Rewards for Rehabilitation and Special Education Staff and Their Importance in Employee Motivation

Noula Alvanoudi
University of Macedonia, Greece, *noula@uom.edu.gr*

Miltiadis Staboulis
University of Macedonia, Greece, *staboulis@uom.edu.gr*

Konstantinos Papadopoulos
University of Macedonia, Greece, *kpapado@uom.edu.gr*

This study examined the rewards for 21 (3 males and 18 females) Greek employees, from different specialties who work with people with special needs either in two rehabilitation centers, a public (n= 9) and a private (n= 5), and or in different public school structures (n=7). For the purpose of this study, three focus groups were set up to determine employees' perceptions and feelings about rewards and their importance in motivating staff. The conceptual research framework was based on the Total Rewards Model of Towers Perrin. From the focus groups we drew conclusions regarding the rewards that were applied and identified those that were important for motivation. Without exception, all the participants were primarily intrinsically motivated. The findings support the notion that the rewards connected to work environment and learning and development were the most important for their motivation, while the rewards connected to pay and benefits did not seem of great importance for their motivation. The Total Rewards Framework proved to be appropriate and useful in understanding the perspectives of rehabilitation and special education staff on rewards. The usefulness of the results lies in the holistic study of the rewards, which can provide feedback for employers, trade unions, and lifelong learning. The study can, also, provide a perspective for future research into the long-term exploitation of the total rewards model.

Keywords: rewards, rehabilitation staff, special education staff, employee motivation, total rewards framework

INTRODUCTION

Rewards have a central place in the theoretical models of human resources management (Storey, 1995). They can be regarded as the fundamental expression of the employment relationship (Armstrong, 2009). Rewards are considered "the benefits that arise from

performing a task, rendering a service or discharging a responsibility" (Pitts, 1995, p. 13). The reward system of an organization, as Henderson (2000, p. 17) states, "includes anything that an employee may value and desire and that the employer is able or willing to offer in exchange for employee contribution."

Total rewards is the combination of financial and non-financial rewards available to employees (Armstrong, 2009). It encompasses all aspects of work experience value for employees, not just on some of them, such as pay and benefits. It aims to mix the financial and non-financial elements of the reward into a single set (Armstrong & Cummins, 2011). As defined by Manas and Graham (2003), total reward "includes all types of rewards – indirect as well as direct, and intrinsic as well extrinsic." Each aspect of reward, namely base pay, contingent pay, employee benefits and non-financial rewards, which include intrinsic rewards from the work itself, are linked together and treated as an integrated and coherent whole. Total rewards combine the impact of the two major categories of rewards: a) transactional rewards: tangible rewards that arise from transactions between the employer and employees concerning pay and benefits; and b) relational rewards: intangible rewards concerned with learning and development and the work environment (Armstrong, 2009). An equally wide definition of total rewards is offered by Prenzno and Griffith (2000) who state that total rewards are all the available tools that may be used to attract, retain, motivate and satisfy employees. The benefits of the total reward approach are: a) greater impact on the motivation and commitment of people; b) enhancing the employment relationship through the maximum use of relational and transactional rewards; c) flexibility to meet individual needs; d) talent management (Armstrong, 2009).

Kerr (1997) refers to the following features of ideal rewards: a) they promote both efficiency and equity; b) they meet not only economic and non-economic needs; c) they are available; d) everyone has the right to participate in them; e) they are communicated to all employees; f) they are reversible. The main impact of satisfactory rewards is to increase incentives for employees. Rewards and incentives play a key role in the level of satisfaction that employees derive from their work. A combination of basic salary, additional benefits and recognition is necessary for an integrated benefit package (Zingheim & Schuster, 2000). A compensation plan model for the direct support of professionals working with individuals with developmental disabilities integrates an assortment of factors – compensation, benefits, recognition and incentives (Kuznia, 2008). Studies have also shown that teachers appreciate intrinsic rewards, such as student achievement and positive relationships with them (Ashiedu & Scott-Ladd, 2012; Dilworth, 1991; Plihal, 1982; Taylor et al., 2014).

Furthermore, employee motivation is one of the most important issues of management as it is linked to human behavior and job performance. Motivation is also one of the most frequently studied subjects in organizational behavior. According to Baron (1991, p. 1) motivation is "an internal process that activates, guides and maintains behavior (especially goal- directed behavior)." It is actually the process that explains the intensity, the direction and the persistence of an individual's effort towards a particular goal (Robbins & Judge, 2007). Teachers' high work motivation proved to have a positive and

significant effect on their performance and on the growth of students' learning interest. (Hendrawijaya, 2022). Managers can motivate their employees by offering rewards that may meet their needs. Employees differ in whether they are motivated by intrinsic rewards, such as job content, autonomy, responsibility, or extrinsic rewards such as pay and perks. Also, employees may respond differently to rewards in different times (Gordon, 2002).

A number of surveys have been carried out about the positive role of rewards on motivation ((Deci, 1971; Milne, 2007; Nyakundi, 2012; Pourtoussi, Ghanizadeh & Mousavi, 2018). In parallel, many studies have been conducted concerning employee preferences in terms of rewards provided by the organizations they work for and how these rewards can positively affect their motivation. The most important and most desirable rewards according to the literature are: good relationships with colleagues (Gkorezis & Petridou, 2012; Harpaz, 1990; Kim, 2005); a good relationship with supervisors (Evans, 1970); interesting and varied work (Ali & Ahmed, 2009); recognition and reward (Ali & Ahmed, 2009; Gkorezis & Petridou, 2012; Wiley, 1997); autonomy and initiative (Reeve & Deci, 1996; Richer & Vallerand, 1995; Zuckerman et al., 1978); career development (Ali & Ahmed, 2009; Allen et al., 2003; Kim, 2005; Nyakundi, 2012); job security (Jurkiewicz et al., 1998; Kim, 2005; Wiley, 1997), and good salary (Ali & Ahmed, 2009; Dilworth, 1991; Harpaz, 1990; Kim, 2005, 2005; Wiley, 1997).

Although, rewards as a mean of enhancing employee motivation has also been the subject of research and annotation in education (Ali & Ahmed, 2009; Ashiedu & Scott-Ladd, 2012; Dilworth, 1991; Nyakundi, 2012; Plihal, 1982; Taylor et al., 2014), not many studies were found regarding employees who work with people with special needs. Hence, it is necessary a study regarding rewards that applied to special education and rehabilitation staff and their importance in employee motivation to be carried out. Additionally, no study was found that examined all types of rewards that the aforementioned employee categories value in their work experience and the impact that these could have in staff motivation. Thus, a need for a more holistic approach, such as the one "total reward" approach offers, exists.

The Study

The aims of this research were to determine the views of rehabilitation and special education (SE) employees on: 1) the rewards that were applied, and 2) the importance of rewards for their motivation. For the purpose of this study, two focus groups for rehabilitation staff and one for SE staff were set up to determine their perceptions, feelings and thoughts about rewards in the workplace.

The conceptual research framework (Figure 1), that was used for the focus group and concerned rewards for rehabilitation and SE staff, was based on Towers Perrin's model of total reward (Armstrong & Brown, 2009, p. 25). The conceptual research framework embraced everything that people value in the employment relationship. The upper two quadrants − pay and benefits − represent transactional rewards. These are financial in nature and are essential to recruit and retain staff but can be easily copied by

competitors. By contrast, the relational (non-financial) rewards at the two lower quadrants are essential to enhancing the value of the upper two quadrants, cannot be easily copied and can create an advantage in relation to the human capital and its management.
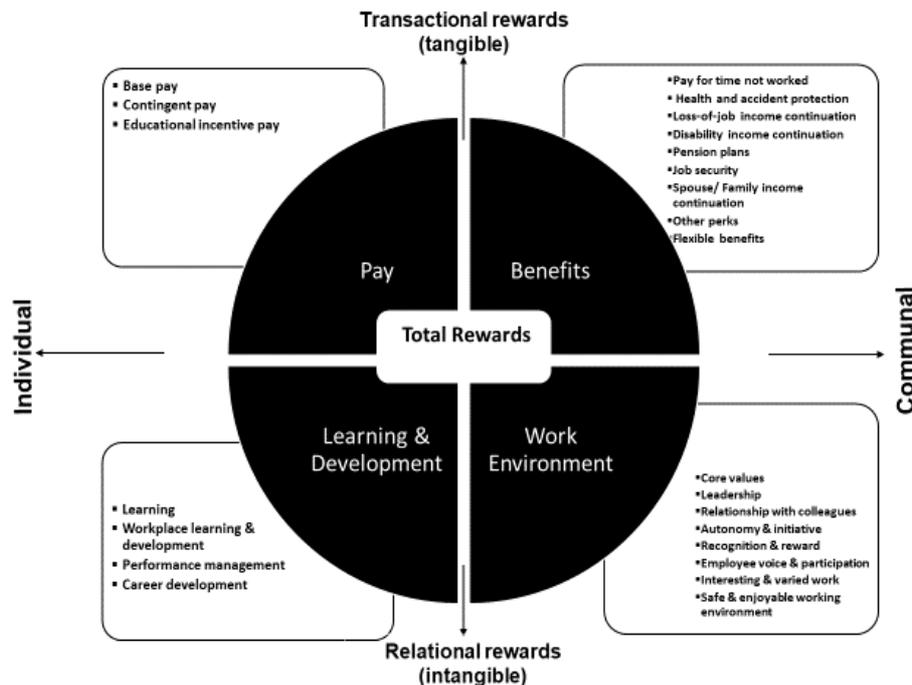

Figure 1
Conceptual research framework

Participants

Participants work with people with special needs either in rehabilitation centers, public or private, or in SE in public primary and secondary schools. A different recruitment strategy was followed for rehabilitation and SE focus groups. In order to be able to compare the specific categories of employees being studied, the participants were divided into three different focus groups. The first consisted of employees of a public rehabilitation center, the second of employees of a private rehabilitation center, and the third of SE staff.

With regard to the two rehabilitation focus groups, these were set up in two rehabilitation centers in Thessaloniki, one in the public and one in the private sector with nonprofit action. Prior to the focus groups, telephone contact was made with six rehabilitation centers and invitations for participation in the focus group were also sent. We received positive answers for participation from public and one private

rehabilitation center. Ad hoc visits, guided tours and first contacts with interested employees preceded the focus groups. In total, 14 rehabilitation employees participated in the two focus groups. As regards homogeneity, participants of each group had the common feature of being employed in the same center. Participants of each group are presented in Table 1.

Table 1
Participants (Part.) of Rehabilitation focus groups. Participants 1-9 were employees of a public rehabilitation center and belonged to the 1st focus group. Participants 10-14 were employees of a private rehabilitation center and belonged to the 2nd focus group

Part.	Gender	Age group	Marital status	Children	Education	Specialty	Work experience	Employment relationship
1	Male	25-34	Single	-	Bachelor (BA)	Care worker	2	Temporary
2	Female	45-54	Single	-	BA	Occupational therapist	24	Permanent
3	Female	> 55	Married	2	BA	Psychologist	30	Permanent
4	Female	45-54	Married	1	BA	Physiotherapist	20	Permanent
5	Female	35-44	Married	2	BA	Nurse	20	Permanent
6	Female	25-34	Single	-	BA	Speech therapist	1	Temporary
7	Female	< 25	Single	-	BA	Special educator	1	Temporary
8	Female	25-34	Single	-	Master's degree (MA)	Music therapist	3	Temporary
9	Female	25-34	Single	-	MA	SE Fitness specialist	1	Temporary
10	Female	25-34	Married	1	BA	Nurse	10	Permanent
11	Male	25-34	Single	-	Institution of Vocational Training (IVT)	Carer	3	Temporary
12	Female	< 25	Single	-	BA	Physiotherapist	1	Temporary
13	Female	35-44	Married	1	BA	Fitness specialist	10	Permanent
14	Female	25-34	Married	1	MA	Fitness specialist	2	Temporary

With regard to the SE focus group, the candidate participants were SE employees with experience in public primary and secondary education and worked in mainstream (general education - GE) and special schools (special education - SE) in Thessaloniki. The aim of the recruitment strategy was to include from six to eight employees from different structures (primary, secondary, and hospital schools), professions (primarily special educators and secondly other specialties, such as special teaching staff), work experience (years), employment relations (permanent and temporary staff). Fifteen candidates who did not know each other were individually interviewed by telephone. Seven people were chosen to participate so as to cover the above criteria of the recruitment strategy. All participants were public sector employees who work with children with special needs and had qualified SE studies. In addition, the focus group

was characterized with sufficient variation among participants mainly in terms of the specialization, the structures, the work experience, the employment relationship. Participants of SE focus group are presented in Table 2.

Table 2
Participants (Part.) of SE focus group (3rd focus group)

Part.	Gender	Age group	Marital status	Children	Education	Specialty	Work experience	Structure	Employment relationship
1	Female	25-34	Single	-	BA	Special educator	10	Primary GE	Temporary
2	Female	35-44	Married	2	IVT	Special teaching staff (special assistant)	16	Primary GE	Temporary
3	Female	45-54	Married	1	BA	Special educator	21	Primary SE	Permanent
4	Female	25-34	Single	-	BA	Kindergarten teacher in SE	2	Primary GE	Temporary
5	Female	25-34	Single	-	BA	Special educator	8	Primary GE	Temporary
6	Female	45-54	Married	2	PhD	Special educator	12	Primary SE-Hospital School	Permanent
7	Male	45-54	Single	-	PhD	Special teaching staff (Psychologist)	11	Secondary SE	Permanent

Instruments and Procedures

A written plan (purpose, background information, conceptual framework, plan of action, participants' information, questioning route) was developed by the research team. A brief written plan was sent to the participants before the focus group meeting to help them prepare for the group discussion. A pilot application of the questioning route preceded. The questioning route was arranged in natural, logical sequence. More specifically, questions moved from being broad and general to being more specific and of greater importance to the study, and were categorized as opening, introductory, transition, key and ending questions. Clear, simple, easy to understand, and open-ended questions were mainly used for the questioning route. Questions that engage participants were also used such as listing things, whilst "think-back" questions were preferred to encourage participants to share personal experiences.

Each focus group lasted no more than two hours as suggested by Krueger and Casey (2000). Focus groups were recorded in three ways: by a tape recorder; with written notes; and additionally, a camera for the SE group and an electronic pen with audio-recording capability for the rehabilitation groups. During the meeting, the research team's involvement was moderate.

Method of analysis

Focus groups were followed by the video and recording transcription and the data analysis. Regarding data analysis, two stems were followed:
1. Qualitative data retrieval of focus groups: it included the thematic / topic coding of data, the indexing of qualitative data codes in categories and the cross referral of the different categories of qualitative data.
2. Focus groups data analysis: it included the data reduction, the data display, the ranking of important rewards for motivation and the conclusions (drawing and verification) (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

FINDINGS

The findings from the focus groups with Rehabilitation and SE staff can be summarized under two major headings which are: 1) Rewards for rehabilitation and SE staff, and 2) Important rewards for rehabilitation and SE staff motivation.

Rewards for Rehabilitation and SE Staff

Through the focus groups, the rewards that were provided in their workplace were identified.

Rewards connected to each of the four axes of the conceptual research framework (pay, benefits, learning and development and work environment) are presented below.

Pay

With respect to pay rewards, apart from base pay, contingent pay, which is connected to required qualifications (i.e. studies and position of responsibility) was also mentioned as a reward provided for both fields, while no difference was found between permanent and temporary staff. Contingent pay with regards to number of years of work experience and family reasons (i.e. child benefit) was not among the standard rewards provided for the employees of the private sector. With regard to educational incentive pay, this is a reward that could be provided on a case-by-case basis only to permanent employees and not to temporary employees.

Benefits

Among the benefits discussed during the focus groups was the pay for time not worked. All participants were paid for national holidays, vacations, marriage leave, regular leave, personal leave, funeral leave, time off to vote, to giving a blood donation, and sabbatical leave. With reference to paternity/maternity leave, sick leave and family illness leave, the temporary employees that participated agreed that there is not an equal treatment between them and the permanent staff and that they do not actually enjoy this privilege. In relation to the lunch and rest periods, most participants agreed that they have some free time during a workday. In rehabilitation they can arrange when to take the break, whilst in SE the break is the same for the whole school, provided that you are not on duty. Somewhat in contrast, it was strongly mentioned that in rehabilitation, nurses and

careers, and in SE, the special assistant personnel, cannot actually have a break and enjoy this benefit. Job security as a benefit was mentioned − as expected − only by the permanent employees. Flexible perks, such as unpaid leave and flextime, and some other perks such as parking, free entrance to museums and archaeological places and tickets to entertainment events for SE staff were among the benefits recognized by the participants. Other benefits that are provided due to the law are health and accident protection, loss-of-job continuation, disability income continuation, pension programs.

Learning and development

Regarding learning, all the rehabilitation participants and most of the permanent SE employees recognized the training opportunities they have to acquire new knowledge and develop skills, whereas the employee of the hospital school highlighted that no education is provided for hospital schools. Among the SE focus group participants with temporary employment there was a general agreement that not enough training opportunities exist for them and in some cases, only takes place after the employees' personal initiative. The development of work and personal skills and knowledge with the help of the boss and colleagues (workplace learning & development) was acknowledged as a reward by all the participants of SE and by the majority of rehabilitation (4 out of 5 for the private sector and 6 out of 9 for the public). With reference to performance management, some participants emphasized the need for specific performance goals and expected results, and others the significant factor of supportive leadership and constructive feedback. It is worth noting that in many cases the available resources (time, knowledge, skills, human resources, physical and technical means) are not enough for best performance management. In relation to career development, it was acknowledged that there are career prospects and opportunities for career development in public SE but that there are few available positions and that are not open to temporary staff. In rehabilitation only 5 out of the 14 (1 from private and 4 from public sector) felt that there are opportunities for career development.

Work environment

What the findings suggest is that for both fields the rewards that are related to the work environment vary according to the employee, the leadership and the organization. Specifically, there was a consensus among SE participants that there is a differentiation from school to school, from year to year. Among the rewards mentioned in relation to the work environment were core values and leadership. With respect to relationship with colleagues, some seemed to be satisfied with their colleagues, whereas others found relationships with coworkers really problematic. There was a consensus among the participants that in a job with people with special needs there has to be teamwork and good cooperation among the specialties for the good of the treated, otherwise it will not work effectively. In the majority of the comments, the emphasis was on the difficulty in finding a work environment where trust, friendship, teamwork, loyalty exist. Autonomy and initiative, recognition and reward, and employee voice and participation, were also rewards connected with the work environment and acknowledged by the majority of the participants. For the temporary staff it is difficult to have a voice as they frequently change schools (maybe every year). There were two significant factors mentioned that

may affect the employees' voice in the organization. These were work experience and employment relationship. The last rewards mentioned were the interesting and varied work and the safe and enjoyable work environment. Somewhat in contrast, the employee of the hospital school questioned the existence of an enjoyable work environment as a reward. Some illustrations are given below:

"I know that the employer has paid for the education of a permanent colleague of another specialty, not mine" (pay)

"As regards maternity leave…the last year when I was pregnant, I didn't take it. Now that my working relationship has changed to permanent…if I get pregnant, I'll deserve it" (benefits)

"There is no education for hospital schools" (learning & development)

"A person always plays a role. There are directors who have no ears to hear, there are others who have" (work environment)

During the focus groups participants were asked if they feel recognized and rewarded for their contribution at work, and they expressed themselves without hesitation. Most of the SE employees expressed their satisfaction for their work recognition. Some examples follow:

"I think an employee in SE has so many reasons to feel lucky and that he/she is really rewarded. So even the financial rewards count and the fact that a little step that a child made, will raise you to the heavens"

"I believe that in special schools, your contribution is recognized, acknowledged…but this happens slowly"

"In hospital schools the satisfaction is enormous and immediate"

In contrast, rehabilitation employees did not seem to feel so rewarded for their contribution. Their rewards come mainly from the children and the treated, and few of the participants feel economically rewarded. Illustrations are given below:

"A reward always comes from the treated…not from the administration and the supervisors...the absence of management and of a supportive leadership is a very serious problem"

"Personally, I am rewarded when I see that a child responds to my treatment and there is an improvement…this is a great reward. The pay is also satisfactory"

Moreover, some difficult situations and problems were highlighted that employees experience, especially with parents and colleagues, that can disappoint them and make them feel that their contribution is not recognized. Examples follow:

"I don't feel rewarded…as it should be. I feel angry with specific colleagues and I have difficulty in communicating with them" (Rehabilitation)

"I believe in SE you feel very often…that you are not rewarded. There are days that something went wrong…something with the parents mainly, something with a colleague, a problem in the school…and then you say: it is not worth it. We feel that we don't get back, that the results are coming very slowly" (SE)

Other rewards found

Through the focus groups, three rewards that were not included in the conceptual framework were determined. The importance of these rewards was highlighted by the majority of the participants. One was related to learning & development and the other two to the work environment and are described below.

Self-growth and personality development: This includes self-improvement, self-empowerment, self-confidence, self- esteem, empathy

Psychological and emotional rewards: These are rewards with respect to the relationship with children and parents and include the contact with the child (for example a smile, a hug), the child's development, the moral satisfaction for the providing help to children and parents

Collectivity: This includes frequent and diffused collective processes of pedagogical practices and pedagogical policy

Important Rewards for Rehabilitation and SE Staff Motivation

The focus groups' participants were asked to write down in order of priority the rewards that are important for their motivation, thus identifying the rewards that were important for them and their motivation. The findings support the notion that the aspects of the conceptual research framework that concern the work environment are the rewards that are the most important for their motivation, followed for rehabilitation staff by those that concern learning and development and pay (Table 3 and Table 4), and for SE staff followed by those that concern learning and development and benefits (Table 5). The presentation of all the important rewards for the motivation of each focus group follows and every reward is accompanied by information about the quadrant of the conceptual research framework to which it belongs, the number of the participants that mentioned each reward, and the times each reward was mentioned in the first position of participants preferences.

Important Rewards for Rehabilitation Employees' Motivation (Private Sector)

Regarding work environment, the most important rewards for rehabilitation employees' motivation in the private sector had to do with a safe and enjoyable work environment, the relationship with colleagues, recognition and reward, the psychological and emotional rewards, and the employee voice and participation (see Table 3). It is worth noting that, although the relationships with colleagues and the recognition and reward have not been mentioned as many times (3 and 2 times respectively) in comparison with the safe and enjoyable environment (4 times), they have been placed in the first position once (1) in the participants' preference. With respect to learning and development, the most important rewards for their motivation were related to career development, self-

growth and personality development, and learning. Each of them was mentioned twice in total, but in the first position the career development was mentioned twice and the self-growth and personality development once. As far as the pay is concerned, rewards had to do with the basic pay, the educational incentive pay and the contingent pay. Moreover, the basic and the educational incentive pay were mentioned twice each as important and the basic pay was placed once in first position in their preferences. The rewards least mentioned were those connected to benefits, and job security was the only reward among the participants' preferences.

Table 3
Important Rewards for Rehabilitation Employees' Motivation (Private Sector). The number in the parenthesis that accompanies each reward in Rewards column refers to the number of the participants that mentioned this reward. The number in the 1st position column refers to the times each reward was mentioned in the first position of participants preferences.

Total reward aspects	Rewards	1st position
Work environment	Safe and enjoyable work environment (4)	0
	Relationship with colleagues (3)	1
	Recognition & reward (2)	1
	Psychological and emotional rewards (1)	0
	Employee voice and participation (1)	0
Learning & Development	Career development (2)	2
	Self-growth and personality development (2)	1
	Learning (2)	0
Pay	Basic pay (2)	1
	Educational incentive pay (2)	0
	Contingent pay (1)	0
Benefits	Job security (1)	0

Important Rewards for Rehabilitation Employees' Motivation (Public Sector)

Regarding work environment, the most important rewards for rehabilitation employees' motivation in the public sector had to do with the psychological and emotional rewards, the recognition and reward, the safe and enjoyable work environment, the relationship with colleagues, autonomy and initiative, the interesting and varied work (see Table 4). The psychological and emotional rewards were not only in first place in terms of the number of times they were mentioned (5) but seemed to be the most important reward regarding the four times that appeared in the first position. Recognition and reward, a safe and enjoyable work environment and the relationship with colleagues each appeared four times in participants' preferences, while the first two were also placed once in first position. With respect to learning and development, the most important rewards for their motivation were related to career development, workplace learning & development, learning, performance management, and self-growth and personality development, and among these the first two also appeared once in first position. As far as pay is concerned, rewards had to do with the basic and the contingent pay. Between them, basic pay was not only mentioned five times in comparison to the once that contingent pay was mentioned, but it also appeared once in first position of their

preferences. No reward connected to benefits appeared among the most important for their motivation.

Table 4
Important Rewards for Rehabilitation Employees' Motivation (Public Sector). The number in the parenthesis that accompanies each reward in Rewards column refers to the number of the participants that mentioned this reward. The number in the 1st position column refers to the times each reward was mentioned in the first position of participants preferences.

Total reward aspects	Rewards	1st position
Work environment	Psychological and emotional rewards (5)	4
	Recognition & reward (4)	1
	Safe and enjoyable work environment (4)	1
	Relationship with colleagues (4)	0
	Autonomy & initiative (3)	0
	Interesting and varied work (1)	0
Learning & Development	Career development (3)	1
	Workplace learning & development (2)	1
	Learning (2)	0
	Performance Management (2)	0
	Self-growth and personality development (1)	0
Pay	Basic pay (5)	1
	Contingent pay (1)	0

Important Rewards for SE Employees' Motivation

Regarding work environment, the most important rewards for SE employees' motivation had to do with the psychological and emotional rewards, a safe and enjoyable work environment, the relationship with colleagues, collectivity, recognition and reward, leadership, and the interesting and varied work (see Table 5). The psychological and emotional rewards were not only first in times mentioned (11) but seemed to be the most important reward given the five times that the appeared in first position of their preferences. Among the rewards that were mentioned once, collectivity was the only one to also appear also in the first position. With respect to learning and development, the most important rewards for their motivation were related to performance management, workplace learning and development, learning, and self-growth and personality development, while the first two also appeared once in the first position. In terms of the benefits, they had to do with job security and pay for time not worked. Job security was not only mentioned four times in comparison to the one time pay for time not worked was mentioned, but it also appeared once in the first position of their preferences. The least important rewards were those connected to pay, such as the base and contingent pay.

Table 5

Important Rewards for SE Employees' Motivation. The number in the parenthesis that accompanies each reward in Rewards column refers to the number of the participants that mentioned this reward. The number in the 1st position column refers to the times each reward was mentioned in the first position of participants preferences

Total reward aspects	Rewards	1st position
Work environment	Psychological and emotional rewards (11)	5
	Safe and enjoyable work environment (2)	0
	Relationship with colleagues (2)	0
	Collectivity (1)	1
	Recognition & reward (1)	0
	Leadership (1)	0
	Interesting and varied work (1)	0
Learning & Development	Performance management (2)	1
	Workplace learning & development (1)	1
	Learning (1)	0
	Self-growth and personality development (1)	0
Pay	Basic pay (1)	0
	Contingent pay (1)	0
Benefits	Job security (4)	1
	Pay for time not worked (1)	0

DISCUSSION- CONCLUSIONS

This study examined the rewards for Greek employees in rehabilitation centers and SE schools and their importance for employee motivation. In line with the results, the relational rewards (work environment and learning and development) were the most important for rehabilitation and SE employees regarding motivation, while the transactional rewards (pay and benefits) did not seem of great importance for their motivation. Intrinsic rewards such as work environment, recognition, training and development, participation in decision making, and workplace flexibility were found to have a significant effect on teachers' motivation in Bangladesh (Anjum et al., 2021). The school environment and working conditions were also very important rewards for teachers of the public sector in Australia (Ashiedu & Scott-Ladd, 2012). A dynamic work environment that fosters creativity was highly valued as an important reward in another study (Taylor et al., 2014). Moreover, the reward system and training highly affect teachers' motivation in public secondary schools, while the school environment should be conducive for them to ensure their motivation, by providing them with adequate teaching and learning resources (Nyakundi, 2012). As highlighted in another study, the opportunity to learn and practice skills during professional development proved to be essential in supporting teachers in improving student outcomes (Opartkiattikul et al., 2016). Efforts have been made to meet the staff training needs in the rehabilitation field (O'Toole & McConkey, 1995) and rehabilitation therapists are expected to be as skilled and as knowledgeable as possible, while children's' parents believe expertise to be connected with better care and better outcomes for their children (Moore & Larkin, 2005). In one study, the most rewarding aspect of rehabilitation

staff's job was seen to be the patient care and among the most important factors affecting their intention to stay were professional growth opportunities and peer relationships (Freda, 1992). Other studies also highlighted career development (Ali & Ahmed, 2009; Allen et al., 2003; Kim, 2005; Nyakundi, 2012) and good relationships with colleagues (Gkorezis & Petridou, 2012; Harpaz, 1990; Kim, 2005) among the most important and most desirable rewards. Within the field of rehabilitation and SE the challenge is to see how to provide the most essential assistance to many people utilizing the readily available resources (O'Toole & McConkey, 1995).

Without exception, all the participants were primarily intrinsically motivated. For the employees of the public sector (SE and rehabilitation) psychological and emotional rewards seem to be, for the majority of them, of great importance, while for the rehabilitation employees in the private sector these were also among the important rewards for their motivation. Intrinsic factors, such as professional growth and having a work environment in line with personal values, are more significant in predicting career satisfaction and intention to stay in the job than are extrinsic factors, such as pay for rehabilitation professionals (Randolph & Johnson, 2005). Intrinsic rewards were perceived to be significant job satisfaction determinants in another study (Painter et al., 1995). Findings of two previous studies in SE indicated that intrinsic rewards were key factors in contributing to teacher retention and longevity within the profession (Ashiedu & Scott-Ladd, 2012; Taylor et al., 2014). In one of the previously mentioned studies (Ashiedu & Scott-Ladd, 2012) most public sector teachers who participated, cited intrinsic motivators as the reasons for joining the teaching profession. Moreover, according to Plihal (1982), the enjoyment of elementary school teachers' interaction with students and the feeling of being instrumental in students' accomplishments were the two major types of intrinsic rewards. Intrinsic rewards, such as the fulfillment of having successfully contributed to a child's development, were also more important than the extrinsic rewards in another study for teachers (Dilworth, 1991). Additionally, as stated by Taylor et al. (2014), teachers had an innate desire to help children in their overall development and to impact their lives in a positive way, and they valued building relationships and making a difference in the lives of their students as the main rewards of teaching. The unique rewards and the intellectual challenge of working with children with SE needs was highlighted by the participants of another study (Mackenzie, 2012).

From the transactional rewards, those connected to pay proved to be more important for rehabilitation staff. Basic pay and contingent pay were the transactional rewards referred to by both rehabilitation and SE employees, with the addition of the educational incentive pay for rehabilitation staff in the private sector. Additionally, from the transactional rewards, those connected to benefits proved to be more important for SE staff. Specifically, job security appeared to be extremely important for them in comparison with the other reward − pay for time not at work − that was mentioned. Rehabilitation staff in the private sector also mentioned job security as important for their motivation, while those from the public sector did not acknowledge any important reward that is connected to benefits. The job security was mentioned as a desirable reward in some studies (Jurkiewicz et al., 1998; Kim, 2005; Wiley, 1997). In one study (Freda, 1992), salary and vacation time proved to be important to rehabilitation

professionals' intention to stay at work. Regarding SE, as reported by Pinto (2011), there is no direct connection between pay and motivation and, as stated by Dilworth (1991), teachers do not take so much satisfaction from extrinsic rewards, such as compensation and position.

Finally, the results shed light on those rewards that temporary staff cannot actually enjoy. These were not only relational rewards, such as learning, and employee voice and participation, but also transactional rewards, such as benefits (paternity/maternity leave, sick leave and family illness leave) and job security. Job security was the one that can be logically justified, given the impermanent nature of their employment relationship.

The usefulness of the results lies in the fact that the holistic study of the rewards provided and their importance for motivation can give feedback to human resource management decision-making centers, trade union representation, employers and the organization of curricula and lifelong learning. In addition, the study can provide a perspective for future research into the long-term exploitation of the total reward model. Maintaining a work team who is motivated and rewarded for its contribution is a major challenge for rehabilitation and SE fields.

This research offers an important window on the rehabilitation and SE staff's perspectives on rewards in the work environment. The Total Rewards Framework proved to be appropriate and useful in understanding the perspectives of rehabilitation and SE staff on rewards. Nevertheless, it is proposed that a revised version of the conceptual framework, that would include the three rewards that emerged from the focus group, should be used in future studies on rehabilitation and SE staff rewards. Furthermore, the findings of this study advanced our knowledge of the rewards provided and highlighted the rewards that can mainly affect employee motivation.

The focus groups' composition proved to be satisfactory for capturing the perceptions, feelings and thoughts of rehabilitation and SE staff regarding rewards in the work environment and satisfied the study aims. The constraint on the variety of specialties of participating special teaching staff could be considered as a limitation of this study.

Data availability statement

Due to the nature of this research, participants of this study did not agree for their data to be shared publicly, so supporting data is not available.

REFERENCES

Ali, R., & Ahmed, M. S. (2009). The impact of reward and recognition programs on employee's motivation and satisfaction: An empirical study. *International Review of Business Research Papers*, *5*(4), 270–279.

Allen, D. G., Shore, L. M., & Griffeth, R. W. (2003). The role of perceived organizational support and supportive human resource practices in the turnover process. *Journal of Management*, *29*(1), 99–118.

Anjum, N., Islam, M. A., Choudhury, M. I., & Saha, J. (2021). Do Intrinsic Rewards Matter on Motivation? Evidence from Primary School Teachers of Bangladesh. *SEISENSE Journal of Management*, *4*(1), 47–58. https://doi.org/10.33215/sjom.v4i1.534

Armstrong, M. (2009). *Armstrong's handbook of human resource management practice* (11th ed). Kogan Page.

Armstrong, M., & Brown, D. (2009). *Strategic reward: Implementing more effective reward management*. Kogan Page.

Armstrong, M., & Cummins, A. (2011). *The reward management toolkit: A step-by-step guide to designing and delivering pay and benefits*. Kogan Page.

Ashiedu, J. A., & Scott-Ladd, B. D. (2012). Understanding teacher attraction and retention drivers: Addressing teacher shortages. *Australian Journal of Teacher Education (Online)*, *37*(11), 23.

Baron, R. A. (1991). Motivation in work settings: Reflections on the core of organizational research. *Motivation and Emotion*, *15*(1), 1–8. https://doi.org/10.1007/BF00991472

Deci, E. L. (1971). Effects of externally mediated rewards on intrinsic motivation. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *18*(1), 105–115.

Dilworth, M. E. (1991). *Motivation, Rewards, and Incentives. Trends and Issues Paper No. 3*. ERIC CLearinghouse on Teacher Education, Washington, DC. https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED330692

Evans, M. G. (1970). The effects of supervisory behavior on the path-goal relationship. *Organizational Behavior and Human Performance*, *5*(3), 277–298. https://doi.org/10.1016/0030-5073(70)90021-8

Freda, M. (1992). Retaining occupational therapists in rehabilitation settings: Influential factors. *The American Journal of Occupational Therapy*, *46*(3), 240–245.

Gkorezis, P., & Petridou, E. (2012). The effect of extrinsic rewards on public and private sector employees' psychological empowerment: A comparative approach. *The International Journal of Human Resource Management*, *23*(17), 3596–3612. https://doi.org/10.1080/09585192.2011.639025

Gordon, J. R. (2002). *Organizational behavior: A diagnostic approach* (7th ed). Prentice Hall.

Harpaz, I. (1990). The Importance of Work Goals: An International Perspective. *Journal of International Business Studies*, *21*(1), 75–93.

Henderson, R. I. (2000). *Compensation management in a knowledge-based world* (8th ed). Prentice Hall.

Hendrawijaya, A. T. (2022). Effects of Mediation of Learning Interest in Improving Student Learning Achievement. *International Journal of Instruction*, *15*(1), 857–872. https://doi.org/10.29333/iji.2022.15149a

Jurkiewicz, C. L., Massey, T. K., & Brown, R. G. (1998). Motivation in Public and Private Organizations: A Comparative Study. *Public Productivity & Management Review*, *21*(3), 230–250. https://doi.org/10.2307/3380856

Kim, S. (2005). Gender Differences in the Job Satisfaction of Public Employees: A Study of Seoul Metropolitan Government, Korea. *Sex Roles*, *52*(9–10), 667–681. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11199-005-3734-6

Krueger, R. A., & Casey, M. A. (2000). *Focus groups: A practical guide for applied research* (3rd ed). Sage Publications.

Kuznia, A. (2008). *Designing a variable compensation plan for direct support professionals in the field of developmental disabilities* [PhD Thesis]. The College of St. Scholastica.

Mackenzie, S. (2012). I can't imagine doing anything else': Why do teachers of children with SEN remain in the profession? Resilience, rewards and realism over time. *Journal of Research in Special Educational Needs*, *12*(3), 151–161. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1471-3802.2011.01221.x

Manas, T. M., & Graham, M. D. (2003). *Creating a total rewards strategy a toolkit for designing business-based plans*. American Management Association.

Miles, M. B., & Huberman, A. M. (1994). *Qualitative data analysis*. Sage.

Milne, P. (2007). Motivation, incentives and organisational culture. *Journal of Knowledge Management*, *11*(6), 28–38. https://doi.org/10.1108/13673270710832145

Moore, T., & Larkin, H. (2005). *'More than my child's disability ... ': A comprehensive literature review about family-centred practice and family experiences of early childhood intervention services*. SCOPE Vic Ltd.

Nyakundi, T. K. (2012). *Factors Affecting Teacher Motivation In Public Secondary Schools. In Thika West District, Kiambu County* [PhD Thesis].

Opartkiattikul, W., Arthur-Kelly, M., & Dempsey, I. (2016). Professional Development and Learning by General Teachers Implementing Functional Behavioural Assessment in Thai Inclusive Classrooms. *International Journal of Disability, Development and Education*, *63*(5), 545–564. https://doi.org/10.1080/1034912X.2016.1153049

O'Toole, B., & McConkey, R. (1995). Development of Training Materials for Community Based Rehabilitation Workers in Guyana. *International Journal of Disability, Development and Education*, *42*(1), 33–40. https://doi.org/10.1080/0156655950420105

Painter, J., Akroyd, D., Wilson, S., & Figuers, C. (1995). The Predictive Value of Selected Job Rewards on Occupational Therapists' Job Satisfaction in Ambulatory Care

Settings. *Occupational Therapy In Health Care*, *9*(4), 21–37. https://doi.org/10.1080/J003v09n04_03

Pinto, E. P. (2011). The Influence Of Wage On Motivation And Satisfaction. *The International Business & Economics Research Journal; Littleton*, *10*(9), 81–91.

Pitts, C. (1995). *Motivating your organization: Achieving business success through reward and recognition*. McGraw-Hill Book Co.

Plihal, J. (1982, March). *Types of Intrinsic Rewards of Teaching and their Relation to Teacher Characteristics and Variables in the Work Setting*. Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association, New York.

Prenzno, N., & Griffith, D. (2000). *Total rewards: From strategy to implementation*. WorldatWork.

Randolph, D., S., & Johnson, S., P. (2005). Predicting the Effect of Extrinsic and Intrinsic Job Satisfaction Factors on Recruitment and Retention of Rehabilitation Professionals. *Journal of Healthcare Management*, *50*(1), 49–60.

Reeve, J., & Deci, E. L. (1996). Elements of the competitive situation that affect intrinsic motivation. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, *22*(1), 24–33.

Richer, S. F., & Vallerand, R. J. (1995). Supervisors' interactional styles and subordinates' intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. *The Journal of Social Psychology*, *135*(6), 707–722.

Robbins, S. P., & Judge, T. (2007). *Organizational behavior* (12th ed). Pearson/Prentice Hall.

Storey, J. (Ed.). (1995). *Human resource management: A critical text*. Routledge.

Taylor, C., McNaney-Funk, C., Jardine, D., Lehman, G., & Fok-Chan, E. (2014). *Teacher Rewards: Going beyond the Stickers--Moving beyond Extrinsic Motivation*. https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED546455

Wiley, C. (1997). What motivates employees according to over 40 years of motivation surveys. *International Journal of Manpower*, *18*(3), 263–280. https://doi.org/10.1108/01437729710169373

Zingheim, P. K., & Schuster, J. R. (2000). Total Rewards for New and Old Economy Companies. *Compensation & Benefits Review*, *32*(6), 20–23. https://doi.org/10.1177/08863680022098091

Zuckerman, M., Porac, J., Lathin, D., & Deci, E. L. (1978). On the importance of self-determination for intrinsically-motivated behavior. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, *4*(3), 443–446.