

Case study

PERCEPTIONS OF EMPLOYEE MOTIVATION AND ITS ROLE IN WORK EFFICIENCY: A QUALITATIVE CASE STUDY IN THE BASIC COURT OF PRISTINA

Besard Belegu and Lavdim Terziu*

ABSTRACT

Background: Kosovo's judicial system has undergone ongoing legal reforms and improvements in infrastructure. However, despite these efforts, overall performance remains a significant challenge for public institutions, highlighting the need to examine factors influencing institutional efficiency. Among these, employee motivation is particularly significant due to its direct impact on the daily operations of the judicial system.

While international academic literature widely acknowledges the crucial role of employee motivation in institutional performance, this study specifically investigates how employees at the Basic Court of Prishtina perceive motivation as influencing their work efficiency.

Methods: The research draws on findings from semi-structured interviews with court employees and compares these perceptions with published official data on institutional efficiency.

DOI:

<https://doi.org/10.33327/AJEE-18-8.4-c000128>

Date of submission: 04 Jun 2025

Date of acceptance: 27 Aug 2025

Last Publication: 18 Nov 2025

Disclaimer:

The authors declare that the opinions and views expressed in this manuscript are free from any influence of any organization.

Copyright:

© 2025 Besard Belegu
and Lavdim Terziu

Results and Conclusions: *The analysis reveals the absence of sustainable mechanisms for fostering employee motivation within the Basic Court of Prishtina. Continuous reforms have not yielded the expected outcomes, mainly due to the predominance of a bureaucratic culture within the institution. Findings from this study closely align with the international academic literature and Public Service Motivation (PSM) theory, which posits that motivation is not merely a matter of financial compensation but is strongly linked to recognition, inclusion, and opportunities for professional development.*

Findings from this research underscore the need for reforms that consider the human and cultural dimensions of public institutions, offering practical recommendations for establishing an effective, long-term motivation system within the judicial system.

1 INTRODUCTION

Employee motivation has long been a key subject in studies related to public management and administration and has been extensively examined by classical theorists, including Maslow (1943), Adams (1963), Vroom (1964), and Lock & Latham (1990).¹ These theories offer different perspectives on motivation and factors that foster it within organisations, focusing on individual needs, expectations, perceptions of fairness, and goal setting. In public institutions, motivation plays a critical role in ensuring institutional effectiveness because, besides affecting the operational performance of the institution, it also shapes the development of its trust and integrity.²

Various studies have shown that policies designed to enhance employee motivation have a direct impact on work efficiency and play a fundamental role in organisational success.³ Leadership strategies, organisational culture, and communication dynamics are considered the most significant factors in enhancing employee productivity and performance due to their contribution to creating a positive work environment.⁴ Therefore, motivation is

- 1 Abraham H Maslow, 'A Theory of Human Motivation' (1943) 50(4) Psychological Review 370. doi:10.1037/h0054346; John Stacy Adams, 'Toward an Understanding of Inequity' (1963) 67 Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology 422. doi:10.1037/h0040968; Victor H Vroom, *Work and Motivation* (Wiley and Sons 1964); Edwin A Locke and Gary P Latham, *A Theory of Goal Setting and Task Performance* (Prentice Hall 1990).
- 2 Christopher Pollitt and Geert Bouckaert, *Public Management Reform: A Comparative Analysis – Into the Age of Austerity* (4th edn, OUP 2017).
- 3 Gayane Tovmasyan and Diana Minasyan, 'The Impact of Motivation on Work Efficiency for Both Employers and Employees also During COVID-19 Pandemic: Case Study from Armenia' (2020) 4(3) *Business Ethics and Leadership* 25. Doi:10.21272/bel.4(3).25-35.2020.
- 4 Sarwar Khawaja and Hengameh Karimi, 'Exploring Factors Influencing Work Productivity: A Qualitative Case Study of Employee Motivation and Leadership Practices' (2024) 8(4) *Edelweiss Applied Science and Technology* 727. doi:10.55214/25768484.v8i4.1451.

regarded as a primary driver of organisational growth and development, as motivated employees demonstrate better performance and greater engagement in their daily tasks.⁵

In Kosovo, salary increases for civil servants have been used as a strategy to combat corruption and promote institutional accountability. However, a 2024 report by the Kosovo Justice Institute argues that the absence of well-established performance evaluation systems, collective agreements, and social dialogue has considerably constrained the impact of these measures. In the absence of these elements, a traditional administrative culture continues to dominate, often creating a demotivating and insecure environment for public sector employees. These concerns have been confirmed by the European Commission's 2023 Report on Kosovo and are further supported by studies analysing the challenges of public administration reforms in the context of European integration.⁶

The theory of Public Service Motivation (PSM) argues that the motivation of public servants is not limited to material incentives but also by the desire to contribute to the common good and serve society with integrity. In contrast, a study by Tovmasyan and Minasyan (2020) shows that employees in the public sector value more material incentives, such as salary, bonuses, and health insurance, compared to non-material incentives, including career advancement, workplace atmosphere, flexible working hours, and training opportunities.⁷

Considering these two opposing theoretical approaches and the specific challenges in the context of Kosovo, this study aims to explore how employees at the Basic Court of Prishtina perceive motivation and its role in enhancing work efficiency. Accordingly, the research question guiding this work is: What are the perceptions of employees regarding the role of motivation in enhancing work efficiency?

This study aims to:

1. Identify the main factors that influence employee motivation within the Basic Court of Prishtina.
2. Analyse employees' perceptions of the relationship between motivation and their work efficiency.
3. Compare employees' perceptions with official data on the court's institutional performance.

5 Doreen Tsotsoo Ashai and others, 'Motivation and its influence on task performance in a workplace: A study of Access Bank Ghana' (2023) 7(1) *European Journal of Human Resource Management Studies* 163. doi:10.46827/ejhrms.v7i1.1577.

6 European Commission, 'Kosovo 2023 Report' SWD(2023) 692 final (8 November 2023) <<https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:52023SC0692>> accessed 4 June 2025; Artan Fejzullahu and Besard Belegu, 'The Challenges of Public Administration Reforms in Kosovo in the Context of Eurointegration Process' (2022) 8(1) *Journal of Liberty and International Affairs* 292. doi:10.47305/JLIA2281292f.

7 Tovmasyan and Minasyan (n 3).

2 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

2.1. Research Design

The methodology of this study is primarily based on the qualitative approach. However, in order to ensure a more comprehensive framework, quantitative data from official sources (e.g., performance report of the Kosovo Judicial Council) were utilised. The latter served to complement the qualitative analysis by enabling a comparison between the perceptions of participants and institutionally reported indicators.

2.2. Sampling and Case Selection

The Basic Court of Prishtina was selected as the case study due to its size, the complexity of its operations, and its significant institutional role in general. As the largest court in Kosovo, it deals with a large number of complex cases and faces unique organisational challenges, mainly arising from the fact that Prishtina's population includes residents from all municipalities of Kosovo. This makes it a focal point within the judicial system of Kosovo and a unique opportunity to examine the internal motivation mechanisms and performance dynamics, with implications not only for this court but for the judicial system of Kosovo as a whole.

Due to the sensitive and restricted nature of the judicial system of Kosovo and the practical difficulties in securing access to important institutional actors, only nine semi-structured interviews were conducted, comprising six men and three women. Participants were selected using purposive sampling, based on their institutional role and their relevance to the main objectives of this study.

Specifically, the sample included two members from the Kosovo Judicial Council, two judges from the civil division, and two from the criminal division at the Basic Court of Prishtina, one executive clerk, and two professional associates. This sample was deemed sufficient for this study as the experiences and perceptions of the selected participants provided extensive insights regarding the motivational factors that affect institutional efficiency.

2.3. Interview Code Explanation

To ensure confidentiality, participants were assigned unique codes of identification. These codes correspond to their institutional role and position, thus ensuring that their names and personal identities remain undisclosed. Specifically, interviews with members of the Kosovo Judicial Council were coded as 101 and 102; judges from the Civil Division as 103 and 104; judges from the Criminal Division as 105 and 106; the executive clerk as 107, and two professional associates as 108 and 109. This categorisation is useful in analysing responses according to their institutional roles and improves the clarity of results.

2.4. Data Collection Process

Data were collected using semi-structured interviews based on open-ended questions, allowing respondents to provide detailed answers. The approach was chosen to obtain deeper insights into issues such as motivation, institutional direction, and organisational challenges. Due to limited access and other institutional restrictions, the interviews were conducted via email.

The interview guide was developed with reference to the literature on employee motivation and judicial performance. The questions focused on topics such as working conditions, salaries, leadership and communication, bureaucratic culture, and suggestions for improving motivation within the judicial system.

In addition to the interviews, other official reports and statistics on the performance of the Kosovo Judicial Council were analysed. These secondary sources were used to support qualitative findings and to provide a more comprehensive framework for assessing institutional performance.

2.5. Data Analysis

Data from the interviews were analysed using thematic analysis. The process involved coding responses and identifying persistent patterns that are related to the research topic.⁸

Main themes that emerged from the responses were:

1. The impact of working conditions on motivation
2. The impact of salary on performance and motivation
3. The impact of leadership and management
4. The impact of bureaucratic culture
5. Suggestions for improvement of the motivation systems

2.6. Ethical Considerations

All participants gave their informed consent before taking part in the study. Participants' confidentiality and anonymity were safeguarded through the assignment of unique identification codes and the removal of any personally identifying information from the transcripts. Participation was voluntary, and participants had the right to withdraw from the study at any stage. Finally, all data were stored securely in password-protected files and administered in accordance with institutional guidelines for ethical research.

⁸ John W Creswell, *A Concise Introduction to Mixed Methods Research* (2nd edn, SAGE 2022).

2.7. Limitations

This study is subject to several limitations. A total of nine interviews were conducted in the Basic Court of Prishtina, a number constrained by limited staff access and the sensitivity of the institutional environment. Interviews were conducted via email, which restricted direct interaction and the opportunity for real-time clarifying questions. However, this method allowed participants more time to reflect and provide more structured answers. Quantitative data were obtained from official sources. While these data offer a general overview of institutional performance, they do not necessarily reflect personal experiences and internal dynamics that affect the efficiency of work. To ensure a more in-depth analysis of this topic, interviews were conducted to gather perceptions and experiences that are not reflected in the official data published by the institution.

3 THE IMPORTANCE OF MOTIVATION IN INSTITUTIONAL PERFORMANCE

Employee motivation is a crucial component for ensuring effective operations in public administration. Motivation directly influences staff commitment, service quality, and the sustainability of organisational performance. According to Pollitt and Bouckaert⁹, performance improvement cannot be achieved solely through formal mechanisms such as evaluation or planning. Rather, it requires a comprehensive approach that incorporates institutional culture, leadership style and attentiveness to human factors.

Herzberg's¹⁰ two-factor theory supports this view by distinguishing between hygiene factors (e.g., salaries, working conditions) and intrinsic factors (e.g., recognition, professional development, sense of achievement). A similar line of reasoning is echoed in the work of Tovmasyan and Minasyan, who highlight the importance of a balanced motivation policy that combines material (salary, rewards, health insurance) with non-material incentives (career advancement opportunities, a positive working environment, flexible working hours, and training opportunities). Their study, conducted during the COVID-19 pandemic, demonstrates that such an approach not only enhances work efficiency but also improves employee satisfaction.¹¹ Moreover, Locke and Latham¹² argue that clear and challenging goals significantly boost both motivation and performance. Together, these perspectives illustrate why motivation cannot be reduced to financial rewards alone.

In the public sector, particularly in the judicial system, leadership plays a key role. For instance, Van Wart¹³ emphasises that leaders who adopt a supportive and inclusive style

9 Pollitt and Bouckaert (n 2).

10 Frederick Herzberg, 'One More Time: How Do You Motivate Employees?' (1987) 65 Harvard Business Review 109.

11 Tovmasyan and Minasyan (n 3).

12 Gary P Latham and Edwin A Locke, 'Self-Regulation through Goal Setting' (1991) 50(2) Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes 212. doi:10.1016/0749-5978(91)90021-K.

13 Montgomery Van Wart and Pamela S Medina, *Leadership in Public and Nonprofit Organizations: An introduction* (4th edn, Routledge 2023).

positively influence employee motivation. By contrast, Christensen, Lægheid, and Røvik¹⁴ argue that organisational structures can impose constraints which, if not managed effectively, narrow down the space for initiative and creativity, thereby reducing the sense of autonomy in the workplace. In addition to conventional methods, Lee and Raschke propose using set-theoretic methods to examine how different combinations of factors contribute to high levels of employee performance.¹⁵

3.1. Modern Approaches and Public Service Motivation (PSM)

The Modern Approaches theory, developed by Perry and Wise¹⁶ and later expanded by Perry et al.,¹⁷ argues that public sector employees often possess a sense of civic duty and a desire to contribute to the public good. This theory, therefore, emphasises the importance of altruistic motives in fostering institutional commitment and promoting positive behaviour within public administration.

Various studies reinforce the relevance of Public Service Motivation. In Ghana, for instance, Ashai et al.¹⁸ found that employee motivation increases when individuals feel valued and are given opportunities to contribute to organisational development. Similarly, research conducted in Indonesia by Andreas¹⁹ highlights that workplace respect and access to professional development have a notable impact on employee performance. These findings show that emotional and interpersonal factors are just as critical as material compensation in shaping motivation.

In Kosovo, despite efforts to increase salaries and improve material conditions, motivation levels remain low. The absence of a functional performance appraisal system, combined with deep-rooted bureaucracy and traditional culture in organisations, is continually inhibiting motivation among employees.²⁰

-
- 14 Tom Christensen, Per Lægheid and Kjell Arne Røvik, *Organization Theory and the Public Sector: Instrument, Culture and Myth* (2nd edn, Routledge 2020).
 - 15 Michael T Lee and Robyn L Raschke, 'Understanding Employee Motivation and Organizational Performance: Arguments for a Set-Theoretic Approach' (2016) 1(3) *Journal of Innovation and Knowledge* 162. doi:10.1016/j.jik.2016.01.004.
 - 16 James L Perry and Lois Recascino Wise, 'The Motivational Bases of Public Service' (1990) 50(3) *Public Administration Review* 367.
 - 17 James L Perry, Annie Hondeghem and Lois Recascino Wise, 'Revisiting the Motivational Bases of Public Service: Twenty Years of Research and an Agenda for the Future' (2010) 70(5) *Public Administration Review* 681.
 - 18 Ashai and others (n 5).
 - 19 Deden Andreas, 'Employee Performance: The Effect of Motivation and Job Satisfaction' (2022) 1(1) *Produktif: Jurnal Kepegawaian dan Organisasi* 28.
 - 20 European Commission, 'Kosovo 2023 Report' (n 6); Naim Jakaj and Gzim Shala, *Mungesa e kontratave kolektive: Dështimi për të siguruar dialog social dhe mbrojtje kolektive të punëtorëve* (Instituti i Kosovës për Drejtësi 2024).

3.2. Reforms in Administration and Their Effect on Motivation

The concept of New Public Management (NPM), proposed by Hood²¹ and later developed by Pollitt and Bouckaert²², has prompted administrations to adopt various management practices, including management by results, performance appraisal, and decentralisation of authority. The objective of these reforms is to increase accountability and empower employees through more direct involvement and improved access to decision-making.

In theory, these approaches are expected to increase motivation. However, in transition countries such as Kosovo, their implementation has faced significant challenges. According to Gajduschek,²³ the lack of administrative capacity and the presence of a rigid bureaucratic culture have dampened the impact of reforms. Rather than leading to improvements, many initiatives have created greater uncertainty and, in some cases, employee demotivation.

The Law on Public Officials, passed in Kosovo in 2023, was intended as a move to modernise governance.²⁴ However, recent studies suggest that its impact has been minimal.²⁵ This is due to the absence of meaningful social dialogue, the lack of general application regulation, and the ineffective implementation of articles related to fair and merit-based evaluation.

3.3. Motivation as a Precursor for Institutional Success

The literature consistently emphasises that motivation extends beyond financial compensation. It is shaped by a complex interplay of factors such as organisational justice, a sense of belonging, understanding of mission, and opportunities for professional growth. This is consistent with the findings of Khawaja and Karim (2024), who, through a case study of a service organisation, demonstrated that internal motivation, leadership style, organisational culture, and transparent communication directly impact employee productivity. Moreover, they argued that the combination of these factors not only improves work efficiency but also encourages long-term dedication from employees.²⁶ Staroňová et al.²⁷ highlight that in many countries, performance appraisal systems remain largely formal and have little influence on promotion or remuneration. As a result, such systems

21 Christopher Hood, 'A Public Management for All Seasons?' (1991) 69(1) Public Administration 3. doi:10.1111/j.1467-9299.1991.tb00779.x.

22 Pollitt and Bouckaert (n 2).

23 Gyorgy Gajduschek, 'Bureaucracy: Is It Efficient? Is It Not? Is That the Question? Uncertainty Reduction: An Ignored Element of Bureaucratic Rationality' (2003) 34(6) Administration & Society 700. doi:10.1177/0095399702239171.

24 Law of the Republic of Kosovo No 08/L-197 'On Public Officials' (22 December 2022) [2023] Official Gazette 21/1 <<https://gzk.rks-gov.net/ActDetail.aspx?ActID=81430>> accessed 4 June 2025.

25 Fejzullahu and Belegu (n 6); Jakaj and Shala (n 20).

26 Khawaja and Karimi (n 4).

27 Katarína Staroňová and others, *Individual Performance Appraisal of Employees in Central Public Administration in Western Balkans* (ReSPA 2018).

often diminish morale and weaken employee commitment. Similarly, Qadir et al.²⁸ stress that motivation should be an integral part of any reform. Without it, reforms remain limited to the technical level and fail to shape institutional culture.

In the Kosovo judicial system, the data reveal a contradictory situation: while formal improvements have been implemented, the absence of genuine performance evaluation, limited staff participation in decision-making, and a lack of a human-centred management approach continue to hinder efficiency. Therefore, improving performance cannot rely solely on legal reforms. Instead, it requires fostering an organisational culture that values employees, acknowledges their efforts, and creates the right conditions for sustainable professional development.

Following this line of reasoning, Andersen argues that different managerial motivation profiles, which are based on the needs for achievement, power, and affiliation, have a direct impact on organisational effectiveness. Furthermore, Andersen highlights the importance of accurately measuring these profiles to ensure more effective management processes, thereby opening the door for further research on how individual factors shape organisational performance.²⁹

4 EMPIRICAL ANALYSIS: EFFICIENCY OF BASIC COURTS IN KOSOVO (2020–2024)

Statistics from the Kosovo Judicial Council (KJC) reports indicate that the country's busiest court, the Basic Court of Pristina, experienced a decline in efficiency in 2024, despite infrastructure investments and technological developments. For example, the efficiency rate dropped from 82% in 2021 to 68% in 2024.³⁰ This downward trend coincides with periods characterised by the absence of collective agreements, a lack of a clear performance evaluation system, and growing dissatisfaction among judicial personnel.

In contrast, courts in smaller cities such as Gjakova and Ferizaj, despite being smaller and having more limited resources, have maintained a more stable level of efficiency. This suggests that not only the quantity of resources but also the quality of management and the level of staff motivation can play a crucial role. As illustrated in the table below, data from

28 Ghayyur Qadir, Imran Saeed and Saif Ullah Khan, 'Relationship Between Motivation and Employee Performance, Organizational Goals: Moderating Role of Employee Empowerment' (2017) 3(1) *Journal of Business and Tourism* 93.

29 Jon Aarum Andersen, 'Managers' Motivation Profiles: Measurement and Application' (2018) 8(2) *SAGE Open* doi:10.1177/2158244018771732.

30 'Performance Review' (*Kosovo Judicial Council*, 2024) <<https://www.gjyqesori-rks.org/pasqyra-e-performances/>> accessed 21 March 2025.

these smaller courts illustrate that proactive leadership, combined with staff engagement in decision-making, is a key driver of their performance."

Table 1. The efficiency rates in cases handled over the period 2020–2024

Case Type	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Criminal	121.8%	80.6%	99.5%	108.5%	96.0%
Serious Crimes	121.6%	88.0%	94.2%	123.2%	56.0%
Juvenile Criminal	92.0%	62.0%	120.7%	130.4%	102.0%
Civil	73.1%	44.4%	62.7%	62.0%	56.0%
Economic	79.5%	58.1%	38.3%	0.0%	77.0%
Administrative	102.2%	104.8%	84.1%	105.8%	108.0%
Special Department	108.5%	51.4%	48.2%	73.2%	94.0%

Table 1 illustrates the efficiency rates of cases handled over the period 2020–2024.³¹ It provides a good overview of changes in judicial performance. As can be seen, efficiency rates have fluctuated over the years due to numerous factors, including case workload and institutional management.

Overall, criminal and administrative cases maintained a relatively stable level of efficiency, despite a temporary decline in 2021, which was followed by a recovery in subsequent years. Conversely, serious and economic crime cases experienced a significant drop in efficiency in 2024, particularly compared to 2023. Civil cases, meanwhile, demonstrated relative stability, albeit with slightly lower efficiency rates.

These trends underscore the need for a comprehensive analysis of the underlying factors influencing performance, as well as the formulation of targeted strategies to improve case management efficiency. Identifying and implementing best practices, along with resource optimisation within institutions, can contribute to a more efficient and sustainable judicial system in the future.

31 *ibid.*

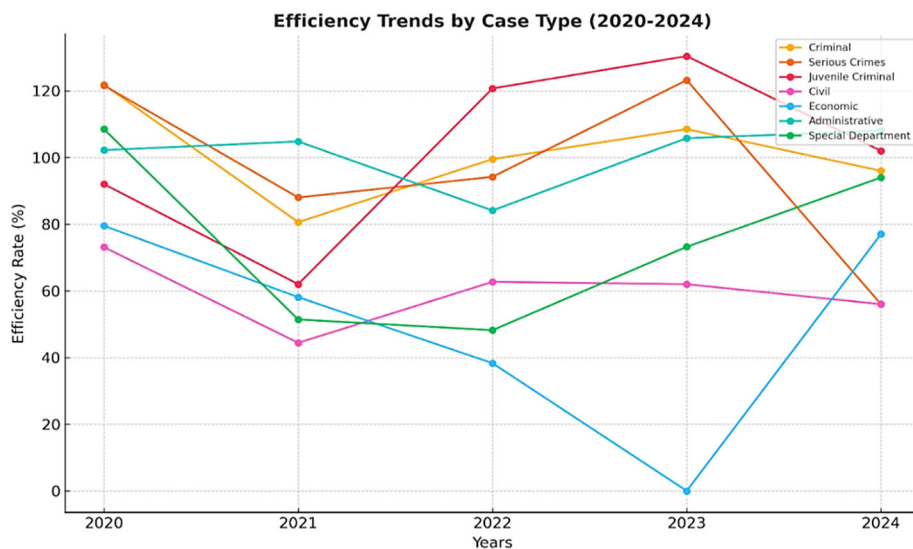


Figure 1. The efficiency trends across all case types from 2020 to 2024

Figure 1 illustrates efficiency trends across all case types from 2020 to 2024 (Figure 1).³² The data indicate that some categories have demonstrated notable improvements, while others have experienced declines in efficiency. These trends can be attributed to a variety of variables, from institutional dynamics to caseload fluctuations to ongoing judicial reform. Further analysis is needed to identify the key drivers that have shaped judicial efficiency over this period.

Table 2 presents the efficiency rates of Basic Courts in Kosovo between 2020 and 2024,³³ highlighting fluctuations in performance over this period. Notably, the Basic Court of Pristina experienced a considerable decline, with efficiency dropping from 103.4% in 2023 to 56.1% in 2024, indicating significant problems in case handling and institutional operations. In contrast, the Basic Court of Peja showed a considerable improvement in 2024, reaching an efficiency rate of 108.0% following a period of relatively minor variations.

The Basic Courts of Mitrovica and Ferizaj demonstrated relatively stable trends, with gradual improvements in efficiency over the observed period. The Basic Court in Prizren, by contrast, experienced fluctuations of decline and recovery, ending 2024 with an efficiency rate of 94.4%.

³² *ibid.*

³³ *ibid.*

Table 2. The efficiency rate of Basic Courts in Kosovo between 2020 and 2024

Court	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Basic Court of Pristina	92.0%	81.8%	76.0%	103.4%	56.1%
Basic Court of Mitrovica	79.6%	67.8%	83.1%	90.3%	76.8%
Basic Court of Peja	88.3%	69.3%	85.8%	56.3%	108.0%
Basic Court of Prizren	94.1%	74.3%	59.3%	68.3%	94.4%
Basic Court of Ferizaj	56.3%	92.1%	70.6%	72.1%	86.2%
Basic Court of Gjiilan	94.1%	74.3%	91.0%	100.6%	109.0%
Basic Court of Gjakova	100.3%	62.4%	70.4%	84.3%	74.0%

To understand the reasons behind these variations, a deeper analysis of the factors influencing such changes is required: namely, caseload volume, judicial staffing capacity, and the court management policies implemented by the Kosovo Judicial Council.

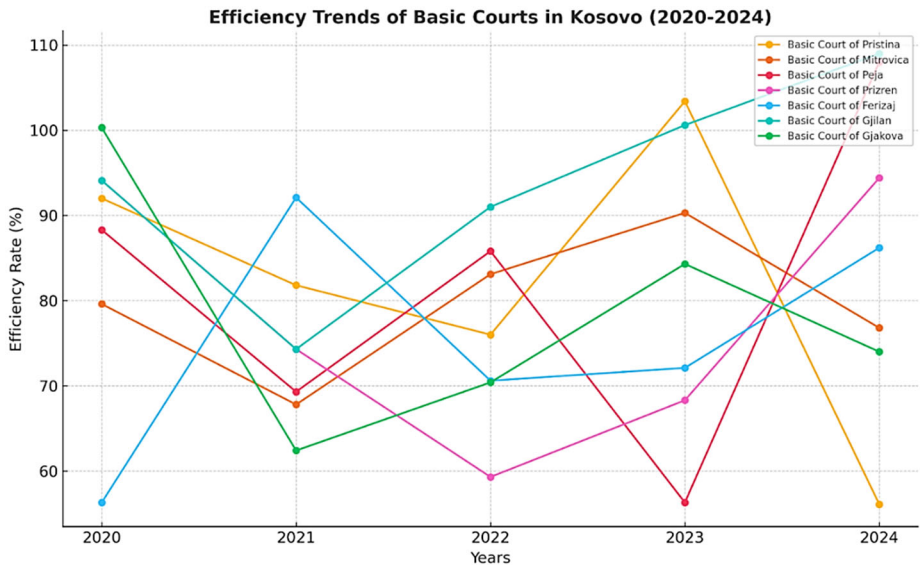


Figure 2. The trends in the efficiency of Basic Courts in Kosovo over the period 2020–2024

Figure 2 illustrates trends in the efficiency of Basic Courts in Kosovo over the period 2020–2024.³⁴ During this timeframe, court performance experienced notable fluctuations, influenced by shifts in caseloads, availability of institutional resources, and the efficiency of judicial management practices. In contrast, courts, such as those in Peja and Gjilan, showed improvements in efficiency through 2024, whereas the Basic Court of Pristina experienced a marked decline.

Further investigation is required to understand the cause of these performance fluctuations, including case management practices and the operational capacities of each court. The observed trend highlights the importance of continuously monitoring court performance and developing strategies to enhance the efficiency of the judicial system.

Thematic Analysis of Interview Data (101-109)

Main themes that emerged from the interviews are:

1. The impact of working conditions on motivation
2. The impact of salary on performance and motivation
3. The impact of leadership and management
4. The impact of bureaucratic culture on motivation
5. Suggestions for improvement of the motivation systems

Theme 1: The impact of working conditions on motivation

A prevailing theme that emerged from interviews is the role of working conditions in employee motivation. Specifically, employees emphasised the importance of physical environment, technology, and collegial support as fundamental factors in maintaining a productive and effective workday.

One Professional Associate (108) stated:

“Working conditions are essential in maintaining motivation. A comfortable, clean, and organised environment can increase both productivity and motivation.”

On the other hand, another respondent, serving as a Judge in the Penal Division (106), reported the absence of some of these elements, noting that this negatively affects productivity and motivation.

In summary, the interviews indicate that, while the institution may not provide these conditions in a consistent manner, they play a critical role in enhancing employee motivation and thus should be taken into consideration in future organisational planning.

34 *ibid.*

Theme 2: The impact of salary on performance and motivation

While all respondents concurred that salary increases have a positive effect on motivation and effectiveness, there were differences in how they explained this relationship.

One Professional Associate (109) stated:

"Salary increases have a significant influence on enhancing performance and motivation...they enhance the sense of commitment."

On the other hand, one Judge (106) provided a perspective emphasising professional ethics, noting that: *"Duties should be carried out responsibly, regardless of salary increases."*

This suggests that while financial compensation may be an essential motivation factor, some employees rely more on the principles of institutional duty and responsibility.

Theme 3: The impact of leadership and management on employee motivation

All participants consistently emphasised the significant role of leadership and managerial support in fostering their motivation and job effectiveness

One Professional Associate (108) stated:

"Leaders create a clear vision and provide guidance that motivates and inspires employees..."

One Judge (106) praised the management's non-bureaucratic approach, describing it as an essential component for promoting open and effective communication within the institution:

"The management's approach is positive and non-bureaucratic... this facilitates communication and contributes to addressing organisational issues."

These findings suggest that a managerial culture characterised by moral support, effective communication, and approachable leadership is perceived as a significant factor in promoting an effective and well-functioning organisation.

Theme 4: The impact of bureaucratic culture on motivation

Bureaucratic culture was frequently mentioned negatively, being perceived as a barrier to initiative and organisational flexibility. One Professional Associate (109) noted:

"Bureaucratic culture... may contribute to creating an environment unsuitable for carrying out job responsibilities."

However, another respondent (108) offered a balanced assessment of bureaucratic practices:

"If successfully managed... it can help in creating a sustainable and safe environment."

These findings indicate that the effects of bureaucracy are not inherently negative but depend on implementation and the level of structural flexibility allowed.

Theme 5: Suggestions for improvement of the motivation systems

Participants offered several concrete suggestions for improving the motivation system in the Court. Importantly, these suggestions highlight the importance of implementing structural and cultural reforms to foster a better work environment:

- Training and professional development
- Performance-based rewards and public acknowledgement
- Improving infrastructure and physical working conditions
- Work schedule flexibility and moral support
- Reduction of unnecessary bureaucracy.

One Professional Associate (108) noted:

“Recognition and performance-based reward... improving working conditions and work schedule flexibility.

Meanwhile, the Executive Clerk (107) highlighted the importance of organisational discipline for maintaining high-quality standards within the institution:

“...disciplinary warnings for employees who fail to demonstrate adequate responsibility.”

Overall, the findings suggest that both external factors (physical environment, technology, and salary increases) and internal factors (leadership, organisational culture, and professional recognition) are directly related to daily employee motivation and institutional performance. Therefore, attention to fairness, open communication, and acknowledgement of high-quality work are essential in creating a more effective, ethical, and enduring work environment.

5 DISCUSSION

The empirical analysis and interview data clearly demonstrate that judicial system efficiency is influenced not only by technical and infrastructural resources but also by motivational and organisational factors. As one judge emphasised: “...even in situations where we face various challenges, adequate communication and moral support help maintain motivation...” (106, Judge).

In the case of the Basic Court of Pristina, interviewees, including administrative support staff and judges, as well as members of the Kosovo Judicial Council, highlighted that one factor contributing to reduced efficiency is the absence of a sustainable system for motivation and performance evaluation. These views are consistent with those of Khawaja and Karim (2021), who argue that the absence of a clear framework for performance evaluation and motivation could undermine employee effectiveness even in cases where technical resources are sufficient.

Despite formal improvements, including salary increases and infrastructure investments, the absence of meritocratic evaluation and the persistence of a bureaucratic culture continue to discourage employee commitment. One employee supported this point, stating: "I didn't think that a salary increase would lead to better performance, but it would affect motivation." (104, Judge).

The findings echo the existing literature, underscoring the importance of organisational justice, job autonomy, and effective communication in improving morale and performance. Another judge reiterated this point, stating: "...even in situations where we face various challenges, appropriate communication and moral support help with motivation..." (106, Judge).

In contrast, other courts with fewer support staff and judges, such as those in Gjakova and Ferizaj, achieved stronger performance. This suggests that leadership style, staff involvement in the decision-making process, and internal motivation may be more decisive than sheer available resources. This observation resonates with Andersen (2019), who highlights the influence of different leadership styles and staff involvement on enhancing organisational effectiveness. It further suggests that cultivating a work environment that values individual contributions and fosters active participation is as crucial as investing in infrastructure.

The interannual performance analysis (2020–2024) reveals that, although formal measures such as salary increases and infrastructure investments have been implemented, their impact on motivation and efficiency has proven to be unsustainable. This stagnation underscores the need for more profound organisational reforms. This is consistent with Herzberg's two-factor theory, which argues that improvements focusing solely on salary are not sufficient to ensure long-term employee motivation and improved performance.

The findings of this study are consistent with insights from international literature. Herzberg's³⁵ two-factor theory, for example, posits that hygiene factors, such as salary, are necessary to prevent dissatisfaction but are insufficient to ensure high performance. Instead, intrinsic factors, such as recognition, responsibility, and opportunities for professional growth, play a more decisive role in sustaining employee motivation. Similarly, Perry and Wise's³⁶ Public Service Motivation (PSM) theory, along with the ReSPA report

35 Herzberg (n 10).

36 Perry and Wise (n 16).

in 2018,³⁷ highlights that the absence of performance-based reward systems and the persistence of rigid bureaucratic practices continue to block efficiency in public administrations across the region. For sustainable improvement, reforms must extend beyond legal and technical dimensions to encompass the development of an institutional culture that fosters motivation, recognition, and professional growth. This requires the establishment of transparent performance appraisal systems, the implementation of regular capacity-building programs, and the reinstatement of collective agreements as both protective mechanisms and instruments of staff incentivisation.

These results address gaps identified by Tovmasyan and Minasyan (2020), who argue that the absence of balanced motivation policies in the public sector, particularly during crisis periods, constitutes a barrier to institutional effectiveness.

5.1. Regional Comparison and Common Challenges in the Western Balkans

The absence of mechanisms to effectively measure employee performance and enhance motivation is not limited to Kosovo but reflects broader regional dynamics. According to the ReSPA report published in 2018, Albania, North Macedonia, Montenegro, and Serbia have faced similar significant challenges in implementing these mechanisms.

Despite the existence of legal frameworks in these countries, performance evaluation processes are often conducted for the sake of formality and are not linked to career advancement, rewards, or professional development. For example:

- In Serbia, reports indicate that ratings were inflated and did not reflect actual performance.
- In North Macedonia, the 360-degree evaluation process was considered complex and ineffective.
- In Montenegro, evaluations were not connected to professional development or job mobility.
- In Albania and Bosnia, reports highlighted a lack of staff training and the absence of strategic analysis of evaluation data.

This situation highlights a common regional challenge, in which limited administrative and organisational capacities constrain the translation of policies into concrete, actionable measures. Similar to Kosovo, these countries lack a functional link between performance and motivation, which directly impacts institutional effectiveness. Herzberg's two-factor theory and Public Service Motivation (PSM) emphasise the critical role of intrinsic factors such as recognition and autonomy in sustaining long-term employee performance. Consequently, for reforms to achieve their intended objectives, they must focus on

37 Staroňová and others (n 27).

developing organisational culture, creating meritocracy mechanisms, and empowering personnel through training and transparent evaluation systems.

In conclusion, developing an efficient judicial system cannot depend solely on regulatory frameworks; it requires sustained investment in personnel and the cultivation of a work culture that genuinely values and meaningfully engages each individual. The findings directly address the research question and support the objectives outlined in the introduction. They demonstrate that employee motivation—including material, psychological, and organisational dimensions—is closely linked to institutional efficiency.

As one respondent noted:

“...collaboration with colleagues is essential, as it directly influences daily motivation...” (109, Professional Associate).

This connection is particularly evident in the comparative analysis of different courts and in the perceptions expressed by interview participants.

6 CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that employee motivation is a key factor in the effectiveness of the judicial system. However, a deeper understanding of the drivers of employee motivation requires moving beyond legal reforms and technical investments. The findings reveal that the absence of effective mechanisms for performance evaluation, the prevalence of bureaucratic culture, and limited staff involvement in decision-making negatively affect not only employees' commitment to institutional objectives but also the capacity of the institution to perform its daily functions effectively.

Conversely, the positive outcomes observed in courts operating with fewer judges and limited support staff highlight the importance of non-material factors in shaping organisational performance. Specifically, they suggest that leadership style and intrinsic motivation are critical for achieving successful outcomes, opening avenues for further research.

In conclusion, this study underscores that sustained investment in employee motivation—through improved working conditions, opportunities for professional development, and formal recognition—is essential for enhancing performance and ensuring the long-term effectiveness of the institution. Future research aimed at deepening the understanding of employee motivation should adopt mixed methods approaches, incorporating qualitative and quantitative analyses. Additionally, conducting additional case studies within the country, as well as comparative studies across different national contexts, would provide valuable insights and advance knowledge in this field. Finally, as judicial institutions continue to implement new reforms, analysing their impact would offer a significant contribution to the field.

REFERENCES

1. Adams JS, 'Toward an Understanding of Inequity' (1963) 67 *Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology* 422. doi:10.1037/h0040968
2. Andersen JA, 'Managers' Motivation Profiles: Measurement and Application' (2018) 8(2) *SAGE Open* doi:10.1177/2158244018771732.
3. Andreas D, 'Employee Performance: The Effect of Motivation and Job Satisfaction' (2022) 1(1) *Produktif: Jurnal Kepegawaian dan Organisasi* 28.
4. Ashai DT and others, 'Motivation and its influence on task performance in a workplace: A study of Access Bank Ghana' (2023) 7(1) *European Journal of Human Resource Management Studies* 163. doi:10.46827/ejhrms.v7i1.1577
5. Christensen T, Lægrend P and Røvik KA, *Organization Theory and the Public Sector: Instrument, Culture and Myth* (2nd edn, Routledge 2020).
6. Creswell JW, *A Concise Introduction to Mixed Methods Research* (2nd edn, SAGE 2022).
7. Fejzullahu A and Belegu B, 'The Challenges of Public Administration Reforms in Kosovo in the Context of Eurointegration Process' (2022) 8(1) *Journal of Liberty and International Affairs* 292. doi:10.47305/JLIA2281292f.
8. Gajduschek G, 'Bureaucracy: Is It Efficient? Is It Not? Is That the Question? Uncertainty Reduction: An Ignored Element of Bureaucratic Rationality' (2003) 34(6) *Administration & Society* 700. doi:10.1177/0095399702239171.
9. Herzberg F, 'One More Time: How Do You Motivate Employees?' (1987) 65 *Harvard Business Review* 109.
10. Hood C, 'A Public Management for All Seasons?' (1991) 69(1) *Public Administration* 3. doi:10.1111/j.1467-9299.1991.tb00779.x.
11. Jakaj N and Shala G, *Mungesa e kontratave kolektive: Dështimi për të siguruar dialog social dhe mbrojtje kolektive të punëtorëve* (Instituti i Kosovës për Drejtësi 2024).
12. Khawaja S and Karimi H, 'Exploring Factors Influencing Work Productivity: A Qualitative Case Study of Employee Motivation and Leadership Practices' (2024) 8(4) *Edelweiss Applied Science and Technology* 727. doi:10.55214/25768484.v8i4.1451
13. Latham GP and Locke EA, 'Self-Regulation through Goal Setting' (1991) 50(2) *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes* 212. doi:10.1016/0749-5978(91)90021-K.
14. Lee MT and Raschke RL, 'Understanding Employee Motivation and Organizational Performance: Arguments for a Set-Theoretic Approach' (2016) 1(3) *Journal of Innovation and Knowledge* 162. doi:10.1016/j.jik.2016.01.004
15. Locke EA and Latham GP, *A Theory of Goal Setting and Task Performance* (Prentice Hall 1990)

16. Maslow AH, 'A Theory of Human Motivation' (1943) 50(4) Psychological Review 370. doi:10.1037/h0054346.
17. Perry JL and Wise LR, 'The Motivational Bases of Public Service' (1990) 50(3) Public Administration Review 367.
18. Perry JL, Hondeghem A and Wise LR, 'Revisiting the Motivational Bases of Public Service: Twenty Years of Research and an Agenda for the Future' (2010) 70(5) Public Administration Review 681.
19. Pollitt C and Bouckaert G, *Public Management Reform: A Comparative Analysis – Into the Age of Austerity* (4th edn, OUP 2017).
20. Qadir G, Saeed I and Khan SU, 'Relationship Between Motivation and Employee Performance, Organizational Goals: Moderating Role of Employee Empowerment' (2017) 3(1) Journal of Business and Tourism 93.
21. Staroňová K and others, *Individual Performance Appraisal of Employees in Central Public Administration in Western Balkans* (ReSPA 2018).
22. Tovmasyan G and Minasyan D, 'The Impact of Motivation on Work Efficiency for Both Employers and Employees also During COVID-19 Pandemic: Case Study from Armenia' (2020) 4(3) *Business Ethics and Leadership* 25. Doi:10.21272/bel.4(3).25-35.2020
23. Van Wart M and Medina PS, *Leadership in Public and Nonprofit Organizations: An introduction* (4th edn, Routledge 2023).
24. Vroom VH, *Work and Motivation* (Wiley and Sons 1964).

AUTHORS INFORMATION

Besard Belegu

PhD in Public Administration, Assistant Professor, AAB College, Kosovo.

besard.belegu@aab-edu.net

<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-1870-4917>

Author, responsible for writing this article – original draft.

Lavdim Terziu*

PhD in Public Administration, Assistant Professor, AAB College, Kosovo.

lavdim.terziu@aab-edu.net

<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-1297-8298>

Corresponding author, responsible for writing this article - reviewing and editing.

Competing interests: No competing interests were disclosed.

Disclaimer: The authors declare that the opinions and views expressed in this manuscript are free from any influence of any organization.

RIGHTS AND PERMISSIONS

Copyright: © 2025 Besard Belegu and Lavdim Terziu. This is an open access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution License, (CC BY 4.0), which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original author and source are credited.

EDITORS

Managing editor – Mag. Bohdana Zahrebelna. **English Editor** – Julie Bold.

Ukrainian language Editor – Lilia Hartman.

ABOUT THIS ARTICLE

Cite this article

Belegu B and Terziu L, ‘Perceptions of Employee Motivation and Its Role in Work Efficiency: a Qualitative Case Study in the Basic Court of Pristina’ (2025) 8(4) Access to Justice in Eastern Europe 436-58 <<https://doi.org/10.33327/AJEE-18-8.4-c000128>> Published

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.33327/AJEE-18-8.4-c000128>

Summary: 1. Introduction. – 2. Research Methodology. – 3. The Importance of Motivation in Institutional Performance. – 3.1. *Modern Approaches and Public Service Motivation (PSM)*. – 3.2. *Reforms in Administration and Their Effect on Motivation*. – 3.3. *Motivation as a Precursor for Institutional Success*. – 4. Empirical Analysis: Efficiency of Basic Courts in Kosovo (2020–2024). – 5. Discussion. – 5.1. *Regional Comparison and Common Challenges in The Western Balkans*. – 6. Conclusions.

Keywords: *Motivation, Efficiency, Judicial System, Public Administration, Performance, Leadership, Organizational Culture.*

DETAILS FOR PUBLICATION

Date of submission: 04 Jun 2025

Date of acceptance: 27 Aug 2025

Last Publication: 18 Nov 2025

Whether the manuscript was fast tracked? - No

Number of reviewer report submitted in first round: 4 reports

Number of revision rounds: 1 round with minor revisions

Technical tools were used in the editorial process:

Plagiarism checks - Turnitin from iThenticate <https://www.turnitin.com/products/ithenticate/>
Scholastica for Peer Review <https://scholasticahq.com/law-reviews>

AI DISCLOSURE STATEMENT

We confirm that we have not used any AI tools for writing, translating, or editing the manuscript, submitted to the Access to Justice in Eastern Europe journal for publication. We understand that if AI usage is discovered without notifying the editor, the article may be retracted. We affirm that the research and content of the manuscript are solely our own work. The corresponding author is responsible for ensuring that all co-authors adhere to this declaration.

АНОТАЦІЯ УКРАЇНСЬКОЮ МОВОЮ

Тематичне дослідження

УЯВЛЕННЯ ПРО МОТИВАЦІЮ ПРАЦІВНИКІВ ТА ЇЇ РОЛЬ В ЕФЕКТИВНОСТІ РОБОТИ:
ЯКІСНЕ ТЕМАТИЧНЕ ДОСЛІДЖЕННЯ ПРАКТИКИ МІСЦЕВОГО СУДУ ПРИШТИНИ

Бесард Белегу та Лавдім Терзіу*

АНОТАЦІЯ

Вступ. Судова система Косова зазнавала постійних правових реформ та вдосконалення інфраструктури. Однак, незважаючи на ці зусилля, загальна ефективність залишається значним викликом для державних установ, що підкреслює необхідність вивчення факторів, які впливають на інституційну ефективність. Серед них – мотивація працівників, яка є особливо важливою через прямий вплив на щоденну діяльність судової системи.

Хоча міжнародна академічна література широко визнає вирішальну роль мотивації працівників в інституційній ефективності, у цьому дослідженні спеціально вивчається, чи працівники місцевого суду Приштини сприймають мотивацію як фактор, що впливає на ефективність їхньої роботи.

Методи. У дослідженні, що ґрунтується на результатах напівструктурованих інтерв'ю з працівниками суду, було використано порівняльний метод, що дав змогу зіставити ці уявлення з опублікованими офіційними даними про інституційну ефективність.

Результати та висновки. Аналіз виявляє відсутність стійких механізмів для сприяння мотивації працівників в місцевому суді Приштини. Постійні реформи не дали очікуваних результатів, головним чином через переважання бюрократичної культури в установі. Результати цього дослідження тісно узгоджуються з міжнародною академічною літературою та теорією мотивації персоналу у сфері державної служби (PSM), яка стверджує, що мотивація — це не просто питання фінансової компенсації, а що вона тісно пов'язана з визнанням, інклюзією та можливостями професійного розвитку.

Результати цього дослідження підкреслюють необхідність реформ, які враховують людські та культурні виміри державних установ, пропонуючи практичні рекомендації щодо створення ефективної довгострокової мотивації в судовій системі.

Ключові слова: мотивація, ефективність, судова система, державне управління, результативність, лідерство, організаційна культура.