

Analytical Study of Public Service Motivation Concept (PSM) and its Relationship with Public Performance (PP)

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Abstract

This paper addresses analytically and critically the concept of public service motivation (PSM) and the concept of public performance (PP) in some studies of occidental public work environments. However, first, we introduce the notion of public service and distinguish it from the profitable sector. The PSM concept has been developed by James Perry (1996) and he has developed an instrument for measuring it. Later, this instrument has been used in several studies; and it has become a reference in studying the notion of motivation in governmental organizations. The PSM has many links with many other organizational concepts like public performance and the degree of public service employees' commitment, and serving both citizens and society.

Keywords: public service, public service motivation (PSM), public performance (PP), analytical and critical study of the relationship between PSM and PP.

ملخص

تتناول هذه الورقة بالتحليل والنقد مفهوم الدافعية اتجاه الخدمة العمومية ومفهوم الأداء العمومي في بعض الدراسات التي تمت في بيئات العمل العمومي الغربي . لكن قبل ذلك من المستحسن المرور بتعريف مفهوم الخدمة العمومية وتمييزها عن القطاع الهادف إلى الربح . طور مفهوم الدافعية اتجاه الخدمة العمومية الباحث الأمريكي James Perry (1996) ووضع له مقياسا استخدم في العديد من الدراسات اللاحقة مما جعله مرجعا لدراسة مفهوم الدافعية في المنظمات والهيئات العمومية الحكومية . طبعا لهذا المفهوم ارتباط وثيق بالأداء العمومي ودرجة التزام أعوان الخدمة العمومية في تأدية الخدمة العامة وخدمة المواطن والمجتمع على حد سواء.

الكلمات المفتاحية : مفهوم الدافعية اتجاه الخدمة العمومية، مفهوم الخدمة العمومية، مفهوم الأداء العمومي، دراسة تحليلية ونقدية للعلاقة بين PSM و PP.

Introduction

Public service is characterized, comparing to the for-profit sector by many features the most outward one is its destination to serving citizen regardless interest to make profits in counterpart of this service. But in the stream of economic, social and administrative evolution this tendency seems to will not satisfy politicians and decision makers. This fact is due to the increasing level of costs and the poor quality of public service. In new tendencies of public management, public service is under way to introduce itself as competitive sector to the profitable one by using the same methodologies, tools, strategies to attract citizen and satisfied their needs. The concept of “customer” was absent for a long time from their jargon. Today, there is a huge tendency to imitate the sector of private enterprises so the satisfaction of citizen is turned out to be the first preoccupation.

According to many researchers such Folz *et al.* (2009); Fryer *et al.* (2009); Newcomer (2007); Wechlsler and Clary (2000), Many practices were the aim of reproduction and transfer from for-profit sector to public service administration particularly the concept of public performance (PP) (Maurel *et al.*, 2014).

Research has never stopped in creating concepts, methods and tools that contribute in developing public service. Concerning this point, the American sociologist James Perry (1996) has developed a concept very important which flows in the stream of comprehending psychological, social, political and religious motives of public agents and make them involved in governmental policies and objectives, the concept is called *public service motivation* (PSM).

We are going to undertake some distinctive studies in public service questions; and the evolution of public service motivation (PSM) notion and its measurement according to James Perry, and its relationship with other concepts such public performance. We are going to expose in this paper the characteristics of non-profit sector, some point of reforms of public service through some occidental researches. The second point is devoted to defining and measuring (PSM) concept and public performance (PP).

1. Public service characteristics and reforms

Public service aims to provide service to citizen without counterpart, but the most important feature is to provide this service directly or indirectly to citizen or other parties in society. In most cases, this is free or with symbolic fees through imposing some charges collected via direct voucher or revenue stamp. In providing these services, governments do not take care for studying cost volume that treasury could afford to. What is important is the extent in which this service is in accordance with the credits that are allowed in public budgets.

This service is carried out according to some programs set up previously within governmental plans. In general, public service is provided in frame of central perspective, according to these plans in average periods relaying on political, economic and social programs of governments.

Adversely, public service sector is guilty of bureaucracy; it relays on a long, complicated and very slow process of control. Their employees are ineffective, less competent, and they utilize their hierarchical position to realize own interests or some third parties. In contrast, reforms aim at changing these practices and performances; they put in charge more responsibilities, dynamism, motivation and improving performance in attempt to adopt the similar practices of the for-profit sector. Such reforms are carried out in several countries like the countries belonged to OCDE.

About this question, many studies tend to adopt managerial profitable approaches. In Hood model (1995, p 25) which goes in line with new public management, he tried to modernize public service through these points:

- “Management by results, which fundamentally modifies the role of the public servant, changing it from administrator to manager responsible for results;
- A measure of the impact of actions, which supposes the prior definition of the finalities and strategic objectives of the local authority, the taking into account of the contribution of its partners, and the improvement of the circulation of information between partners;
- The pursuit of client satisfaction, the action of the Administration being totally focused on user satisfaction. This principle supposes the deployment of tools for analyzing needs and expectations and the development of differentiated services;
- A determination to set public finances on a sound footing, which entails cost analysis and, for certain reforms, the outsourcing or privatization of certain services;
- An improvement in the accuracy and transparency of public accounts. This principle, adopted from the competitive sector, aims to apply the principles of private accounting to the public sector and, especially, to take account of the local authority’s assets. It supposes the presentation of a balance sheet that reconstitutes, in particular, the value of the local authority’s fixed assets. It is accompanied by the certification of the accounts by an external auditor.”

In other perspective of reforms classified among stakeholders’ approaches in performing public administration, it is called *common assessment framework* (CAF) and it has been developed by some European researchers in 2000 in the goal to

increase the quality of public service. In the same line, the European foundation of quality management (EFQM) has presented a developed model in 2006 of CAF's model. The new one gives a great importance to the requirements of public sector like the supremacy of law, ethics and general principals; however, it stresses on modernization, innovation and global thinking.

In this model, researchers focus on outcomes of public service through:

The results which are linked to customers or to the objectives that were the target of public service administration measured externally in terms of customer's satisfaction, and internally in terms of the number of complaints or by the limit of commitment to service performance pact in the required norms;

Social results which are directly or indirectly linked to public organization's environment measured in terms of the impact on society and environment.

We find the roots of these reforms which have been developed by EFQM in total quality management tendency. Operationally, the quality of service can be presented to the customer or citizen in terms of information.

While many reforms which have been held in the favor of promoting public service have turned around motivating human resources by which services are accomplished. These models are known by the link between performance and merit salary. In fact, these reforms are achieved in a number of countries particularly in the OCDE members. Among reforms there is the merit salary considering organizational justice as background similar to what is applied in the profitable sector. These features are linked with individual performance according to many studies such: Ongaro and Bellé (2009) in Italy, Forest (2008), Kopel (2005). In all these approaches, motivation theories such as expectation theory of Vroom (1964) and equity theory of Adams (1963) or recently the theory of organizational justice of Greenberg (1990) there was not a clear evidence to develop a notion of motivation in public sector on the contrary to the for-profit sector; even though, some indicators in Perry's (1996) instrument of PSM are relied on these theories.

2. The concept of PSM

Before we hold the details of this concept, it is beneficial to refer to some other appellations of this concept. For example British studies have called PSM "public service ethos" or "public service ethic"; Canadian ones have called it "*éthique du bien commun*". These divergences are also related to the content, for instance Norris (2003) has shown that this concept is influenced by values and cultures in the different parts of world; in addition the instrument as it is described in Perry's study, it couldn't be applied in Belgium for example even though there are many similarities between American and Belgian cultures.

In Perry and Wise's article (1990), PSM is defined as: *"the individual predisposition to be involved in achieving fundamental objectives of public institutions."* In the front of Perry's article (1996), he was defined PSM as: *"an individual's predisposition to respond to motives grounded primarily or uniquely in public institution."* According to the two definitions, the notion of involvement is focused on the extent to which individual in public sector can interest in public policies in different domains like health, education, justice and security that state and government ensure the biggest part for the benefit of the citizen and society.

3. The Measurement of PSM

Perry has initially measured PSM through six dimensions, cited in his study that are: *attraction to public policy making, commitment to the public interest, social justice, civic duty, compassion and self-sacrifice.* But in his investigation of reliability and validity, Perry has confirmed the utility of only four dimensions that are as follows: *attraction to public policy making, commitment to the public interest, compassion and self-sacrifice* (p. 14).

3.1. Attraction to public policy making

This dimension was defined as: *"the opportunity of individual to formulate the state policy in public service domain."* It forms a high degree of ambition and enthusiasm among people because it reinforced the importance of the image of individual toward his society. It was measured through these items: (Perry, p. 10)

- Politics is a dirty word.
- The give and take of public policy making doesn't appeal to me.
- I don't care much for politicians.

All these items have to be reversed when scaling due to their nature of negative tendency.

3. 2. commitment to the public interest

Perry has defined commitment to the public interest as: *"the value which individual considers it as a feeling of appurtenance to a group or a society. The involvement is the highest degree of this feeling."*

This dimension is measured through these items: (p. 10)

- "It is hard for me to get intensely interested in what is going on in my community. (reversed)
- I unselfishly contribute to my community.
- Meaningful public service is very important to me.
- I would prefer seeing public officials do what is best for the whole community even if it harmed my interest.
- I consider public service y civic duty."

3. 3. Compassion

This is the third dimension in PSM instrument. According to Camilleri and Van Der Heijden (2007, p. 246) compassion is: *“the employee’s strong desire for patriotism and benevolence.”*

It was measured in Perry’s concept of PSM through these indicators: (p. 10)

- “I am rarely moved by the plight of the underprivileged.
- Most social programs are too vital to do without.
- It is difficult for me to contain my feelings when I see people in distress.
- To me, patriotism includes seeing to the welfare of others.
- I seldom think about the welfare of people whom I don’t know personally.
- I am often reminded by daily events about how dependent we are on one another.
- I have little compassion for people in need who are unwilling to take the first step to help themselves.
- There are few public programs that I wholeheartedly support.”

3. 4. Self-sacrifice

This dimension is the fourth one in PSM instrument which has shown valid and reliable measurement. Once more, Camilleri and Van Der Heijden (2007, p. 246) defined self-sacrifice as: *“an employee’s strong desire to act for causes that protect, advocate, and work for the good of the public regardless of personal consequences.”*

Perry has developed 8 items to measure this dimension:(p. 10)

- “Making a difference in society means more to me than personal achievements.
- I believe in putting duty before self.
- Doing well financially is definitely more important to me than doing good deeds.
- Much of what I do is for a cause bigger than myself.
- Serving citizens would give me a good feeling even if no one paid me for it.
- I feel people should give back to society more than they get from it.
- I am one of those rare people who would risk personal loss to help someone else.
- I am prepared to make enormous sacrifices for the good of society.”

4. Analyzing public service motivation concept

Some researchers have pointed to the need to treat the concept as it has been developed in an American environment, to some extent may not adequate with other environments, even if it is western, so that the values and beliefs differ even in the same Western environment. In another study, Pandey and Stazyk (2008) pointed to the positive influence of age on the MSP, it could be related to the fact that

individuals feel more envy, as they age, to make a lasting contribution to society, and his feeling to provide something for the community as long as he is engaged in his work before his retirement (Leisink and Steijn, p. 41).

Pandey and Stazyk (2008) had also remarked that women got higher degrees in PSM compared with men when it concerns compassion and they considered this dimension as a female dimension with distinction. It reinforces a previous result of DeHart-Davis, Marlowe and Pandey (2006).

In other studies, the researchers classified studies of PSM into three categories: studies explain the concept of motivation, others interested in the differences between public and private sectors, and the third ones are about international comparison to apply this concept. For instance, Pandey and Moyniban (2007) noted the impact of organizational factors such minimizing hierarchical levels, reducing bureaucratic constraints and lastly perfecting objectives towards PSM. Other studies have attempted to explore the differences between private and public sector, researchers such Van Den Broeck and Buelens (2007), Houston (2000) and Crewson (1997) had remarked that financial incentives have no impact on public employees.

We can observe huge differences in governmental regulation and legislation between countries and states. Some federal systems like Switzerland offer wide authorities to the federal states; however, public employees such governors and general secretaries in countries like France, Algeria or Germany have taken their high education in national administration schools.

In a methodological context, Perry (1996) did not include any objective measurement (quantitative indicators) in his scale. For example, it can be measured the degree of public agent involvement in planning public policies by the number of participations or meetings and studies' circles, or by the number of projects which have been prepared and carried out or evaluated by him. If we focused again on the scale, we can evaluate the dimension of compassion by the number of vital and social programs that the public agent has involved and participated in their realization.

5. Exploring and analyzing the relationship between PSM and PP

In this part, we focus on analyzing the link between PSM and PP because this later forms one of the major preoccupations of public service. First, we will define this notion and then we determine the frontiers of this relationship. PP is defined as: *"the public organization's capability of controlling their human, financial and organizational resources for producing public service appropriate in quality and quantity to meet the needs of stakeholders, and generating positive impact in their environment"* (Maurel et al., 2014, p. 40).

Most studies on this relationship resulted in a positive impact of PSM's variable and that the employees who score the highest levels on this scale, are most effective in achieving the objectives of their individual and organizational performances. However, other studies did not reach the same findings such as Alonso and Lewis' (2001). Some studies have come to the conclusion in which there is a greater impact of other organizational factors besides the PSM. According to Kim (2005), these factors are job satisfaction, emotional commitment and citizenship behavior.

In other contexts, Leisink and Steijn (2009) pointed to the existence of a relationship between employees' behavior and attitudes on the one hand, and the work environment on the other hand; so PSM affects person-work fit. This result, according to the researchers, many other studies have found this relationship particularly in the field of organizational psychology such as Hoffman and Woehr (2005); Kristof (2005); Kristof-Brown et al. (2005); Verquer, Beehr and Wagner (2002).

In the same context, the researchers argue that personal motives in the public service can be a mediator between PSM and job performance. In other words, when public employees score high marks on PSM's scale and satisfy at the same time their personal needs and achieve personal motives they will be more effective than their peers who scored high scores on PSM's scale but they do not satisfy their own needs and do not achieve personal motives. On this basis, many factors will have an effect on job public performance such as merit wage, the evolution of a career path, executive positions, greater empowerment and delegation of greater powers, strengthening decentralization of public authorities. This package of factors is among many other personal motives that affect the effectiveness of public agent (Leisink and Steijn, 2009).

Basing on the intrinsic and extrinsic motives notion, Ritz (2009) believes that extrinsic rewards when they are appropriate and consistent with the values and principles of the public employee, they will have a positive effect on his performance. PSM also affects job characteristics such as independence, excellence and the importance of job as stated in many studies like Perry and Wise (1990), Moynihan (2008) and Paarlberg et al. (2008).

In this study, Ritz (2009) found important methodological and practical results as regards the sample which covered 13532 federal employees in Switzerland. He has measured PSM using two dimensions: Attraction to public policy making and commitment to the public interest. After the analysis, firstly, he found that commitment to the public interest is more correlated to PP more than the first dimension. Secondly, the management by objectives as method affects clearly the internal efficiency and PP. After that, and indirectly, he believed that PSM could be affected by rewards stability in the long and the mid-term. In despite of the relative stability of wages in this country, Ritz observed a decreasing tendency of real wages, warning at the same time to the negative reflection of this decline on PSM and PP.

In contrast, some results are different, in France for instance, Jeannot (2005) argued that merit salary do not represent the major preoccupation for public employees particularly those who occupied executive position; further, what is the important for them is to develop their carriers and the nature of work (the seek for person-work fit). Merit salary, according to Jean not, comes as complementary to the above-cited factors.

Leisink and Steijn (2009), using the same first dimensions of PSM as well as Ritz, found no significance variances between public sectors in Netherlands. The second result is the existence of significant variances between elders and young employees in favor of elders on PSM scale and it goes much more significant when they age. In addition, there are significant variances referred to schooling level's factor in favor of higher educated employees. They also found a positive relationship between PSM and PP, moreover, the high score of PP is found bigger among men than women.

Camilleri Van Der Heijden (2007), when they carried out a study on public sector in Malta, they found that PSM is enhanced by the existence of a high organizational commitment, in addition to its positive impact on performance. They studied PP through two dimensions which are: auto-evaluation scaling performance at the end of the year and the evaluation of direct supervisor. It showed that the later one is more influenced by PSM than the auto-evaluation dimension, in counterpart; researchers did not deny the existence of weak measurement in using strong dimensions and indicators when it concerns the diagnosis of enormous number of various functions. They recommend that research has to find objective criteria to measure PP, and then to specified them according to the nature of tasks and functions in public sector.

Conclusion

This study aims at exploring and analyzing the concept of public service motivation (PSM) and public performance (PP). We argued that this concept is developed by the American sociologist, first he proposed six dimensions, later and after testing reliability and validity he maintained four consistent dimensions. This concept was developed in many cultures under many labels. Some studies showed its relationship with many organizational concepts among them: commitment, task characteristics, public performance, merit salary, carrier development, and other notions.

But we think that the most important result from managerial point view is that of Leisink and Steijn(2009), when they found that public employees score high marks on PSM's scale and satisfy at the same time their personal needs and achieve personal motives, they will be more effective than their peers who scored high scores on PSM's scale, but they do not satisfy their own needs and do not achieve personal motives. This result can intersect with the tendency of human resource management (HRM) models when organizational objectives meet the human resources ones. In this model of HRM, individuals in organizations seek for developing their carriers by developing their selves in harmony with the development of their organizations and vise-versa. Today, public organizations look for high performance in accordance with many duties towards citizen and society.

As noted at the beginning, when public employees look at citizen as customer and its satisfaction is the major concern, and when public management provides more authorities and delegates more responsibilities to employees; we may improve both public service motivation and high level of effectiveness.

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