Public Service Motivation and Social Institution Antecedents among the Nigerian Civil Service: A Proposed Framework

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Abstract

Public Service Motivation (PSM) is still a new field of study which need to be extended to various parts of the world, especially third world countries like Nigeria, in order to ascertain or generalized the results of the construct. This study is aimed at examining the concept of PSM, what it is, its Nature, its dimensions and antecedents. The paper is limited to three social institution antecedents; family socialization, religion socialization and professionalism. The paper argued that, the level of PSM of Nigerian worker is very low compared to that of other developed countries. It further argued that Family socialization, Religious socialization and professionalism can play a very vital role in raising the level of PSM.

Keywords: Public Service Motivation, Social Institution Antecedents, Civil Service

INTRODUCTION

Public service motivation was first nurtured by works of Bruce 1975. Since then, a lot of studies have emerged which have led to faster growth of literature in the field. Researchers in this field as noted by Brewer, Selden and Facer (2000) can be grouped into two broad categories. The first group are concerned with examining differences between public and private sector employees in relation to various dimensions of public service motivation which may include job involvement, job satisfaction, rewards preference and public service conceptualisation (Rainey 1982; Wittner 1991; Crewson 1995; Gabrin and Simo 1990). The second group were those that focus mainly on the explanation of the multifaceted nature of public service motivation example (Perry & Wise 1990). At the early stage, public service motivation researchers encounter some controversies and low turnout of researches which was due to lack of developing an acceptable method of conceptualisation on the side of PSM researchers, for more than 20 years, the concept remained no standard definition, no measurement scale and conflicting results were obtained from researches, this development led many researchers to shy away from the field (Leonard Bright, 2011). Notwithstanding, PSM concept received a greater attention after the publication of the Motivational Bases of Public Service (Perry & Wise 1990). More so, their Wise studies were the pioneered works that gave boost to researches in PSM. Since then, researches in PSM from theoretical, conceptual, and empirical views have yielded fruitful results. Now many scholars have turned attention on the existence of PSM construct, and areas of convergence between public and private sector employees, some have even go further to include non-profit organisations. This has gone a long way to enhance understanding of PSM concept, its impacts levels, antecedents and the behavioural impacts of PSM (Jacobson, 2011).

The development of PSM studies can be attributed to the lack of satisfaction and criticisms levied against the Traditional motivation theories. The traditional theories are characterised by individual bias, total exclusion of values and sense of moral obligation from the conception of intrinsic motivation and that, the theories also assumed there exist strong situations (Choi, 2004). Other reasons includes, the desire to find an alternative to rational choice of motivation, long standing belief about and interest in an ethic of public service, global management revolution as well as the consistent failure of financial incentives researchers that have been transferred from the private to public since the late 1970’s.

Statement of the Problem

Most of the writings on PSM originated from America, although there are evidences that some emanate from Europe and Asia but under different names. For example in US, scholars’ uses public ethos, in Canada, public administrators speaks of “lethique dubien commom”.In Netherland and Germany, motivation of public servant is done through public service values that are embedded in ethos, in France, public service values are referred to as “lethique dubien commom”.In Netherland and Germany, motivation of public servant is done through public service values that are embedded in ethos, in France, public service values are referred to as “lethique dubien commom”.In Netherland and Germany, motivation of public servant is done through public service values that are embedded in ethos, in France, public service values are referred to as “lethique dubien commom”.

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Literature Review

Public Service Motivation (PSM)

Public Service Motivation came into the lime light of research in the 1980’s and early 1990’s when scholars start to give meaning to Public Service Motivation or ethics. This is with the view to complement the research of public and private managers, which was aimed at finding ways of rewarding their workers (Perry & Wise, 1990). The most popular cited definition of PSM is the one provided by Perry and Wise (1990), which viewed PSM as an individual’s predisposition to respond to motives grounded primarily or uniquely in public institutions and organisations. Mann (2006). Syamsir (2014) define PSM as a general altruistic motives to serve the interest of a community of people, a state, a nation or humanity. Kim and Vandenabeele (2010) sees PSM as the “a motivational force that induces individual to perform meaningful in public organization. Vandenabeele (2007) also define PSM as the belief, values and attitudes that go beyond self-interest or organisational interest that concern the interest of a larger political entity and that motivates individuals to act accordingly whenever appropriate. Although there are some kinds of variations in definitions of PSM by scholars, the common focus is on the desire and intention to do well for people and promote the well-being of the society.

In line with the study of Jacobson (2011) PSM plays an important role as far as the survival of organisations is concerned, because it provide a knowledge on how employee can be motivated, how they can be recruited and how to retain employees, it also provides a mirror for viewing the nature of public sector incentives as well as strategies for measuring public servants behaviour and this explains why PSM have a close link with Human Resource Management construct. Some scholars even suggested that, PSM studies should be incorporated into the public administration curricula and to educate public managers and human resources professionals on the basic tenants of PSM.

PSM was built on three theoretical bases as outlined by Perry and Wise (1990) which includes rational, norm-based, and affection. The rational aspect has to do with co instance of individual’s interest with a particular public policy, norm based is concern with the question of loyalty of individual to government and public interest, while affection is more of individual desire to help others. Perry and Wise used the above theoretical bases to construct a measurement scale (Andersen, 2009).

PSM is structured along six dimensions; Attraction to public policy making, commitment to public interest, civil duty, social justice, compassion and self-sacrifice. However, Perry (1996) reduced it to four by using data from a survey of 376 respondents from public sector backgrounds. The four dimensions are attraction to public policy making, commitment to public interest, civil duties, compassion and self-sacrifice. Attraction to public policy making was on the assumption that public policy co-inside with individual personal interest, compassion has to do with expression of love for others, commitment to the public interest deals with how loyal one is to the society, and self-sacrifice is about the desire to help others.

Meanwhile, Kim and Vandenabeele (2010) has observed that, for generalisation of PSM construct, the four dimensions has be redefined. They suggested for example, public policy making be modified to public participation, because public participation focus more on a desire to work in the public sector and participate in the public policy making for the community and social development. Commitment to public interest should be change to public values for the fact that there exist an overlap between it and self-sacrifice. They went further to argue that the third dimension does not represent a unique and silent qualities of affective motives, this weakness was reported by many past studies (DeHart-daris, Mariwe and Parley 2006; Maynihan and Pandey 2007 and Wright 2008; Wright and Pandey 2005), it is therefore suggested that, it should be re-define to better represent affective motives and to be more focus on affective bonding with the identified objectives such as other members of a social category or of a political system.

The last dimension according to Kim (2006) there should be clear distinction between three and a four dimension PSM construct. He said, public motives are found in the self-sacrifice and it is fundamental to the construct of PSM and need to be independently included in the operational dimensions. He argued that, the four dimension model is better because each dimension can capture a different and unique component of PSM. And it is useful for explaining and predicting the various aspects of public service-related behaviour.

Writers over the years had used these dimensions to examine various antecedents and their effects on...
PSM (Emanuel Camiller, 2005; Perry 2000). These four categories of antecedents are:

- Socio-historical context which refers to environmental variables that shapes individual predisposition such as education, professional training, religion, parental relations and other life events.
- Motivational context, this involves situational factors that influence behaviour in organisation examples are job characteristics, organisational incentives and work environment variables.
- Individual characteristics- this is made up of ability and competences, self-concept based on individual values and identity that entails creating incentives to respond to one’s behaviour and self-regulation which is made up of self-observation, judgmental processes, self-reactions and self-monitoring.
- Behaviour of individual- This could flow either from a logic of consequence or from a logic of appropriateness and is dependent on the self-regulatory effect.

In addition to above, Perry and Hondeghem (2008) categorises PSM antecedents into three parts.

- Socio-demographic factors which includes age, education, gender, and income.
- Social institution antecedents which comprises of family socialisation, religious socialisation, and professionalism
- Organisational factors are made up of organisational culture, bureaucratic rules, changes in organisational hierarchy levels and time organisation.

However, the focus of this paper is mainly on the social institution antecedents which is made up of three dimensions Family Socialization, Religion Socialization and Professionalism.

**Social Intitution antecedets and PSM**

Despite the fact that the PSM is a newly developed field, scholars have tried to publish works on the antecedents of PSM. Among them are, Syamsir (2014) who conducted a study on the antecedents of public service motivation in Indonesian Public Servants. The research used t-test and Anova to analyse data collected from 471 workers selected from the public sector. At the end, the result reveal that social institution antecedents (family socialization, religion socialization) are significantly related to PSM, while professionalism which also an example of social institution antecedents has negative impact on PSM. In a similar development, Clerkin, Paynter and Taylor (2009) find out that, antecedents such as family income, family socialization, political identity, religiosity, sex as well as volunteering are positively related to PSM. Meanwhile, a research aimed at identifying the level of PSM and socio-demographic antecedents particularly political ideology, income, education, marital status, age and gender among Indonesian civil servants was carried out by Syamsir (2014). Using simple mean and chi-square, data was collected from 398 respondents and analysed. The findings indicated that PSM levels of civil servants in developed countries is relatively high when compared to that of developing ones. The study further revealed that significant relationship exists between some socio-demographics antecedents and the level of PSM. A research aimed at investigating the role of non-profit service motivation (NPSM) as a factor in the enhancement of managerial accountability of Korean works was carried out by (Park & Kim, 2016). The study used quantitative approach to obtained data from 400 respondents. At the end of the research, it was discovered that training and development are the major elements leading to employees value similarity and motivation. The study also confirmed that person-organizational fit relates with NPSM. Furthermore, it was found out that, intrinsically motivated NGO workers contribute to the improvement in the level of managerial accountability among Korean NGO workers. The study of Lee (2012) investigates the differences between public and nonprofit employees’ volunteering concentrating on the types of organizations where they volunteer. The findings show distinguishing patterns of volunteering between public and nonprofit sector workers. It shows that, Nonprofit respondents are more likely to volunteer in religious and social/community organizations, while public workers volunteer more in educational organizations. The researches therefore recommend for a more systematic and multidimensional method which will aid more comprehension of the link between PSM and volunteering.

The study of Alonso and Lewis, (2001) examine the relationship between PSM and job performance in the federal service using multiple regression and logit analyses. Mixed result was reveal on whether PSM influence grades and performance ratings. It also provide evidence that employees who anticipated to receive a material return for excellent performance attained higher grades and performance ratings. The result further reveal that there is negative relationship between material rewards and performance mattered any less to those with high PSM. It was also proved empirically that PSM and prosocial behaviors were not related with public-sector choice (Lee & Choi, 2013). Their findings further show that job security was the main reason why college students envisioned to
enter the public sector in Korea. Jacobson (2011) explored the influence of organizational action on the development and enhancement of PSM. The study employed qualitative method to collect data from the mid-level managers of two federal agencies. The result show that majority of the participants agreed that, pragmatic reasons was what make them to pursue public sector employment. The result further reveal that workers notion about PSM changes over time particularly as they rise from lower to higher position. Bright (2005) investigated public employees with high levels of public service motivation who are they, where are they, and what do they want. The study investigated the influence of PSM on personal characteristics, management level, and monetary inclinations of public employees. At the end of study it was discovered that public service motivation is positively related to the gender, education level, management level, and monetary preferences of public employees.

Based on the above discussion this paper hereby hypothesis that

**H1** There is significant relationship between family socialization and PSM

**H2** There is significant relationship between religious socialization and PSM

**H3** There is significant relationship between professionalism and PSM

Figure 1.1

Framework

Figure 1.1 above shows the proposed framework of this paper indicating that the family socialisation, can influence PSM level of an individual, this influence is in form of parents who participated in volunteer organisation can transfer their moral and ethical values of helping others to their off springs. So when family socialisation is of high level, it will certainly lead to increase in PSM level of the younger ones. It was also expected that volunteering activities as a youth will yield positive impacts on PSM as individual mature.

In the case of the second dimension (Religion socialization) which is regarded as one of most important cultural factors that give structure and meaning to human values, behaviour and experience. It is belief that, religion socialization can have significant impact on PSM. The framework also proposed that professionalism can also influence the level of PSM.

**CONCLUSION**

This paper examines the influence of family socialization, religion socialization and professionalism on the level of PSM of Nigerian workers. The paper argues that, the level of employee level of PSM will be improve through family socialization, religion socialization and professionalism which in the long may lead to increase performance. The model has implications for civil service organizations, managers and other stakeholders. It is anticipative that, once the provisions of this model are observed PSM level of workers will also increase. This is due to the fact that family socialization, religion socialization and professionalism serve as important antecedents that has significant influence on PSM. The model will also help in the expansion and application of Social Exchange theory in organizations

**References**


