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FACULTY OF SOCIOLOGY AND SOCIAL WORK

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ORGANIZATIONAL JUSTICE IN THE PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL CONTEXT – FAIRNESS PERCEPTION OF AND SATISFACTION WITH THE PROCESS IN THE ROMANIAN NORTH-WESTERN REGION'S PUBLIC SECTOR

DOCTORAL THESIS SUMMARY

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Introduction

Studying the perception of the performance appraisal process from the organizational justice perspective and the satisfaction with its diverse aspects is very important because this specific managerial activity determines the split of the human resource in two categories which assume different roles, one as the judgment provider, the other one as the judgment receiver, neither being content with the involvement which derived from its specific role (McGregor, 1957/1990; Armstrong and Appelbaum, 2003).

Consequently, this process leads to a transition from the *test metaphor* model, which is characterized by the rational intention of those who design and impose specific methods, techniques and instruments, to the *political metaphor* model (Folger, Konovsky and Cropanzano, 1992), which goes beyond the „mask of objectivity and rationality" (Longenecker, Sims and Gioia, 1987, p. 183) toward a manipulation of the results oficially noted in the organizational files or documents, manipulation done for a variety of appraisers' specific reasons (Murphy and Cleveland, 1995).

The preocupation for the study of the perceived fairness of the performance appraisal is confirmed by multiple studies done by many researchers, from which Jerald Greenberg is standing out as the introducer of the organizational justice concept and as the subsequently main developer of this new research field of the organizational studies.

According to the tendency of reconciliating the academic and the practitioners interests, the research began to concentrate after year 2000 on the connection between the perceived fairness of the performance appraisal and the satisfaction with this process (Thurston, 2001, cf. Burns Walsh, 2003) and even with employees atitudinal and behavioral reactions (Thurston and McNall, 2010), because the last ones mentioned can take counter-productive forms leading to undesirable organizational costs (Conlon, Meyer and Nowakowski, 2005; Sheppard, Lewicki and Minton, 1992).

Chapter I. The justice concept: emergence, evolution and particularization in the organizational context

The first chapter starts with an historical argument intended to demonstrate the social, political, philosophical and moral importance of justice, confirmed by many ample written works from antiquity, such as those of Plato (cf. Folger and Cropanzano, 1998; Rawls, 1971, cf. De Cremer, Van Knippenberg, Van Dijke and Bos, 2004) and Aristotle (1988), Herodotus and Plutarch (Cropanzano, Bowen and Gilliland, 2007), until today, such as those of John Rawls and Robert Nozick (cf. Chan, 2000).

Furthermore, one very important element for the entire endeavour of our thesis is the presentation of the distinction between the normative and prescriptive approach, which usually frame the identification and the development of values and principles on which decisions are made as correctly as possible, and the descriptive approach, which phenomenologically define justice, not as it should be, but as it is perceived by the people (Cropanzano, Bowen and Gilliland, 2007; Folger and Cropanzano, 1998), the last one guiding, indirectly, to the approach of fundamental themes of human life (Colquitt, Greenberg and Zapata-Phelan, 2005).

Folger and Cropanzano (1998) consider that the justice roots resides in the individuals inclination for social groups affiliation, in which they will create, based on exchange relations, opportunities to satisfy both the economic and material needs and the socio-emotional ones.

Anglo-saxon literature tends to use on this theme just two synonymous terms, *justice* and *fairness* (Colquitt, Greenberg and Zapata-Phelan, 2005), whereas in Romanian language exists a much more wider range of concepts, from *justiţie* (justice) and *echitate* (equity), to *corectitudine* (corectness), *dreptate* (righteousness) and *onestitate* (honesty)(Chelcea, Radu and Ciupercă, 1999, 2000; Iluţ, 2004, 2009; Zlate and Zaharia, 2008).

Organizational justice is a concept introduced in 1986 through an heuristic exercise by Jerald Greenberg and registered from then on a diverse range of definitions, from very synthetic ones, such as „people's perception of fairness in organizational settings" (Greenberg, 1995, p. viii; Greenberg and Tyler, 2000, p. 73, cf. Zlate and Zaharia 2008, pp. 59-60) or as representing the study of the workplace fairness (Byrne and Cropanzano, 2001, cf. Burns Walsh, 2003; Greenberg and Cropanzano, 2001), to that of Keith James (1993), in which the perceptions are also associated with the adequate behavioral reactions, or that which highlights the motivational potential as organizational justice function (Zlate and Zaharia, 2008).

Tinted understanding of the organizational justice concept is facilitated by the discussion on the following defining elements: the situations categories in which the interest for this problem is initiated (Beugré, 2007; Greenberg, 2001), the main reasons for which people consider that the fairness is important (Cropanzano, Bowen and Gilliland, 2007), the instrumental, relational and moral goals (Beugré, 2007; Cropanzano, Byrne, Bobocel and Rupp, 2001; Gillespie and Greenberg, 2005), the referential standard into which account the judgments about the organizational justice are made (Beugré, 2007), the events or the social entities kind of aims of these judgments (Cropanzano, Byrne, Bobocel and Rupp, 2001), justice centering on person and organization, depending on the dual model agent-system perspective suggested by Bies and Moag (1986, cf. Colquitt, Conlon, Wesson, Porter and Ng, 2001) and the two levels at which the fairness judgments is conditioned by the social context, at the first one being influenced by individuals (Lamertz, 2002, cf. Beugré, 2007), and at the second one being influenced by other people experiences (Beugré, 2007; Stinglhamber and De Cremer, 2008).

Chapter II. Organizational justice typology. The evolution of research and theoretical models

The second chapter notices the evolution of organizational justice studies focused on its forms (Bies, 2001; Lind, 2001, cf. Ambrose and Arnaud, 2005; Stinglhamber and De Cremer, 2008), dimensions (Greenberg, 1993; Greenberg, 1995; Beugré, 2007; Iluţ, 2004; Iluţ, 2009), factors (Colquitt, 2001; Cropanzano, Byrne, Bobocel and Rupp, 2001) or types (Ambrose and Arnaud, 2005; Burns Walsh, 2003; Cropanzano and Ambrose, 2001), and confirming that this field distinguished itself by concentrating firstly on constructs and not on theories (Gilliland and Chan, 2001, cf. Zlate and Zaharia, 2008), a confirmation being the fact that this orientation conducted to the identification and consecration of two factors, three factors and four factors classification models confirmed by many studies (Ambrose and Arnaud, 2005; Bies, 2001; Bies and Moag, 1986, cf. Colquitt, Greenberg and Zapata-Phelan, 2005; Colquitt, 2001; Greenberg, 1986; Greenberg, 1990b), to which the controversial exception of the monistic, one dimension, model of Cropanzano and Ambrose (2001) is added, asserting that, in some circumstances, the distinction between the basic types of justice, distributive and procedural, is strongly affected.

Colquitt, Greenberg and Zapata-Phelan suggest the staging of more than 50 years of research and theories construction of organizational justice history in four periods (2005, pp. 6-7): distributive justice stage (years 1950-1960), procedural justice stage (from the half of the seventies until the half of the eighties), interactional justice stage (from the half of the eighties until today) and the integrative justice stage (overlapping the interactional justice).

The distributive justice referrs to „the perceived fairness of the outcomes or allocations that an individual receives” (Folger and Cropanzano, 1998, p. xxi), its corresponding stage starting with the relative deprivation theory (Stouffer, Suchmann, DeVinney, Star and Williams, Jr., 1949, cf. Colquitt, Greenberg and Zapata-Phelan, 2005), its principal contribution consisting in the assesing the importance of the social comparation processes in determinating the satisfaction with the results and benefits.

The definition of the distributive justice concept is related to Homans (1961, cf. Colquitt, Greenberg and Zapata-Phelan, 2005), who, using a language adopted from the economic field, asserts that the fairness or unfairness feeling is determined by the exchange relation generated by the proportion between profits and investments, this theoretical model applying not only to the cases involving two actors engaged in a direct relationship, but also in the cases in which a third part, like the employer of the two, intervenes.

The equity theory (Adams, 1965) is considered as representing the theoretical model of the organizational justice in general and of the distributive justice in particular, having the highest level of appeal and usage in the specialized literature of the field (Beugré, 2007; Colquitt, Greenberg and Zapata-Phelan, 2005), the most consistent contribution which differentiate it from the other two mentioned theories comprised in the determination of the inequity consequences observed by an individual who compares the result of the report between inputs and outcomes with the result of the report made with the same variables for another person, its author asserting that people doesn’t limit to state a incorrect situation, but try to re-establish the equality.

The last significant contribution related to research on and to theorizing the distributive justice belong to Leventhal (1976, 1980, cf. Greenberg, 1987a, 1995) and Deutsch (1975, 1985, cf. Beugré, 2007), who separately concluded that the equity doesn’t have to constitute the unique allocation principle, its alternatives having the potential to bring other benefits in different contexts. Therefore the concept of multiple norms of allocation was born, and the Leventhal contribution was known with the title of *model* or *justice judgment theory* (Greenberg, 1987a, 1995).

The procedural justice refers to the people perception about the „method, manner, technique, or means by which something is accomplished” (Cropanzano and Ambrose, 2001, p. 128).

Thibaut and Walker identified in a research of the fairness perception of the judicial disputes resolution two categories of different legal procedures regarding the procedural phase of evidence presentation and the decisional one of verdict ascertainment (1975, cf. Colquitt, Greenberg and Zapata-Phelan, 2005, p. 21; Vidmar, 1990, p. 878): a) the adversary system used in the U.S.A. and the U.K., in which the judge has control over the decision but not over the evidences presentation leading to it, b) the inquisitorial system of the continental Europe, in which the judge has control both on the verdict and on the procedures. Subsequent laboratory research guided those two to the conclusion that „a procedure that limits the third-party control, thus allocating the preponderance of control to the disputants, constitutes a just procedure." (Thibaut and Walker, 1975, p. 118, cf. Colquitt, Greenberg and Zapata-Phelan, 2005, p. 23). This theoretical construction is called process control model because the two researchers determined that this is the variable which influence the fairness perception of dispute resolution outcome and that of personal interest model comes from the instrumental explanation according to which people get involved in different disputes being motivated by their own interest (Tyler and Blader, 2000, cf. Shapiro and Brett, 2005), being convinced that they are right, and if they will inform the third party about their point of view, this will accept their version as being the right one and not that of the others (Shapiro and Brett, 2005).

Leventhal declares that „Procedural rules constitute the second category of justice rules. A *procedural rule* is defined as an individual's belief that allocative procedures which satisfy certain criteria are fair and appropriate" (1980, p. 30) and identifies the following six rules which must be respected by the procedures to be considered corect: 1) consistency, 2) bias suppression, 3) accuracy, 4) correctability, 5) representativeness and 6) ethicality.

The development of Leventhal's justice assessment model (1980) leads to the outline of the *preference allocation theory* (Leventhal, Karuza and Fry, 1980, cf. Colquitt, Greenberg and Zapata-Phelan, 2005), by which its authors proposed to focus on the procedures used in allocation, such as the theoretical model of Thibaut and Walker (1975, cf. Colquitt, Greenberg and Zapata-Phelan, 2005; Zlate and Zaharia, 2008).

Interactional justice refers to the quality of interpersonal treatment which is received by people when the organizational procedures are enacted (Bies and Moag, 1986, cf. Bies, 2005), being conceived as a third form of justice, distinct from the distributive and the procedural one (Bies, 2001, 2005).

Bies and Moag identified four rules of the fair interpersonal treatment (1986, cf. Colquitt, Greenberg and Zapata-Phelan, 2005, p. 30): truthfulness, justification, respect and propriety. Bies and Folger (1989, cf. Colquitt, Greenberg and Zapata-Phelan, 2005) catch up the first three rules mentioned before and added the feedback, the consideration of employees points of view, consistency and bias suppression as seven key responsibilities of the managers, and Bies, Greenberg and Eskew determine six considerations types for the managers wanting to promote their image as being fair, three of a structural nature (consideration of employees viewpoints, appearance of neutrality and the rules consistent application) and three of a interpersonal nature (feedback timily used, adequate explanations use and treatment with dignity and respect)(1991, cf. Colquitt, Greenberg şi Zapata-Phelan, 2005). The partial overlapping with some procedural rules assessed by Thibaut and Walker (1975, cf. Zlate and Zaharia, 2008) and by Leventhal (1980) and the study made by Bies and Tyler (1990, cf. Bies, 2005), in which was asserted the idea that the interactional justice could be more advantageous conceptualised as a dimension of the procedural one, lead to the third justice type identity dilemma. Bies (2001) concludes that the two organizational fairness forms affect the organizational behavior differently, this conclusion leading to the confirmation of the organizational justice four-factors model.

Greenberg (1993) proposes a alternative model, asserting the separation of the interactional justice in two distinct dimensions: *informational justice*, which refers to the adequated degree of the information used for explaining how the decisions were made and the level of descriptions details or of the given specifications (Beugré, 2007; Greenberg, 1994, 1995) and the *interpersonal justice*, which targets the concern regarding the respect and dignity displayed in people's treatment mode and the social sensibility toward the results obtained by individuals (Beugré, 2007; Greenberg, 1994, 1995). Colquitt (2001) suggested afterwards a four-factors model similar to Greenberg (1993) taxonomy of organizational justice.

Colquitt, Greenberg and Zapata-Phelan (2005) identify in the integrative stage three approach types: counterfactual conceptualizations, which develop perceptions approaches like „What might have been" (referent cognitions theory and fairness theory), group-oriented conceptualizations referring to it and to its members affiliation relationship (group value model, relational model and group engagement model) and the heuristic conceptualizations which approach the problem of using mental shortcuts for making justice assessments (fairness heuristic theory and the uncertainty management theory).

The Referent Cognitions Theory (Folger, 1986) refers to the fact that the judgments triggering point regarding justice is the comparison of a real personal experience with the cognitive representation of a hypothetical alternative situation like „What might have been", which means in different conditions and circumstances (Beugré, 2007; Zlate and Zaharia, 2008). Folger (1986) explains the emergence of the injustice feeling by the fact that the people use, after a personal experience, heuristical simulations for creating mental scenarios in which if the decisional agent would have acted differently, this could have lead to a favourable result for him.

The Fairness Theory originated in the referent cognitions theory (Beugré, 2007) and focuses on the responsibility implications in judging fairness, asserting that the responsibility has three interconected components (Folger and Cropanzano, 2001): a) existence of an unfavourable condition for which someone is made responsible, b) an event due to discretionary actions of a target person whose accountability is evaluated and c) harmful actions which violate an ethical principle of interpersonal conduct which constitute a normative justice standard.

Group Value Model (Lind and Tyler, 1988, cf. Colquitt, Greenberg and Zapata-Phelan, 2005) asserts that the process control, the consistency, the respect and justifications lead to fairness perception not only because of the influence over the obtained results, but also because it reaffirm the group values, Tyler (1989, cf. Beugré, 2007) highlighting the fact that the affirmation of these values is distinguished by three justice specific criteria: a) neutrality or the bias suppression in decision making process, b) trustworthy and c) standing or the group status aknowledgment.

The Relational Model asserts that the individual decisions to conforming to the authority directives depend on the legitimacy degree of that authority and the procedural justice judgments are the primary determinants of the authorities legitimacy perception (Tyler and Lind, 1992, cf. Beugré, 2007).

The research results assert the central elements of the relational model which are synthetized by Tyler and Lind in this way: „a good relationship with authorities promotes feelings of procedural fairness and that this, in turn, leads one to feel valued by the group. This group-value belief is, in turn, a potent determinant of various atittudes and behaviors, including judgments of legitimacy and obedience to authority" (1992, p. 158, cf. Colquitt, Greenberg and Zapata-Phelan, 2005, p. 41).

The Group Engagement Model extends the perspective of the group value model and the authority relational model toward the explanatory way in which the procedural justice shapes the cooperation in groups, organizations and societies (Tyler and Blader, 2003), being characterized by the following diferentiating particularities (Tyler and Blader, 2003, p. 352): a) its objective is the identification of atittudes and group cooperating behaviors antecedents, b) asserts that the identity judgments are the main factors that influence the atittudes, values and group cooperating behavior, and the judgments related to resources have an indirectly strong influence, intermediated by the identity judgments, c) assesses that the primary antecedent factor of the identity judgments is shaped by the judgments related to the procedural justice at the group level and d) asserts that the judgments regarding the status, related to pride and respect, outline the individual identification with the group.

The Group Engagement Model distinguishes between three aspects of social identity (Blader and Tyler, 2005, pp. 336-337): a) pride, which represents the group status and reputation perception, b) respect as perception of group status and standing and c) identification, which refers to the degree in which the employees define themselves as group members and the overlapping degree of the subject and group representations from a cognitive point of view.

The foundation of the ***Fairness Heuristic Theory*** is represented by the acknowledgment of the fact that the social relations, including the organizational ones, imply frequent meetings with the „fundamental social dilemma” which refers to two aspects (Lind, 2001): a) the results or benefits valued and appreciated, which can be obtained by identification with and conforming to the authority demands and b) the conformation to the authority, which expose the individuals to the danger of exploitation.

Fairness Heuristic Theory imply the two following effects (Lind, 2001; Van den Bos, Wilke, Lind and Vermunt, 1998; Van den Bos, Vermunt and Wilke, 1997): *primacy effect* (Miclea, 1999, cf. Iluţ, 2001, 2009), which refers to the fact that people use the most accessible information, the first being used as decisional heuristics in relation to afterwards acquired one (Lind, 2001; Beugré, 2007) and the *substitutability effect*, which refers to the fact that if a judgment type regarding the fairness is missing, the individuals use other fairness types for supplying the absence of the first one in making the final judgments (Lind, 2001).

Uncertainty management theory refers to the fact that the people use the fairness to administrate uncertainty which occurs when a person doesn’t have the capacity to anticipate the future or when confronting incompatibilities between different cognitions, between cognitions and experiences or between cognitions and behaviors (Van den Bos, 2002, cf. Beugré, 2007).

Lind and Van den Bos (2002, cf. Colquitt, Greenberg and Zapata-Phelan, 2005) assert that the people use the fairness to administrate the reactions to the uncertainty situations, discovering the confort in experiences associated or not with fairness, so that fairness is useful in uncertainty management because it gives to individuals a sense of security in relation to the social milieu (Van den Bos and Lind, 2002).

In the context of the organizational justice problems, people experience the uncertainty feeling regarding the way in which they are treated by the group or organizations authorities. If they do not have the necessary information for making judgments regarding the fairness with which they are treated, they try to obtain information from other persons and rely on these even if they are not complete (Beugré, 2007).

Chapter III. The performance appraisal: a context-based approach

Performance appraisal is „a mandated process in which, for a specified period of time, all or a group of employees' work performance, behaviors, or traits are individually rated, judged, or described by a person other than the rated employee and the results are kept by the organization" (Coens şi Jenkins, 2002, p. 14).

This definition contains five characteristics whose analysis done by the two previously mentioned authors represents a synthesis of a great deal of the specialized literature regarding this theme, which debated the controversial problem of the compatibility of the two basic goals of this process, namely the administrative one and the human resource development one (McGregor, 1957/1990; Meyer, Kay and French, 1965/1990; Grubb, 2007; Storey, 1995, cf. Lukács, 2002; Murphy and Cleveland, 1995), from which two distinct roles emerged for the rater which has generate debates of many researchers alongside the evolution of studying and development of the methods, techniques and instruments adequate to this managerial activity.

The study of the specialized literature regarding the performance appraisal permits the identification of three distinct stages from the point of view of the orientation in this process study with its improvement as main purpose.

I. *Psychometric stage* is characterised by the preocupation for the scales construction within the diverse formats of the performance appraisal instruments, in which the appraisal is seen as a simply measurement process. The majority of research focused on the attempt to disseminate the best type of measurement instruments, which can lead to an utmost reduction of raters errors, and on their training.

II. *Cognitive stage* referrs to the reorientation from the aknowledgement of the performance appraisal as a measurement process to that in which arise the problem of necessary information processing for issuing a judgment, process based on three operations set (Ilgen, Barnes-Farrell and McKellin, 1993, pp. 322-323): 1) information acquisition regarding those who must be appraised; 2) organization and storage of this information in the appraiser memory and 3) retrieval and the information integration in such a manner as to lead, finally, at the registering or documentation of the appraisal made to the person in question.

III. *Context-based stage* or of the social context of the performance appraisal started with the publishing of Murphy and Cleveland first book (1991, cf. Levy şi Williams, 2004), in which they assert that, although the antecedent scientific contributions, such as that of

Landy and Farr (1980), were very useful, they didn't bestow enough attention to the organizational context in which the appraisal is made and didn't manage to achieve a better connection between the research and this activity practice.

Ilgen, Barnes-Farrell and McKellin (1993) claim, to the final part of their study, that it seems more and more clear the fact that the major appraisal problems doesn't lay in the cognitive process field and neither in the measurement scale contruction field, mentioning the fact that Padgett asserted as far back as the year 1988 (cf. Ilgen, Barnes-Farrell and McKellin, 1993) that a more valuable research focus regarding the process in question is that which emphasizes the values and the expectancies generated by that social environment („social milieu") in which the appraisal participants are in.

The meta-analysis made by Levy and Williams (2004) on the studies published between 1995 and 2003 leads to a model which includes distal and proximal variables which directly or indirectly affect the reactions of the performance appraisal involved parts, namely the rater and the ratee. Among the distal factors, the authors include the organizational climate and culture, the organizational goals, the technological development level, the economic conditions, the human resource strategies, the workforce structure, all these indirectly affecting the appraisal participants' reactions.

The proximal variables are classified in two categories, process related and structural, rater aspects, such as those related to affects and motivation, being on the first category, and ratee aspects, such as those regarding the behavior and the impression management use and those regarding the relationship between the ratees and the environment and culture in which they interact, being on the second one. The structural proximal variables category is represented by aspects referring to performance, such as its standards and dimensions, and to appraisal, such as goal and objectives, frecquency, consequences, legitimacy, etc. (Levy and Williams, 2004).

Because Levy and Williams's meta-analytic study (2004) contains limited information regarding the distal variables, this thing can be compensated with the more consistent approach of these elements made by Murphy and Cleveland (1995), who consider that between the enviroment and raters and ratees exists the following interfering variables (1995, p. 37): 1. The performance standards; 2. The performance dimensions; 3. The appraisal frecquency; 4. The relationship supervizor-subordinate; 5. The consequences of the good rating versus the consequences of the bad rating; 6. The appraisal legitimacy, specifying though that this is not an exhaustive list, but a necessary base for the dissociation of different ways by which the environment can affect directly the performance appraisal.

Making an analysis of the influence of the external environment diverse aspects over these variables, for determining the munificence or the penury effects over them, the/these??? two researchers identified distinct influences of the societal, legal, economical, technical and physical effects.

The attention focused on the societal values influence over those six variables differs in intensity or strenght, the most powerful effects being over the performance standards and the appraisal legitimacy, and the more powerless recorded over the frecquency achievement of this activity (Murphy and Cleveland, 1995).

Although there are some studies regarding the political systems influence over the performance appraisal, Murphy and Cleveland (1995) questions these because the lack of a more larger data number and even the non-approval of some of the invocated results by some specialists. But the problem of the internal politics influence by the power concept is more clear and evident, Longenecker, Sims and Gioia (1987) making one of the more relevant studies on this subject, by which demonstrate that the managers deliberately manipulate the formal appraisals, either producing over-appreciative results or under-appreciative ones, depending on their own interest and goals. The three researchers concluded that these tactics depend on the organizational cultural politics, which influences its economic health and development potential, as well as the understanding and support of the performance appraisal process by the superior management.

Balzer and Sulsky (1990) identified the fact that the organizational, the appraiser, the appraisee and the researcher’s different goals and objectives, which represent components of the appraisal process, determine the criteria selection after which its efficacy is assessed. Based on previous studies, Levy and Williams (2004) determined that the appraiser errors and biases, the appraisal accuracy and the reactions towards it represent the main interests research field regarding the performance appraisal efficacy, Cardy and Dobbins asserting that the last of the three represents the best evaluation criterion of a performance appraisal system (1994, cf. Levy and Williams, 2004), afterwards this thing being underlined also by Keeping and Levy (2000, cf. Levy and Williams, 2004). Pichler (2012) arrived also at the same conclusion that the employee reactions are a fundamental resource for the appraisal process social interaction, these being strong connected with the relationship between the appraiser and the appraisee, the work appreciations and the appraisal participation. The participation idea was already identified as important by Roberts (2003), because it leads to an improvement of the employee acceptance and satisfaction towards the appraisal. In their turn, Cawley, Keeping and Levy (1998) assert that the participation determines the employee satisfaction towards the performance appraisal and proposed a series of solutions for the improvement of its engagement in the process, starting with the possibility to express its opinion, with an instrumental and a non-instrumental role as well, to have the opportunity to use self-evaluation, to participates in the appreciation system development and even to contributes to the process goals assessment.

Todd Grubb (2007) is standing out with two major contributions regarding the appraisal conflictual character. He identifies firstly three errors of the performance appraisal: compensation according to performance, which prioritize individual performance appraisal instead of group consideration and organizational productivity, focused on individual weak points instead of the strong ones and appraisal periodical implementation instead of using it as a continue process or at the end of a project completion. The second Grubb's contribution refers to the identification of a conflict set of different complexities specific to the performance appraisal, from those intrapersonal to those interpersonal and, finally, to those between an individual and the organization, also indicating the conflict potential of the most appealing appreciation system, the 360 degree appraisal, and of the most aggressive one, „rank and yank".

Douglas McGregor (1960/2006) identifies in its turn a conflict between the councellor and judge roles which the rater must assume for carrying out the administrative, informative and motivational goals of the performance appraisal.

Storey (1995, cf. Lukács, 2002) differentiates the possible conflicts between the stated and unstated appraisal goals, whereas Murphy and Cleveland (1995) highlight two incompatibility types, between the goals of the different stakeholders and between the multiple goals pursued by the same stakeholder.

The main oponent of the performance appraisal is Edwards Deming, the one who established the total quality management, who lines this process among the management seven mortal diseases because the „[The annual review] nourises short-term performance, annihilates long-term planning, builds fear, demolishes teamwork, nourishes rivalry and politics… It leaves people bitter, crushed, bruised, battered, desolate, despondent, dejected, feeling inferior, some even depressed, unfit for work for weeks after receipt of rating, unable to comprehend why they are inferior. It is unfair, as it ascribes to the people in a group differences that may caused totally by the system that they work in" (1982, p. 102), other practicioners and researchers defining it as a cultural symbol of the parental relationship between superior and subordinate characteristics of the patriarchal organizations (Block, in Coens and Jenkins, 2002, p. xiii) and even „bloodkletting' of today's management" (Covey, 1996, cf. Coens and Jenkins, 2002, p. 146), „once a year necessary evil” (Armstrong and Appelbaum, 2003).

These ideas are asserted also by a series of opinion surveys which outline the lack of satisfaction towards the performance appraisal, a study of the Society for Human Resources Management poiting out that over 90% of the performance appreciation systems doesn’t achieve success (Schellhardt, 1994, cf. Coens and Jenkins, 2002), 100 companies from “Fortune 500” list demonstrating in 1993 that just 10% of their employees are satisfied with the appraisal methods applied in their own organization (Vinson, 1996, cf. Armstrong and Appelbaum, 2003). Even a hard critic of the Edwards Deming’s opinion and of the other opponents of the performance appraisal had to accept the results of an international study according to which even if 80% of the organizations subjected their employees to some srt of performance appraisal process, just 5% of these are satisfied with the achieved results (Rudman, 2003).

The first performance appraisal system was implemented in Romania by the Law no. 12 from October 21, 1971, in full comunist regime. This applied for a good deal of the active Romanian population, pointing specially the technical, economical and the administrative personnel, and could have been extended also to other worker categories, which suggests that this process wasn’t considered as being compatible with any kind of professional activity. Moreover, in regard to the actual performance appraisal systems, the socialist system integrated an appreciation criterion which extended the activity, according to the state ideology of that time, beyond the work borders, asserting the behavior appraisal even in family, also in society, adding also the participation at the collective activity and the atittude towards the country general interests, elements asking for an investigation regarding the employee exceeding clearly and consistently the workplace boundaries. Another element deserving apprehesion as being specific to this first human resource appraisal system implemented in 1971 is the fact that the acquiring of the rating „Unsatisfactory”, as minimum possible rating, had as effects just the deny of access to promotion opportunities and the keeping of the actual position or the demotion, the dismissing possibility not being stipulated.

The change of political regime in December 1989 was followed by a period of stagnation of concerns regarding the managerial problems, after which appeared new innitiatives which started to reorder important sectors of the Romanian society, such as that of the public administration. Therefore appeared the Civil servants status, included in the Law no. 188 from December 8, 1994, in which is putting the question of performance appraisal. Similarly, another laws regularizing, in a centralist manner, this problem regarding other categories of budgetary personnel appeared, imposing methods with an high level of generality and universality claims for their application.

For our research we chose two categories of the Romanian public sector employees, civil servants employed in county councils and librarians employed in county public libraries, because their adecquate appraisal systems present more similarities than differences, fact allowing the comparison of their perception towards it.

Among similarities we mention the administrative and the development process goals, the annual achievement frecquence, three categories of process involved actors, from which two directly and one indirectly, the appraisal document structure, the possibility of written mentioning the reviewed goals, different definition of the common criteria depending on the position, different number of criteria coresponding to the complexity of the position or position's authority, numeric scale with five values, where 1 – minimum level and 5 – maximum level, scale with four final ratings (unsatisfactory, satisfactory, good, very good), procedure with three compulsory stages (appraisal document completion, appraisal interview and document countersign) and the appeal procedures available for situations when someone experience dissatisfaction with the appraisal final result.

As principal differences we apprehend: different terminology for identical content (e.g.: file versus appraisal report, appraisal criteria versus performance criteria), content differences, definition and number of criteria, difference of value interval scales adequate to the final ratings, difference in the promotion conditioning by the ratings received in the last years (the rating „Very good" in two from the last three years for librarians vs. at least the rating „Good" in the last two years for the civil servants).

Chapter IV. Organizational justice in the performance appraisal context

Many organizational justice established specialists invoked in their works the performance appraisal as a very adequate process for studying it from the models and theories regarding the corectness or justice perspective (Colquitt, Greenberg and Zapata-Phelan, 2005; Cropanzano, Bowen and Gilliland, 2007; Folger and Greenberg, 1985; Folger and Cropanzano, 1998; Greenberg, 1987b, 1995; Thurston and McNall, 2010).

In their study, Bretz, Milkovich and Read (1992) outline the fact that the managers appreciate the corectness as being the most important problem which the organizations are confronting with regarding the performance appraisal.

Burns Walsh (2003) asserts that one research orientation direction is concentrated on the employees satisfaction and on the process perception because it gives to the researchers and to the practiciens a comprehensive image of the appraisal systems's efficacy and on their appreciation.

Greenberg contributed to the study of applying the organizational justice within the performance appraisal process with several studies, four of which were published in just two years, 1986 and 1987. The first research made by Greenberg (1986, cf. Greenberg, 1995) on this theme states the question of this process perceived fairness generating source, which can eventually determines the acceptance of the work appreciation systems by their beneficiaries (Dipboye and de Pontbriand, 1981; Lawler, 1967). Greenberg asserts in this study that the answer given to the problem can be identified with two different approaches, focused on two distinct types of organizational justice (1995): the perspective of *distributive justice* concentrates on the fairness of the received evaluation interrelated with the carried out work, this judgment being based on the report inputs-outputs of the Adams's equity theory (1965), whereas the perspective of the procedural justice is centered on the perceived fairness of procedures which determine the ratings. The researcher made finally the suggestion that the subsequent studies must not ignore the distributive factors positioned at a second level towards those more recently discovered and more numerous of procedural nature, both categories being necessary for the best elaborate justice conceptualization by their applying in the organizational frame in general and in the performance appraisal in particular (Greenberg, 1995).

In his second study, of empirical nature, on the organizational justice in the performance appraisal context, published also in the year 1986, Greenberg (1995) asserts the necessity of understanding this process fairness from two distributive perspectives: a) the measure in which the performance rating reflects the individual work quality and b) the measure in which organizational compensation are distributed concordantly with the appraisal results.

Greenberg suggests a taxonomy of the performance appraisal as results, this taxonomic model having two dimensions: 1) the terminality of evaluation, which is making the distinction between this process result being penultimate, because it leads to other subsequent judgments, or representing the final condition per se and 2) the analysis level referring to the results operating system, one by which the employee organization position is assessed, and other which indicates the result influence over his or her psychological condition.

The third study published by Greenberg (1986, cf. Greenberg, 1995) regarding the organizational justice in the performance appraisal context discussed the importance of fair procedures in relation to three key tasks: data collection, information evaluation and results communication in the appraisal interview. Furthermore, it was studied the way by which the procedural fairness can contributes to the appraisal process specific bias elimination.

The forth study done between 1986-1987 by Greenberg (1987c) is focused on the diaries practice for promoting the performance appraisal fairness, the obtained result demonstrating the diary use efficacy, because it improves the performance appraisal perceived fairness, the participants whose work was evaluated by an appraiser which practiced the observation and the work recording, considering both procedures and the obtained result pursuant to their application as being more fair than their colleagues whose work was continually observed or whose work wasn't observed and noted at all until the end of the experiment.

His studies regarding the performance appraisal fairness perception's results lead Greenberg to the conclusion that the participants perceive the difference between the procedural and distributive sources of the organizational justice and that the procedural elements manipulation are further responsible than those regarding the distributive elements for the variation of the perceived fairness, this conclusion being consonant with the theoretical models (e.g. Leventhal, 1980) and with research previously made (e.g. Alexander and Ruderman, 1987; Tyler and Caine, 1981).

Erdogan, Kraimer and Liden (2001) focused their attention on the procedural justice in their study, because it proved to be an important predictor of the performance appraisal satisfaction (Landy, Barnes and Murphy, 1978; Taylor, Masterson, Renard and Tracy, 1998; Taylor, Tracy, Renard, Harrison and Carroll, 1995), treating it as a one dimensional construct since it was meant that in that way those who must apply the procedures cannot altered them in the moment of their implementation, so that the procedural justice perception will be determined furthest by the organizational decision regarding the procedural design. This three researchers's study explicitly examined the relationship between the *due process* characteristics and the procedural justice, which is considered as being two dimensional, having a systemic component reffering to the perceived fairness of the system or organization adopted appraisal politics and procedures and to that of the procedures applied by appraisers beyond the formal organizational system.

Carrying out a brief review of the organizational justice specialized literature evolution, Greenberg (1993, 1995) determined a limitation of the traditional approaches, bi-factorial, on the structural nature aspects (Greenberg and McCarty, 1990, cf. Greenberg, 1993, 1995; Tyler and Bies, 1990, cf. Greenberg, 1993, 1995), referring to the mechanisms by which the distributive and procedural justice are achieved, exploring problems such as the distributive norms adequation at a particular situation (Greenberg and Cohen, 1982, cf. Greenberg, 1993, 1995) or the identification of the procedural elements whereby the compensation allocation fairness is improved (Greenberg, 1986).

Greenberg's (1993, 1995) conclusion is that, although the tendency of focusing attention on the structural aspects is important, this leads to ignoring another important fairness perception source, namely the justice social determinants.

Starting from this last aknowledgement, Greenberg (1993, 1995) conceive and propose a justice classes taxonomy, formed by the intersection of two important independent dimensions: a) justice categories – procedural and distributive and b) focal determinants – structural and social. Whereas the difference between the procedural and distributive justice is based on the distinction between the process and content, the first category reffering to the procedures determinining some results and the second to the perceived fairness of the results final distribution, the distinction between the structural and social determinants is based on the fair action immediate focus, the first determinants type concentrating on the environment context in which the interaction take place, whereas the second one is concentrating on the individual applied treatment.

The combination of the traditional fairness categories with the two types of determinants leads to the identification of four distinct justice classes:

The systemic justice (structural-procedural) refers to a certain type of procedural justice made by the help of the structural means and is based on some studies results, such as those of Thibaut and Walker (1995, cf. Greenberg, 1993), in which is specified that the procedural justice demands a disputes resolution context patterning, so that the involved parts have control over the process, and those of Leventhal (1980), by which he concluded that the fairness principle asks for imposition of procedures based on which allocaton decision are made, so that those are consistent from an individual to another and over time, doesn't permit biases, are based on information characterised by accuracy, offers opportunities for decisions change, represents the concerns and interests of all the involved parts and are compatible with moral and ethical prevalent standards.

The configural justice (structural-distributive) refers to the distributive justice type achieved the structural means, being studied by the sociology and social psychology specialists interested in the perceived fairness of the resources allocation in diverse circumstantial situations.

The informational justice (social-procedural) refers to the procedural justice social determinants, being achieved by supplying information about procedures which demonstrates the aknowledgement of people concerns.

The interpersonal justice (social-distributive) is a term used for referring to the distributive justice social aspects, following the concern for the individuals in their quality of recipients of certain results based on a distributive decision.

Thurston (2001, cf. Burns Walsh, 2003) made a research regarding the performance appraisal in which he build ten scales reflecting the taxonomic model of justice suggested by Greenberg (1993), renewing it in a new study (Thurston and McNall, 2010) in which he tested the same structure in relation with the Colquitt (2001) four-factors model.

In a context of permanent and long term controversy related to this managerial process, the multi-dimensional approach suggested by Thurston (2001, cf. Burns Walsh) through his model, which integrates a model of four-factors taxonomy of organizational justice (Greenberg, 1993, 1995), opened the way to both researchers and practitioners for a better understanding of the professional performance appraisal complexity.

Chapter V. Research methodology

The research goal is to investigate the performance appraisal fairness perception and the satisfaction towards it on three aspects: the appraisal system, the last achieved/made appraisal and the appraiser implementing the system (Thurston and McNall, 2010; Sudin, 2011). The research is based on the organizational justice tetrafactorial taxonomic model of Jerald Greenberg (1993) and on its application manner in three researches achieved in the professional performance appraisal context (Burns Walsh, 2003; Thurston, 2001, cf. Burns Walsh, 2003; Thurston and McNall, 2010).

The research covered the North-Western Romanian region, teritorial-administrative zone constituted from six counties. From these counties were selected two types of representative institutions, the county councils and the county libraries. Among the total of 12 institutions which were asked to participate, seven agreed to collaborate.

The survey has been achieved by the use of questionnaire with 130 assertions and questions, questionnaire applied to those two categories of employees from the public organizations mentioned above.

The followed **research objectives** are:

I. Determination of the satisfaction with the perfomance appraisal process of the employees from the public organizations participating in this study, measured with three multi-items scales targeting „The satisfaction with the last performance appraisal", „The satisfaction with the performance appraisal system" and „The satisfaction with the appraiser".

II. Determination of the perceived justice of the performance appraisal by the employees from the public organizations participating in this study, measured with ten multi-items scales (Thurston, 2001, cf. Burns Walsh, 2003) corresponding to the Greenberg four-factors taxonomy model (1993).

III. Determination of the relationship between the justice of the performance appraisal process perceived by the employees from the public organizations participating in this study and the following socio-demographic characteristics: age, gender, ethnic group, education level, job/position's complexity, job/position's authority, institution tenure, department tenure, job tenure, tenure in the subordination of the actual appraiser and profession.

IV. Determination of the perceived performance appraisal justice influence towards the satisfaction regarding this process, as it is perceived by the employees from the public organizations participating in this study.

The following **hypotheses** were established for achieving the third research objective:

1. Systemic justice perception (structural-procedural) of the performance appraisal positively influences the satisfaction with the appraisal system of the employees from the organizations participating in this research.

2. Configural justice (structural-distributive) of performance appraisal positively influences the satisfaction with the last appraisal of the employees from the organizations participating in this research.

3. Informational justice perception and interpersonal justice perception of the performance appraisal positively influences the satisfaction with the appraiser of the employees from the organizations participating in this research.

The questionnaire was designed in two forms, one for librarians and one for the civil servants, being different only because of some specialized terms.

Technically, the questionnaire was designed in two ways. The items no. 1-112 were constructed according to Likert model, as affirmations associated with a five values scale, where 1 = Strongly disagree; 2 = Disagree; 3 = Neither disagree or agree; 4 = Agree şi 5 = Strongly agree, the used scale for enabling the explanation of the direct results being the following (Burns Walsh, 2003): 1,00-1,50 = Strongly disagree; 1,51-2,50 = Disagree; 2,51-3,49 = Neither disagree or agree; 3,50-4,49 = Agree; 4,50-5,00 = Strongly agree. A no. 9 response meaning „I don't know/I cannot appreciate" was introduced to some affirmations, according to a methodology explained in the thesis. For the no. 113-130 items, the measuring scales were designed such as to correspond to their content.

The questionnaire was designed on four parts:

a. The first part contains opening questions which target the respondents perception regarding to the Romania’s economic recovery after the world crisis started in the year 2008, but its effect was resented in our country in 2010, when the wages reduction and all the additional benefits cuts were operated (with few exceptions only), the perceived chances of work finding at a national and local level, of personnel scarcity, discerned at institutional, subunit and personal level, of the institutional compensation level, of the salary correspondence with the insurance of a decent living, with the job description tasks and with the entire organization activity (beyond the limits of the occupied job).

b. The second part includes performance appraisal fairness or justice perception’s measurement elements.

c. The third part includes elements for measuring the reaction towards the most recently performance appraisal session and its result, towards the performance appraisal system and towards the appraiser, in this particular case of the Romanian public sector meaning the direct supervisor or superior. These elements are considered as being indicators of the satisfaction with the professional performance appraisal in all of its principal aspects.

d. The fourth part contains elements which refers to the respondent socio-demographic characteristics.

Chapter VI. Data analysis and interpretation

The initial number of returned questionnairies was 221, which represented a general response rate of 60,48%, but 15 were eliminated because they ignored some rules initially stipulated, so that the final sample contains 206 respondents, representing 56,37% from the total eligible cases.

The sample structure is the following:

- by the gender criterion: 72,5% females and 27,5% males;
- by the age: 30,7% between 26 and 40 years old, 36,1% between 41 and 50 years old, 29,3% between 51 and 60 years old and 3,9% over 60 years old;
- by the ethnic group: 92,2% Romanian and 7,8% Hungarian;
- by the education level: 10,4% high-school and post-high school studies, 3,9% short term university studies, 43,3% long term university studies, 40,4% specialized studies and master degree, 2% PhD studies;

- by the job level: 8,5% operational positions with high school studies or third class civil servant position, 5,5% operational positions with short term university studies or second class civil servant position , 71,9% operational positions with university studies or first class civil servant position and 14,1% managerial positions;

- by the organization tenure: 62,7% with over 10 years, 24,5% between 6 and 10 years, 4,9% between 4 and 5 years, and 7,8% between 1 and 3 years;

- by the subunit tenure: 44,1% over 10 years, 23,5% between 6 and 10 years, 11,3% between 4 and 5 years, 17,6% between 1 and 3 years, and 3,4% under one year;

- by the job tenure: 43,4% over 10 years, 22,9% between 6 and 10 years, 13,2% between 4 and 5 years, 15,6% between 1 and 3 years and 4,9% under one year;

- by the monthly earned wage: 9% under 1.000 lei, 35,4% between 1.001 and 1.500 lei, 33,9% between 1.501 and 2.000 lei, 16,4% between 2.001 and 2.500 lei, 3,7% between 2.501 and 3.000 lei, 1,6% between 3.501 and 4.000 lei;

- by the profession criteria: 52,4% civil servants and 47,6% librarians;

- by the county criterion: 43,7% from Cluj, 35,4% from Sălaj, 13,1% from Bistriţa-Năsăud and 7,8% from Satu Mare (this last county being represented by just one organization).

The 13th scales reliability analysis regarding the performance appraisal fairness and the satisfaction with its three components finally lead to the model reduction, from 93 items to 81 items, representing a reduction with 13,98%.

The factor analysis used for the identification of the interdependence between the four scales coresponding to Greenberg's four-factors taxonomy model (1993) lead to the extraction of a single factor, such as can be observed in the following table.

Loading factors for the four types of organizational justice
determined by the Greenberg (1993) taxonomic model
applied in the performance appraisal context

Factors matrix[a]

	Factor
	1
Scale 1 Systemic Justice	,778
Scale 2 Configural Justice	,909
Scale 3 Informational Justice	,904
Scale 4 Interpersonal Justice	,875

Extraction method: Analysis of the principal components

a. 1 factor extracted .

Consequently, appealing to the hierarchical cluster analysis method, the following results were obtained: the cluster no. 1 contains the scales no. 6, 7 and 8, corresponding to the informational justice (social-procedural), the cluster no. 2 contains the scales no. 4 and no. 5 and correspond to the configural justice (structural-distributive), the cluster no. 3 is exclusively formed by the scale no. 3 of the organizational justice, the cluster no. 4 is formed by the scale no. 1, the cluster no. 5 contains the scales no. 9 and no. 10, corresponding to the interpersonal justice (social-distributive). The only organizational justice type from the Greenberg's (1993, 1995) taxonomy for which it wasn't confirmed the Thurston's model (2001, cf. Burns Walsh, 2003; Thurston and McNall, 2010) is the systemic justice (structural-procedural). The dissociation of the scale no. 2, „Trust in the appraiser", from the scales no. 1 and no. 3 is explained by Erdogan, Kraimer and Liden (2001), who assert that the procedural justice of the performance appraisal is two-dimensional, consisting of the organizational imposed system justice (in our case by a national central authority) and in the appraiser procedural justice. The dissociation of the scales no. 1 and 3, representing the systemic procedural justice, can be explained by the fact that the first refers to the anticipative ascertainment of the objectives defining the expectations regarding the employee future performance, and the second refers to what the employees can do after they find out the appraisal result and after they consider it to be incorrect, that means that we have a form of pre-evaluative procedural justice and one of post-evaluative nature.

For determining the appraisal process satisfaction, corresponding to the first research objective, we calculated the general score with the scores obtained for each of its three components. The general score of the satisfaction towards the performance appraisal process is 3,49, corresponding to the parity interval of the answer variance „Neither disagree or agree".

The second research objective refers to the performance appraisal justice perception, and the general score obtained by it is 3,85, meaning that the respondents have a positive opinion regarding the fairness of the process.

The analysis of data corresponding to the third objective leads to the conclusion that, even if exists some of the socio-demographic variables – age, gender, ethnic group, education level, job complexity, job authority, institution tenure, department tenure, job tenure, tenure in the subordination of the actual appraiser and profession – for which were registered some significant differences, the contribution to the perception differences of the diverse organizational justice types applied in the performance appraisal context is low/weak.

For achieving the last research objective, targeting the performance appraisal justice influence identification measured with the ten scales determined by Thurston (2001, cf. Burns Walsh, 2003) based on Greenberg's (1993, 1995) taxonomy model on the satisfaction with this process, measured with three components (Burns Walsh, 2003; Thurston şi McNall, 2010), three hypotheses presented in an previous summary section were tested, using the linear regression method.

The hypothesis no. 1 wasn't confirmed, none of the three procedural justice types, two of systemic nature and one of the appraiser, which replaced the systemic justice (structural-procedural) from the Greenberg's (1993, 1995) taxonomy model, influence at all, neither positively or negatively, the satisfaction with the appraisal system.

The hypothesis no. 2 was confirmed since the regression result demonstrated the positive influence of the configural justice (structural-distributive) of the performance appraisal on the satisfaction with the last appraisal provided to the respondents.

The third hypothesis was also confirmed, since it was resulting that both the information justice (social-procedural) and the interpersonal justice (social-distributive) positively influence the satisfaction with the appraiser.

The most surprising result emerged from the testing of the hypothesis no. 1 and is similar with that obtained by Sudin (2011), which concludes that new research examining this problem of the procedural justice irrelevance, in a more complex and thorough manner, is necessary. For that purpose, we identified in the specialized literature the fact that the studies of Leventhal (1980) and of Leventhal, Karuza and Fry (1980, cf. Colquitt, Greenberg şi Zapata-Phelan, 2005) assert that when the allocation decisions results are in accordance with their beneficiaries expectancies, the procedures were not taken into consideration. Furthermore, an experiment made by Greenberg (1987b) lead to the conclusion that the subjects receiving high and medium level rewards for their work perceived them as being correct regardless of to the used procedure, just those receiving low level rewards considering them correct according to the procedural fairness perception. In our respondents' cases, 90,7% received the maximum rating, everybody else receiving the next rating which is "Good".

Because Bretz, Milkovich and Read (1992) assert that the appraisal of the 60-70% of the work force on the first two of the highest levels of performance measurement scale is a common phenomenon, and Murphy and Cleveland (1995) determined that 80% of the ratings are 6 and 7 when the appraisal scales has seven values, we can conclude that in our research case we deal also with the inflation phenomenon or the leniency error. For determining a possible explanation of this tendency, we referred to the items no. 1-11 from the questionnaire, based on which we concluded that both the appraisers and the appraisees consider that:

- Romania hasn't significantly recovered from the 2008 economic crisis;
- generally speaking, in Romania it's not easy to find a job;
- they don't think that it's easy to find a job in their own city/town either;
- (the majority of them) „Agree" with the fact that the organization in which they work endures a human resource deficit;
- they „Neither disagree or agree" with the idea of the human resource scarcity in the subunit (bureau, service, department, etc.) in which they work;
- they „Agree" with the affirmation which says that their immediate superior has a very hard work daily schedule;
- they „Agree" with the affirmation according to which they have a daily very hard work schedule;
- they „Agree" with the affirmation according to which the majority of salaries are modest in the organization in which they work;
- they „Disagree" with the affirmation that their salary affords them to live a decent life;
- they „Neither disagree or agree" with the idea of the salary accordance with the activity which they must carry out depending on the job description requirements;
- they „Disagree" with the affirmation according to which the received salary is in accordance with the entire activity which they must carry out at their workplace.

This unity of opinion can stay as an explanatory base of the inflation practice.

Furthermore, the difference between the score obtained by the scale no. 12, „The satisfaction with the appraisal system" and the scores obtained by the scales corresponding to the systemic justice (structural-procedural) lead to the conclusion that the actual performance evaluation is not made according to the official, formal system, but according to one informal, outlined and used by the appraisers depending on their own goals and interests, which can be personal interested, appraisees' oriented and/or organizational oriented, certifying the displacement of the *test metaphor* principles with those of the *political metaphor* (Folger and Cropanzano, 1998; Folger, Konovsky and Cropanzano, 1992).

Chapter VII. Final conclusions

The main goal of our research was the determination of the relationship between the perception of the performance appraisal organizational justice and the satisfaction withthis process in the public sector of the North-Western Romanian Development Region.

Firstly, we determined the level of satisfaction with the performance appraisal process using its three components, the first two referring to the result obtained in the last appraisal session and to the appraisal system (Cawley, Keeping and Levy, 1998; Levy and Williams, 2004), and the third one targeting the appraiser (Boswell and Boudreau, 2000; Burns Walsh, 2003; Pichler, 2012; Tang and Sarsfield-Baldwin, 1996; Thurston, 2001, cf. Burns Walsh, 2003; Thurston and McNall, 2010). The final result obtained demonstrates that the respondents are satisfied with the last appraisal and with their appraiser, but registered in the case of the satisfaction with the appraisal system just the mean 2,99, corresponding to the parity interval of the answer „Neither disagree or agree", the only score type of this kind obtained for all the multidimensional scales used in this research, the other 12 registering scores corresponding to the answer variance „Agree".

The hierarhical cluster analysis confirmed just partially the four-factors taxonomy model of Greenberg (1993, 1995), seven out of the ten scales with multiple items measuring the performance appraisal fairness perception suggested by Thurston (2001, cf. Burns Walsh, 2003) grouping in three clusters according to the original model, the three scales corresponding to the systemic justice (structural-procedural) do not form a group, but separate from each other, result partially explained by Erdogan, Kraimer and Liden's study (2001), which leads to the difference between the procedural-systemic justice and the appraiser procedural justice, and the fact that the justice of performance objectives assessing constitutes a pre-evaluative fairness form, whereas the justice of the appraisal result appeal constitutes a post-evaluative justice form.

For achieving the third objective, we demonstrated that none of the followed 11 socio-demographic variables manifest any influence on the six types or organizational justice dimensions identified with the cluster analysis.

Finally, conforming to the fourth research objective, we arrived at the following conclusions:

1. The configural justice (structural-distributive) is the most influent form of organizational fairness, significantly affecting all the three components of the appraisal satisfaction.

2. The interpersonal justice (social-distributive) influences two of the three satisfaction components, the one referring to the last appraisal and the one referring to the appraiser.

3. The informational justice (social-procedural) significantly influences just one satisfaction component, namely the one referring to the appraiser.

4. None of the three types of procedural justice determined with the scales corresponding to the systemic justice (structural-procedural) from Greenberg (1993) four-factors taxonomy model significantly influence any of the three components of the satisfaction with the performance appraisal.

The absence of the influence of the two procedural-system justice types, pre-evaluative and post-evaluative, and of the appraiser procedural justice on the satisfaction with the appraisal system is explained by Leventhal's (1980) and Leventhal, Karuza and Fry' studies (1980, cf. Colquitt, Greenberg and Zapata-Phelan, 2005), according to which the procedures are not taken into consideration when the allocation decisions results are according with their receivers expectations, aspect also later determined by Greenberg (1987b), who concludes that the perception of high level and middle compensations as being correct nullify the impact of fairness appreciation of the procedures based on which were obtained. Because all the respondents affirmed that they received the most highly placed ratings of the performance scale, this shows that we are situated in a scenario corresponding to Greenberg's conclusions, and the fact that 92% of them consider that they received the deserved rating also confirms the conclusions relevance of the two studies from 1980.

The explanation of the ratings „Good" şi „Very good" received by all the respondents can be that of the inflation practice or the leniency error, specific to the *political metaphor* identified as being practiced instead of *test metaphor*, specific to the appraisal systems designers' rational intention, this role of the results political manipulation being explained in the particular case of the public organizations from the North-Western Romanian region by the common opinion of the appraisers and appraisees regarding their working unsatisfactory conditions.

Finally, we can assert that we have a *ritualistic appraisal* situation conceived with political goals (Barlow, 1989, cf. McGivern and Ferlie, 2007), representing a particular form of 'mock bureaucracy', which aims to conform to certain regulations imposed by an external factor (Gouldman, 1954, cf. McGivern and Ferlie, 2007), conclusion also sustained by the fact that 49,8% of the respondents agree with the affirmation „I think that the main motive of the performance appraisal being done is its compulsory characteristic by law enforcement", whereas just 16,8% are against it.

The performance appraisal has the potential to encourage the appraisees to actively participate in the appraisal interview, not for being stimulated to exercise a instrumental control over the final rating determination, because it cannot influence, according to the law, the change of salary level, but for the fact that this occasion offered them the possibility to practice an value-expressive participation (Lind and Tyler, 1988, cf. Cawley, Keeping and Levy, 1998), which permits to identify the measure in which they are accepted, respected and appreciated by their professional group, explanation sustained by the group value model (Lind and Tyler, 1998, cf. Colquitt, Greenberg and Zapata-Phelan, 2005) and by the relational model (Tyler and Lind, 1992, cf. Beugré, 2007), and also by the fact that 54,7% respondents are feeling stimulated by this goal, whereas just 10,4% doesn’t see in it an involvement stake.

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