Public Service Motivation: Implications for Developing Countries

Knowledge Forum on Public Service Motivation
10-12 Jul 2017, Nay Pyi Taw

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PSM: Implications for Developing Countries

- What is PSM?
- Why is PSM Important?
- How can PSM Help?
What is PSM?
Public Service Motivation (PSM) is “an individual’s predisposition to respond to motives grounded primarily or uniquely in public institutions or organizations” (Perry and Wise, 1990)

PSM can be manifested several ways (adapted from Perry, 1996 and Brewer et al., 2000):

1. Attraction to public policy making - ‘Communitarians’
2. Commitment to public interest and civic duty - ‘Patriots’
3. Willingness for self-sacrifice - ‘Humanitarians’
4. Inherent compassion - ‘Samaritans’

- PSM is one form of intrinsic motivation
Motivation: Intrinsic versus Extrinsic

- ‘Motivation’ (“the ability of people, institutions and societies to perform functions, solve problems and set and achieve objectives”) includes both intrinsic motivation (including PSM) and incentives (extrinsic motivation) (GCPSE, 2014).

- Incentives can be classified as financial (e.g., wages, performance bonuses, pensions, allowances) and non-financial (e.g., professional development, work recognition, working conditions) (GCPSE, 2014).

- Intrinsic motivation (including PSM) and incentives both affect performance at work
Why is PSM important?
Changing Operating Environment for Public Officials

- Educated, Globalized and Networked Citizens
- Technology: Promise and Perils
- Increased Complexity
- Change in Nature of Public Sector Jobs:
  - Greater Overlap Between Private and Public Sector Jobs
  - Decreasing Security of Public Service Jobs
Possible Macro-Shifts in Public Service

- From Service Delivery to Platform Creation
- Passionate, Entrepreneurial Public Officials
- From Risk Aversion to Shared Risk
- Adaptive Governance
- From Policy-Centred to People-Centred
Challenges for Senior Management

- Legitimacy of Role for the public service
- Competition for Talent from private sector
- Skill-Task Matching
- Dealing with Legacy Workers
- Staff Motivation – different factors from today?
How can PSM help?
Besides PSM, public officials can be ‘motivated’ by other factors (non-altruistic, self-serving) like pride, social status, or even opportunities for ‘gray income’ (Ko and Han, 2013).

Motives for starting and remaining in a public sector career may change over time and with seniority (Ritz et al., 2013); or by type of work (GCPSE, 2015).

Few non-Western, non-developed country PSM studies: 82.5% of research (1990-2014) in North American or European contexts; non-Western PSM research has increased in more developed parts of East Asia; but few studies from Africa, Latin America and Central Asia (van der Wal, 2015).
Compensation and PSM

- **Pay systems**: Flat Pay, Pay-for-Performance and Pay-for-Ability have differing effects on organizational PSM (Banuri and Keefer, 2015).

- **Performance bonuses strengthen extrinsic motivation but may crowd out intrinsic motivation** (Weibel et al., 2010)

- **Pay quantum**: Below-market, at-market, or above-market levels?
New Public Passion

- Beyond, but including what has worked before - Public Administration, New Public Management and New Public Governance
- It is not the ‘silver bullet’, but **PSM matters**
- Public management systems **over-rely on extrinsic motivation levers**
- **PSM values are already present** in most public service organizations
- Need to effectively **harness PSM to enable dynamic and adaptive officials to respond** to increasing change and complex challenges
- **Improvements or reform of public service is not sustainable without incorporating motivation of public officials in design and implementation**
Harnessing PSM: A Reality Check

- Not all public service jobs require PSM
- PSM does not ensure high performance on all jobs
- PSM is necessary for the civil service to sustain development momentum in a fast-changing, complex and resource-constrained environment
THANK YOU!

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References