies have examined the behavior and approaches of the various tax administrations in terms of the taxpayer (James et al., 2001), in many cases measuring the degree of satisfaction of users with regards to the service received. However, studies have failed to address the attitudes and perceptions of the personnel within these administrations towards their work, including, amongst other factors, job satisfaction. This reveals a clear shortcoming in this area, given that, as Mikesell (1974) pointed out, the success or failure of a tax system is dependent upon the administrative procedure employed and the capacity of employees to carry it out.

The efficiency of a tax administration requires trained and capacitated human resources (Jenkins et al. 2000) with motivation. In the same vein, attention has been drawn to the fact that the personnel within tax administrations are a determining factor within the fulfillment of proposed objectives and have bearing on efficacy and efficiency (Schlemenson, 1992), whereby, motivation, efficiency and responsibility are important in terms of the proper functioning of these organizations (Frampton, 1993). Any reform seeking to improve the results offered must attempt to solve the problems of employees, where they exist (Silvani & Baer, 1997). The attitudes and perceptions of high-ranking employees within tax administrations can have a significant effect on efficiency and effectiveness and therefore require study (James et al. 2006), despite the fact that this factor is normally left unaddressed in the analysis of performance indicators.

As we have seen, analyses of the efficiency of Public Administrations are frequent within the literature. More specifically, in terms of tax administrations, a number of

authors have carried out an analysis of efficiency employing data envelopment analysis: Barrilao & Villar (2013), Jiménez & Barrilao (2001), González & Miles (2000), Katharaki & Tsakas (2010), Barros (2007), Moesen & Persoon (2002), Forsund et al. (2005) and Thirtle et al. (2000), amongst others.

However, as stated above, very few empirical studies have focused on the attitudes of the personnel within tax administrations (see Table 2). Emphasis appears to have been placed on analyses focusing on aspects such as commitment and the work system (Tayib, 1998); appraisal, commitment and the work system (Manaf et al., 2004); employee perception of the tax collection process (James et al. 2006; Rani & Arora, 2011); motivation in relation to the economic incentives offered (Bertelli, 2006); and the correlation between organizational culture, employee stress level and employee job satisfaction (Mansor & Tayib, 2010).

Table 2- Empirical analysis of the working environment within tax administrations

Reference	Country	Surveyed Sample	Methodology
Rani, V. & Arora, R.S. (2011)	India	250 employees	Simple frequencies, chi-squared test, Kendall's tau coefficient, etc.
Mansor, M. & Tayib, M (2010)	Malaysia	250 employees	Frequencies, weighted mean and Spearman's rank correlation coefficient.
James, S., Svetalekh, T. & Wright, B. (2006)	Thailand	1175 employees	ANOVA test
Bertelli, A.M. (2006)	USA	1058 employees	Simple linear regression and interquartile regression.

Source: Drawn up by the author

More specifically, Rani and Arora (2011) analyzed the functioning of the tax administration in India and discovered that the majority of employees were satisfied in terms of their working conditions and the physical space in which they performed their daily duties. The work of Mansor & Tayib (2010) reaches the conclusion that determining the appropriate organizational culture for any nature of institution is a difficult process, given the differences in form adopted and tasks carried out, whilst insisting on the need to implement programs and action aimed at reducing employee stress levels and increasing job satisfaction. In their study, they demonstrated that the satisfaction of personnel within tax administrations in Malaysia is negatively correlated with framework. Indeed, their findings coincide with the results of numerous studies all evidencing that an excessively hierarchized framework has an adverse effect on employee attitude, whereby a management model based on human relations and teamwork is to be adopted (Wallach, 1983; Kratina, 1990; Brewer, 1993; Trice & Beyer, 1993; Brewer, 1994; Krausz et al., 1995; London & Larsen, 1999; Lok & In relation to the impact of economic incentives on employee satisfaction, Bertelli (2006) discovered that, within the US tax administration, the intrinsic motivation of employees as a result of such measures was greater amongst subordinates in comparison with supervisors. In this sense, Mansor & Tayib (2010) indicated that the greatest cause of stress amongst personnel within tax administrations is the result of uncertainty regarding the criteria to be employed to evaluate and confer a salary increase or promotion, giving rise to a reduction of job satisfaction. For her part, Ott

(1998), analyzing the Croatian tax agency, drew attention to the fact that this administration is characterized by offering employees low salaries, significantly lower than those offered within the private sector. As a result, highly qualified workers are not attracted by these positions and the situation also represents a significant cause of corruption amongst personnel within the tax administration, characterized by a high degree of discretion, thereby giving rise to high levels of employee dissatisfaction.

As a result, motivation and job satisfaction, in all organizations, including tax agencies, represent the cornerstone that, to a large extent, determines the success of the organization in question. Tax administrations are prone to various shortcomings, particularly those arising as a result of budgetary restrictions. However, efficient management of human resources can have a positive impact on objective fulfillment, whereby the motivation with which the employee faces the performance of his or her duties becomes a determining factor.

The most common method of measuring personnel satisfaction levels within tax administrations is via surveys that, through the use of a questionnaire, gauge the attitude of employees towards their work. In Table 1, amongst the OECD and selected non-OECD countries it can be observed that 34 countries carry out periodic internal surveying to measure employee satisfaction levels; however, six of these countries do not perform internal surveys of any nature: Belgium, Spain, Latvia, Malta, Romania and Turkey.

Given that the Spanish tax administration has not engaged in any initiatives to measure personnel satisfaction, this paper offers the results of an empirical study based on a survey taking in 1401 employees within this body that focuses on the various factors that have bearing on employee satisfaction, such as the promotion of initiative within the workplace, awareness of objectives, autonomy in the performance of duties and the fulfillment of job prospects, amongst others, all of which are very closely linked to the achievement of goals within any tax administration. Below, we provide a brief description of the context of the Spanish tax administration, before moving on to the analysis of the results obtained via the survey.

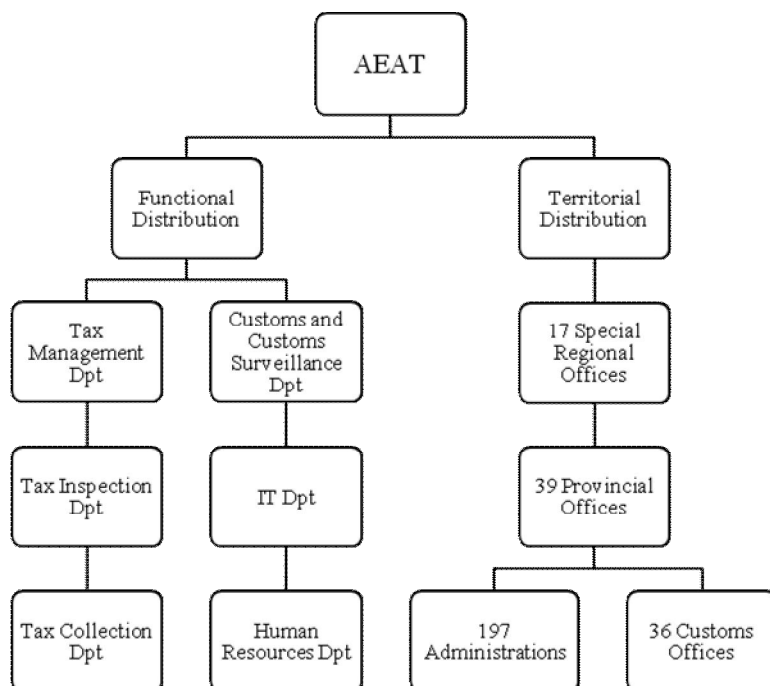
3. The Spanish tax administration

Since 1992, the Spanish State has boasted its own specific, quasi-autonomous body, distinguished from the remainder of the General State Administration: the State Agency for Tax Administration (AEAT or Tax Agency), charged with the integrated management of the state tax and customs system, a task that entails a wide range of activities and functions. The Agency manifests itself as a body charged exclusively with the management of the tax system, in its entirety (excluding social security contributions), whilst lacking any powers in terms of its design (Gaitero, 1991). Forming a part of the Central Public Administration, the AEAT nevertheless exists as a legal entity in its own right and enjoys a certain degree of autonomy in terms of budgetary matters and personnel expenditure, thereby enabling us to classify it as a quasi-autonomous body that is a dependency of a Ministry. One of the peculiarities of this body, in contrast to the remainder of administrations, is that it selects personnel via a process focused on specialization that is comparatively rigorous and demanding.

The organization of the AEAT is grounded on a functional model (rather than a model centered on the taxpayer) ordered into the following operative functional areas: tax

management, financial and tax inspection, tax collection, customs and excise, IT department and the department of human resources, complemented by several support structures, such as the legal service, the financial management service, the fiscal and statistical studies service and the planning and institutional relations service (Figure 1). Within its territorial distribution, we find central services, which coordinate functions, and peripheral services that are provided in offices scattered throughout Spain; a) the so-called Special Regional Offices, with a sphere of operation that coincides with the Autonomous Community; b) the Provincial Offices; and c) Administrations, found in municipalities with a determined number of taxpayers.

Figure 1- Organigram of the Spanish State Agency for Tax Administration.



Source: Drawn up by the author. Data obtained from the Annual Report of the Tax Administration (2011)

On the 31st of December 2011, total AEAT employees rose to 27,613 (of which 47% were men and 53% women), with an average age of 48.61 years old. In terms of their distribution, 2692 employees were posted within the central services and 24,921, in the peripheral services. With regards functional division, the departments that accounted for the highest personnel numbers were tax management, tax inspection and tax collection, accounting for 63% of AEAT employees, whilst in relation to professional categories, two large groups can be distinguished on the basis of the contractual relationship with the administration: civil servants² and contractual staff³.

² There are five professional categories within the civil service: A1, A2, C1, C2 and E. The classification is made on the basis of the qualifications required to occupy the post and the entry examinations: A1, University Degree (5 years); A2, University Degree (3 years); C1, High School Diploma; C2, Secondary School Certificate; and E, Primary Education Qualification.

4. Data collection and sample characteristics

The data employed in this analysis result from a sample of a survey entailing 1401 AEAT employees, taking in offices throughout Spain, grouped on the basis of the special office to which the employee is assigned, considering both civil servants and contractual staff. Table 3 presents the sociodemographic characteristics of the sample. Primary sampling units (grouped by Special Regional Office), secondary sampling units (functional department) and third sampling units (professional categories) were randomly selected. The employees were also selected on a random basis from amongst the various territorial offices. As a result, the type of sample employed is “non-probabilistic [and] entailing voluntary subjects” (Hernández et al. 2003), as the responses obtained were afforded by subjects who participated in the survey voluntarily.

Table 3- Sociodemographic description of the sample (N=1401)

Variable	Number	%	Variable	Number	%
Gender			Special Regional Office		
Women	771	55	Andalusia	471	33.6
Men	630	45	Aragon	44	3.1
Age			Asturias	52	3.7
18-35	162	11.6	Balearic Islands	89	6.4
36-45	333	23.8	Canary Islands	25	1.8
46-55	750	53.5	Cantabria	16	1.1
>56	156	11.1	Castile and Leon	16	1.1
Length Service (in years)			Castile-La Mancha	45	3.2
<1	27	1.9	Catalonia	290	20.7
1-4	145	10.3	Extremadura	37	2.6
5-9	86	6.1	Galicia	32	2.3
10-14	56	4	Madrid	112	8
15-19	122	8.7	Region of Murcia	45	3.2
20-24	298	21.3	La Rioja	7	0.5
25-29	472	33.7	Valencian comm.	120	8.6
30-34	94	6.7			
35-39	86	6.1	Professional Category		
>40	15	1.1	Civil Servants		
Department			Group A1 y A2	213	15.2
Tax Management	561	40	Group C1	712	50.8
Tax Inspection	138	9.9	Group C2 y E	408	29.1
Tax Collection	386	27.6			
Customs	73	5.2	Professional Category		
IT	69	4.9	Contractual Staff		
Human Resources	140	10	Group I-III	22	1.6
CustomsSurveillance	34	2.4	Group IV	28	2
			Group V	18	1.3

As a result, the type of sample employed is “non-probabilistic [and] entailing voluntary subjects” (Hernández et al. 2003), as the responses obtained were afforded by subjects who participated in the survey voluntarily. The survey was distributed in person

³ Contractual staff are also organized into five professional categories: I, II, III, IV, and V. The classification is made on the basis of the qualifications required to occupy the post and the entry examinations: I, University Degree (5 years); II, University Degree (3 years); III, High School Diploma; IV, Secondary School Certificate; and V, Primary Education Qualification. These employees enter into an employment contract, normally permanent in nature, but at times temporary.

through the collaboration of UCESHA⁴ (the trade union for group-C civil servants within the treasury), which agreed to distribute the survey to all employees, irrespective of their professional classification.

As Table 3 shows, the sample includes public employees of all ages, where employees within the age range of 46 to 55 years of age account for more than half of the total (53.5%), whilst distribution according to gender proves fairly homogenous. The most representative length of time served at a post is between 25 and 29 years, accounting for 33.7% of the sample, whereas with regards to professional category, group C1, amongst civil servants, takes in over 50% of the sample. In terms of geographical distribution, the survey was conducted in all Special Regional Offices in Spain, with the exception of those found in the Basque Country and Navarre, which due to their specific configuration, occupy a very small dimension, in comparison with the remainder.

5. Measures of the variables and Results

In order to obtain the required information, the technique of a field study, via the drawing up of a questionnaire gauging the satisfaction of public employees within the tax agency, was employed. The questionnaire is defined as “subjective methodological tool” that is widespread when carrying out field studies relating to knowledge of a socio-occupational environment, where the subjects themselves provide responses on their own personal perception of the factors analyzed. A questionnaire featuring a Likert Scale was used, wherein the measures of the different variables under study take on values of between 1 and 5, 1 representing an attitude of strong disagreement with the statement proposed and 5, the opposite extreme, strong agreement. In order to analyze satisfaction levels amongst the employees of the tax agency, seven items were identified, as indicated in Table 4, which provide a summary of the main statistics associated with these items.

To test the internal consistency of the analyzed variables, Cronbach’s alpha was employed, affording a value of 0.875, fairly close to 1, and therefore indicative of the reliability of the scale.

The item with the highest mean value is that which affirms that AEAT employees exercise autonomy when carrying out their work, with a mean score of 3.24. In contrast, the lowest value is recorded in relation to the fulfillment of job prospects, as corroborated by the mode, which may be indicative of deficiencies within internal promotion.

With the aim of affording more consistency and clarity to the results, the responses were grouped according to polarity: negative responses (in disagreement), indifferent responses (neither agreeing nor disagreeing) and positive responses (in agreement). Figure 2 shows the results for each factor within the survey, in accordance with the proposed groupings. As we can see, the factor that occasions the greatest negative

⁴ The trade union UCESHA and the authors signed a collaboration agreement whereby the trade union delivered all questionnaires, employing its own means or those delegated to it, obtaining permission, where necessary, from the institution to which it pertains.

impact on overall job satisfaction is a failure to see job prospects realized (61% of survey respondents), followed by personal initiative within the workplace (55%). This places the employee before a professional future that affords little hope in terms of progression, whilst he or she remains in a present wherein personal skills and aptitudes are not promoted with a view to improved performance, which may account for the 47% of survey respondents who do not feel that their work is valued, or the fact that a third (35%) of employees are dissatisfied, in general, with their work.

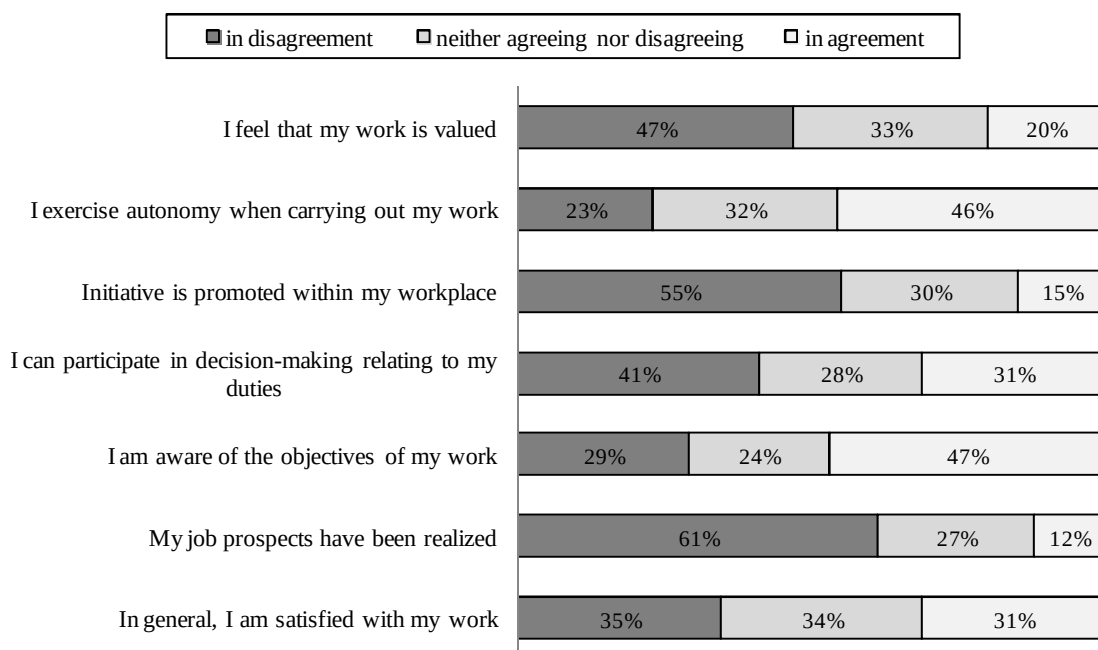
Table 4- Items determining job satisfaction amongst AEAT employees

All items were measured using a 5 point Likert type scale
(1=strong disagreement, 5=strong agreement)

<i>Item Description</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Mode</i>	<i>St. Dev.</i>	<i>Skewness</i>	<i>Kurtosis</i>	<i>Cronbach</i>
1.- I feel that my work is valued	2.55	3	1.076	0.103	-0.827	
2.- I exercise autonomy when carrying out my work	3.24	4	1.079	-0.415	-0.438	
3.- Initiative is promoted within my workplace	2.34	3	1.098	0.362	-0.701	
4.- I can participate in decision-making relating to my duties	2.76	3	1.190	-0.036	-1.037	
5.- I am aware of the objectives of my work	3.20	4	1.249	-0.324	-0.911	
6.- My job prospects have been realized	2.19	1	1.072	0.496	-0.650	
7.- In general, I am satisfied with my work.	2.86	3	1.109	-0.175	-0.791	
Factors linked to satisfaction (1-7)						0.875

In contrast, the variables that had a positive impact on employee satisfaction with the greatest intensity, were, on the one hand, awareness of the objectives to be fulfilled within the position (47%) and, on the other hand, autonomy in the performance of duties (46%), which can be a positive element, given the high training levels of the personnel in this institution. With regards to the final factor, entailing an overall appraisal of employee satisfaction, no more than approximately a third of employees acknowledged satisfaction, on a general level, with their work

Below, Table 5 presents a summary of the correlation of the different variables with regards to each of the items proposed in the sample, with particular focus on those variables that prove of greatest significance in accordance with Pearson's chi-squared test and the corresponding asymptotic bilateral significance. A total of six factors came under study; gender, age, length of service, the department, the office and professional category. The results show that length of service and age are that factors that have the greatest influence on the variables that determine the general appraisal of job satisfaction amongst employees within the tax agency.

Figure 2- Graphic analysis of subjective evaluations

Source: Drawn up by the author.

Table 5- Intercorrelations

Pearson's chi-squared test (asymptotic bilateral sig.)	Gender	Age	Length of Service	Department	Office	Professional Category
1.- Evaluation	2.136 (0.344)	8.316 (0.216)	29.468 (0.043*)	15.778 (0.202)	23.881 (0.688)	7.814 (0.647)
2.- Autonomy	0.365 (0.833)	15.917 (0.014*)	16.700 (0.544)	12.307 (0.421)	40.164 (0.064)	14.462 (0.153)
3.- Initiative	12.098 (0.002*)	10.973 (0.089)	31.651 (0.024*)	24.246 (0.019*)	48.529 (0.009*)	11.319 (0.333)
4.- Participation	12.622 (0.002*)	20.307 (0.002*)	37.957 (0.004*)	37.045 (0.000*)	47.421 (0.012*)	27.513 (0.002*)
5.- Objectives	1.316 (0.518)	7.918 (0.244)	19.596 (0.356)	34.145 (0.001*)	37.313 (0.112)	8.109 (0.618)
6.- Prospects	5.050 (0.080)	24.387 (0.000*)	36.777 (0.006*)	8.422 (0.751)	24.964 (0.630)	17.775 (0.059)
7.- General Satisfaction	13.350 (0.001*)	12.370 (0.054)	36.374 (0.006*)	18.399 (0.104)	36.627 (0.127)	5.714 (0.839)

*The chi-squared statistic is significant at 0.05.

On the basis of the conclusions offered in Table 5, the following observations can be drawn:

I) In relation to the first factor analyzed, the perception of being valued on the part of AEAT employees, only 20% of the employees are in agreement, whilst 47% are in

disagreement. Length of service is the only variable that can be identified as significant, predominating, in practically all instances, a stance of disagreement. The highest percentages in this regard are found amongst employees whose length of service ranges between 5 and 19 years, wherein over 50% disagree with the statement. It is significant that the lowest percentages of disagreement in relation to the evaluation of work are found amongst those employees with the shortest and longest length of service in the organization: 22% of employees with a length of service of less than one year and slightly less than 38% of employees with thirty-five or more years of service disagree with the affirmation. However, the factors that might have bearing on this behavior are different in each group. Within the first group, sufficient time has not elapsed to enable the employees to be aware of the manner in which their work is perceived. They have entered the organization following years of effort and preparation and having passed demanding examinations and they are in a phase of celebrating the fulfillment of the objective of arriving where they wanted to be. In the case of the second group, workers with many years of experience are no longer concerned with objective appraisals of the work they perform and, as a result of their stable position, society has afforded them a status that causes them to value the post they occupy more highly.

II) With regards to the existence of autonomy within the workplace, 46% of employees feel that their work entails a certain degree of autonomy. In contrast, 23% hold the opposite to be true. Within this item, age is the only significant factor: young people, aged between 18 and 35 years of age, and older people, over 56 years of age, show a greater incidence of agreement in terms of the possession of discretionary power when carrying out their duties, reporting percentages of 52% and 54% in agreement, respectively. Once again, as occurred in the case of the previous item, we find polarity within the behavior that shows coinciding perceptions amongst the youngest and oldest employees and those with the longest and shortest length of service, although, as stated above, the factors contributing to this situation in each case are distinct.

III) In terms of the promotion of personal initiative within the workplace, on average, 55% do not agree that this is the case, whilst 15% agree with the statement. Within this item, gender, length of service, the department and the office are the significant variables.

With regards to gender, 51% of women and 60% of men do not believe that the promotion of initiative within the workplace occurs within the AEAT. In relation to length of service, it can be observed that as years of service increase, the employee perceives a greater degree of initiative within the workplace. In terms of the functional department to which the employee is assigned, it can be affirmed that within Human Resources, a department with more controlled and monotonous procedures, we find the highest numbers of employees who feel that they exercise initiative within the workplace (20%). IT, a non-operational department, reports the lowest percentage in this sense (10%). Amongst the operational departments, which come into direct contact with the taxpayer, perceptions with regards to this item range between the 16.4% of Customs and Excise and the 12.8% of Tax Collection. Tax Management and Inspection, report ratios of approximately 15%. Within Customs Surveillance, a body with a certain degree of contact with taxpayers who represent a risk, specializing in the

fight against drug trafficking and smuggling, only 11.8% of employees feel that they exercise initiative within the workplace.

Finally, analysis according to special territorial office reveals that significant differences do exist between AEAT employees depending upon their location within the Autonomous Communities into which the Spanish State is politically structured. Attention should be drawn to the special territorial offices of Galicia, La Rioja, the Canary Islands and Castile and León, where we find the highest incidence of perceived failure to promote initiative (where more than 70% of employees disagree with the statement), as opposed to the Autonomous Community of Valencia, where we find the highest degree of the promotion of initiative within the workplace, according to 23% of the employees.

IV) With regards to employee participation in decision-making relating to their duties, where only 31% agree with the statement, whilst 41% disagree, the six items under analysis proved significant.

In terms of gender, 37% of women and 46% of men held that they did not participate in decision-making relating to their work. An analysis of age indicates that as it increases, we witness less participation in decision-making relating to duties. Thus, young employees (between 18 and 35 years old) are the group that reports the highest levels of agreement with the statement: 41% are in agreement. They are followed by employees aged between 36 and 45 years old (33%) and those over 56 years of age (31%). The age bracket wherein the lowest number of employees are in agreement is formed by those aged between 46 and 55 years old. This inverse relationship between age and perceived participation in the workplace is also true for length of service, which might be explained by the fact that as employees become older, they become aware of the manner in which they have failed to participate in possible changes that they hold to be necessary within their daily duties in order to improve results.

The Department variable behaves in a similar manner to Initiative within the workplace. In the support departments Human Resources and IT, we find the extreme positions within this item, with 40% of employees in the former expressing agreement and 54% in the latter expressing disagreement. With regards to operational departments, Management is where we observe a highest degree of participation in duties, with 34.3% of employees affirming agreement, whilst Inspection is at the opposite end of this scale, with 19.2%. It is surprising that in a department that interprets, analyses and makes decisions in relation to undeclared taxable events, the employee has little participation in decision-making relating to duties.

With regards to the special territorial offices, those that afford the highest degree of participation to employees in decision-making are Asturias and Castile and León, whilst those reporting the lowest participation levels are Galicia, Castile-La Mancha and La Rioja.

Finally, in terms of professional category, given the hierarchical structure of the organization's organigram, the data afforded appears normal and in keeping with a system of this nature. Clear postures exist amongst civil servants, wherein the highest levels of participation in decision-making relating to duties are found within those groups that occupy the highest hierarchical positions, whilst the opposite is true for those occupying lower levels within the scale.

V) Within the fifth variable, awareness of the objectives to be fulfilled within the workplace, we find the highest percentage of employees who are in agreement with the

statement. As Figure 2 shows, 47% of the employees surveyed affirm that they are aware of the objectives associated with their post, whilst 29% state the opposite. Amongst the various factors analyzed, Department is the only factor that proved significant. Thus, it becomes clear that the Tax Inspection, Collection and Management departments (accounting for over 60% of AEAT personnel) are those reporting the highest degree of a lack of awareness of the objectives to be carried out within the workplace. The department of Human Resources presents the lowest levels of employees affirming awareness of the objectives to be fulfilled.

VI) The fulfillment of career prospects and expectations is the factor reporting the highest degree of disagreement with the statement on the part of employees (61%, whilst only 12% are in agreement), wherein the impact of age and length of service proves particularly strong. In each age bracket, we observe that approximately 60% of the employees express disagreement. With regards length of service, we find that the most dissatisfied employees, in terms of the fulfillment of career expectations, are those who have been in the employ of the AEAT for the longest periods (in the case of employees with more than 40 years of service, the figure rises to 87%). Logically, employees with the shortest length of service (less than 1 year) are those that report the highest levels of agreement with the statement (30%), in all likelihood due to the fact that they are in an incipient stage of professional development and hope to obtain promotion in the short or medium-term. The percentage of dissatisfaction with career expectations decreases as length of service falls, reaching levels of less than 50% amongst employees with service of 4 years or less, whereby we can identify a clear and worrying inverse relationship between length of service and the fulfillment of career prospects and expectations.

VII) Finally, with regards to the variable that presents an overall view of the general level of satisfaction within the workplace (35% of the employees surveyed evidenced general dissatisfaction in contrast to 31% who maintained that they were, in general, satisfied), the items gender and length of service prove significant, as evidenced in Table 5. In terms of differences within the gender variable, the percentage of women who are satisfied with their job rises to 35%, in contrast to 27% in the case of men, whilst 31% of women are, in general, dissatisfied at work as opposed to 39% of men. Furthermore, an analysis of the Length of service variable evidences two extremes: those who have been working in the AEAT for the shortest period (less than 1 year) and those who have been working for the longest period (more than 40 years of experience), as 50% and 40%, respectively, of the respondents in these groups are in agreement with regards to this item. The lowest levels of satisfaction associated with length of service are found in the brackets of 10-14 and 15-19 years of service, reporting percentages of 25% and 23%, respectively.

6. Conclusions

Tax administrations make intensive use of the work factor, whereby salary costs are very high in relation to overall expenditure. Human resources represent the main asset of these organizations in terms of the fulfillment of objectives, whereby employee motivation determines proper performance of duties, in relation to which very few studies exist.

The most common method of gauging the satisfaction of employees within tax administrations is via surveys, which employ a questionnaire to assess the attitude of

the employee with regards to his or her work. Amongst the administrations that do not employ surveys of this nature, we find the Spanish tax agency. Therefore, this paper offers the results of an empirical study based on a survey conducted on 1401 AEAT employees, addressing different factors that influence employee motivation, such as the promotion of initiative within the workplace, awareness of objectives, autonomy within the workplace and the fulfillment of career prospects and expectations, amongst others, which have a strong bearing on the Agency's objectives.

The results presented suggest that employees within the Spanish tax administration do not feel valued in their workplace, particularly those with a length of service of between 5 and 19 years. Moreover, these employees do not feel that their career prospects and expectations have been realized, particularly those who have worked longest in the agency. As a third negative point, they hold that their work provides little opportunity for the exercise of initiative, although this perception diminishes as length of service increases. However, employees within the tax agency are aware of the objectives that they are to fulfill in the workplace and do enjoy a certain degree of autonomy.

With regards to participation in decision-making, as the personnel exist within a hierarchical structure, a direct relationship is established: greater decision-making powers for higher ranked employees and the opposite. Nevertheless, an inverse relationship is observed in terms of age and the perception of participation in the workplace and the same holds true in relation to length of service.

In terms of territorial distribution, in the special regional offices in Galicia, La Rioja, the Canary Islands and Castile and León, a failure to promote initiative in the workplace is evidenced, in contrast to the case of the Autonomous Community of Valencia. Those Autonomous Communities that afford employees the greatest degree of participation in decision making are Asturias and Castile and León, whilst Galicia, Castile-La Mancha and La Rioja report the lowest levels of participation.

With regards to functional distribution, attention is drawn to the fact that the Tax Inspection, Collection and Management departments (accounting for more than 60% of AEAT personnel) report the highest levels of lack of awareness of the objectives to be fulfilled within the workplace. In contrast, the Human Resources department reports the highest percentages of workers who affirm that they are aware of the objectives to be met at work.

In short, 35% of the employees are generally dissatisfied with their job, compared to 31% who express satisfaction, whilst the remaining third provide an ambiguous response. These results show a considerable lack of motivation on the part of employees, which entails a significant detrimental impact on objective fulfillment within the Spanish tax administration. On the one hand, this gives rise to inefficient use of resources to combat tax fraud and, on the other, a negative perception of this administration on the part of the taxpayer, thereby contributing to a decrease of voluntary tax payment. Thus, low satisfaction levels amongst employees within the tax administration produces a reduction in the fiscal revenue that is required to finance public expenditure in Spain.

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