

Uplifting Motivation of Tanzanian Public Service Personnel for Improved Service Delivery: The Reflection of Public Service Motivation Theory

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Abstract

The widespread of public administration scholarship calls for the utilization of intrinsic motivational drivers to achieve high motivation among the public service personnel. However, this call has not been well received by many public bureaucracies especially in developing Africa. This study aimed at contributing to our understanding of the potency of intrinsic motivational drivers in motivating public Personnel in Tanzania from the lens of Public Service Motivation (PSM) theory. A case study design was employed and Ikungi District Council (IDC) was selected as a focal point of the study. Data were collected through interviews and 22 employees participated in the study. The findings indicate that public personnel are highly motivated by intrinsic factors as hypothesized by Public Service Motivation Theory. In their attempt of achieving high motivation among their employees the study recommend that, public institutions should take a critical respect to intrinsic factors of motivation rather than merely concentrating much on extrinsic motivation factors. Furthermore recruitment and selection processes in the public service should contemplate motivation dimensions hypothesized by public service motivation theory.

Keywords: Public Service, Public Service Motivation, Intrinsic Motivation, Public Personnel

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1. Introduction

For more than two decades now Public service in many of the African countries is under reform agendas stirred by ideas from New Public Management (NPM). The nature of NPM lies on embracing market management tools and techniques to public sector aiming at enhancing efficiency and performance improvement in the delivery of public service. However, findings across Africa show that those reforms failed to achieve expected results. (Obong'o, 2009; Crook, 2010; Afegbua & Ejalonibu, 2015; and Kilelo, 2015) For example, Crook, (2010) reported that, a part of many reforms adopted by African Public sectors, the delivery of public services in most Sub-Saharan African states remains in crisis. Hence, it appears that NPM has added very little to make African public sector organizations more efficient.

One potential justification for the failure of NPM in improving the African Public sector may be that NPM disregards an important behavioral driver: the motivation of the individual public service employees who implement these reforms and make organizations more efficient since the success of service delivery in the public service is mainly influenced by the underlying motivational levels among public employees. As Vandenebeele and Schott (2020) noted that, motivated people are the key asset of public organizations.

Eventually, the rise of NPM resulted to an increase in the use of output-related performance measures and rewards in the public service borrowed from the market environment. Nevertheless, the prevailing kinds of literature have identified several hitches inherent to the introduction of such incentives and control system in the Public sector. (Perry, 1996; Vandenebeele, 2009; Taylor & Taylor, 2011; Desmarais & Gamasson, 2014; Bozeman & Su, 2014) For example Perry, (1996) argued that 'Public service is a special calling and this has a significant behavioral implications to those who accept the call' Thus, understanding incentive regimes and their impacts on work motivation in the public sector has become of great interest. It is significant to examine at length the critical factors that need to be considered to achieve high morale among African Public service employees. The understanding of these critical factors that contribute to motivation among public employees will help in the review and formulation of relevant policies that take into consideration the unique local environment. The purpose of the study therefore was to explore the potency of intrinsic motivational drivers in motivating public service employees in Tanzania from the lens of Public service motivation (PSM). A case study design was employed and Ikungi District Council (IDC) was selected as a focal point of the present study.

2. Literature Review

Since the attainment of its political independence in 1961, Tanzanian government adopted various public sector reforms to bring changes to the Public service to make it better in delivering goods and services to the public. The first major reform was launched in July 1991 by the name of Civil Service Reform Programme (CSRP). The

central theme of Civil Service Reform was Cost containment and restructuring of the Government. The CSRP ended up in 1999 after its failure since its achievement was not translated into improved service delivery to the public. (URT, 2000; Rugumyamheto, 2005; Bana, 2009; World Bank, 2013 and Nchimbi, 2019).

In order to address the challenges that arose from the implementation of CSRP, the government of Tanzania undertook a major policy reform in the area of Public service management and came up with the Public service management and employment policy (PSMEP) of 1999. The PSMEP provides the roadmap that will guide and aspire the reform of the Public service of Tanzania in to a national institution of excellence that plays a pivotal role in achieving sustained national economic growth and eradication of poverty in the 21 century (URT, 2000). The policy calls for the management systems and principles of management that transfers private sector management tools and practice to public sector organizations. The policy aimed at holding both public service institutions and individual employees in the service responsible for performance and results.

To achieve the objectives of PSMEP the government of Tanzania embarked on an 11-years Public Reform Programme (PSRP). PSRP has four core areas: a pay reform to raise and differentiate public sector salaries to increase motivation and reduce corruption; downsizing of the public sector through privatization to limit government inefficiencies; rationalization of the government bureaucracy and introduction of performance monitoring systems to reduce the size of the bureaucracy and finally decentralisation of powers to local governments authorities to increase efficiency of service delivery and effectiveness of developmental planning.

After years of its implementation PSRP results do not look convincing especially in improving motivation among public employees. Several studies confirm that a motivation level among personnel in the public service of Tanzania is still low. (Hakielimu, 2011; Melkizedek at el, 2008 and Njunwa, 2017). One of the potential justifications for the limited achievement of PSRP in achieving high motivation among public servants is that the Program transferred private sector policies and programs without considering the unique nature of the public service environment. However, there is a considerable empirical indication that motivational programs and policies mirrored from private sector including performance-based pay schemes are either worthless or dysfunctional (Perry, 1996; Vandenabeele, 2009; Taylor & Taylor, 2011; Desmarais & Gamasson, 2014; Bozeman & Su, 2014). In Tanzania, the PSRP neglected the use of intrinsic motivational drivers as an integral part of the Programme. In addition, the employment and labor regime laws in the public service of Tanzania also neglects the aspects of intrinsic motivational drivers. (The Public Service Act, 2002; The Public Service Regulations, 2003 and Standing orders for the Public Service, 2009) Generally, intrinsic motivational drivers in the public service of Tanzania are not planned and they depend much on the whims of the superiors. There are no directives or circulars to guide the application of intrinsic motivation drivers in the Public service of Tanzania. From this point, it is evident that, the Tanzania public service lacks the relevant values for implementing intrinsic motivational drivers as a part of the motivational program provided by the government.

In this setting, Public Service Motivation (PSM) was embraced as a theoretical lens of the study. PSM has been evidenced to generate valuable insights when studying individual work motivation in the public service. (Perry, 1996; Vandenabeele, 2009; Desmarais & Gamasson, 2014; Bozeman & Su, 2014). The concept of Public Service Motivation originated from the United States of America in response to the decreasing public self-assurance towards American public institutions. This dictated the need to reboot the importance of a public service ethics and sense of public duty (Perry and Wise, 1990). Since then the discussion about Public service motivation has changed in line with this regard.

Public service motivation is defined as an individual's predisposition to responds to motives grounded primarily or uniquely in public institutions and organizations. Vandenabeele (2007) defines PSM as the belief, values and attitudes that go beyond self-interest or organizational interests that concern the interest of larger political entity and that motivate individuals to act accordingly whenever appropriate. Generally, PSM theory suggests that individuals with superior level of PSM are more likely to be found working in public service because of the chances it offers to provide meaningful public service and perform better in and more satisfied with their public sector jobs because they find this type of work intrinsically rewarding. There are four distinct dimensions which are usually made in respect to public service motivation theory. These dimensions are attraction to public policy making (APP), commitment to public interests/values (CPV), compassion (COM) and self-sacrifice (SS).

The opportunity to contribute in public policy making is a rational motive of joining public service since policy making may seem to be exciting or dramatic to the one concerned reinforcing one's image of self-importance. This motive is uniquely grounded from public institutions; the public interest undertaking is related to norm based reasons around the idea of civic duty and social justice; compassion refers to emotional reasons, referring to patriotism of benevolence, defined as love towards and desire to protect fellow citizens; self-sacrifice refers to the desire to replace the intangible rewards, consecutive to service rendered to another person with tangible rewards. This can be seen as having components that are both emotional and norm based and refers to altruism, which lies at the heart of the Public service Motivation. (Perry, 1996).

3. Methodological Annotation

A case study design was employed and Ikungi District Council (IDC) was selected as a focal point of the present study. Data were collected from the employees of Ikungi district council through semi structured interviews. Initially the study aimed to interview 43 employees of Ikungi district council from the category of supervisors and non-supervisors but after reaching 22 respondents no new theme was discovered hence the population remained 22 respondents. As Grady (1998) noted that 'in interviews, when the researcher begins to hear the same comments again and again, data saturation is being reached... It is then time to stop collecting information and to start analysing what has been collected'. With the participant's approval, the interviews were audio-recorded to ensure complete transcript. Typed notes were also taken during all interviews, enabling us to track key points to return to later in the interview and for use during data analysis. All interviews were conducted between April 05 -15, 2021 after obtaining research permission letter from Singida Regional Administrative secretary.

Interview questions were structured to reflect four dimensions of Public service motivation. The dimensions were adopted from the work of Kim et al. (2013). These dimensions partly overlap those of Perry (1996) but with significant differences. The dimensions are: attraction to public service (APS), Commitment to Public Values (CPV), Compassion (COM) and Self Sacrifice (SS). Attraction to Public Service focuses on the disposition to serve the public, to work for the common good and to participate in the process of developing and implementing public policies, Commitment to Public values assesses the extent to which individuals share a set of public values, compassion is based on the original Perry's scale but more specifically assesses the identification with the suffering of others and self-sacrifice dimension is similar to that existing in Perry's scale of Public Service motivation. The questions were organized in semi-directive manner to reduce the bias of desirability. Thus, the interview guide does not have questions as such that relates to compassionate dimension of PSM. The themes developed naturally in the course of the interviews.

Data were analysed through Thematic Analysis and that interview questions were used as 'prompts' which enable the researcher to expand on follow up questions. The respondents were interviewed in Kiswahili language and letter on translated their responses in English.

4. Results and Discussions

The present study investigated the potency of intrinsic motivational drivers in motivating Tanzanian public service employees from the lens of Public Service Motivation. The analysis of the data focuses on four dimensions of PSM as modified by Kim at al, (2013) from the original dimensions of Perry (1996). These dimensions are attraction to public service (APS), Commitment to public values (CPV), Compassion (COM) and self-sacrifice.

Attraction to public service (APS)

Job security was the major determinants for the majority of the respondents to join the public service. Although previous studies on PSM reported that PSM is an essential determinants of career choice in the public sector, this study generated a divergent result since majority of respondents perceived that the main determinants for their choices to join the public service was job security.

One respondent had this to say: *I used to work in the private sector before my decision to join the public service. I feel my job is secured now. I never had such feeling when I used to work in the private sector. In the private sector any time you may be fired. I have seen many employees who lost their jobs by being fired without even considering the employment laws and regulations.*

The opportunity to be exposed to multiple practice areas in the public service was another reason why people choose to join the public service, the study revealed. The participants perceived that, Public service is a huge sector with multiple functions and sectors hence employees are able to work on a wide range of sectors from education, health, agriculture and many others. This makes their job more interesting than working in a restricted practice area in the private sector.

Engineer had this to say: *Working in government is very interesting; I am able to apply my skills in the vast of sectors there for I am not just an engineer. I know what is going on in all sectors from education, health, agriculture and others. You can't have such opportunity in the private sector.*

These findings suggest that, the motivation to serve the public does not give the impression to be a significant determining factor for public service employees when making a career choice to join the public service of Tanzania. What matters to them is job security and the opportunity to diverse their skills. This finding relates with the study of Vandenebee and Van de Walle (2008) through the survey data from the international social survey program, the survey revealed that PSM is more or less universal concept, but its constituent dimensions are not necessarily universal, this implies that historical and institutional differences might explain the different pattern of PSM in different countries. Wise (2000) and Wright and Pandel (2008) also viewed that attraction to public Service as the first dimension of PSM which represent a rational motive to join the public service has the possibility of self-interested motives. However, Perry and Hondeghe (2008) made a very clear distinction

between PSM and Public sector motivation, the latter of which refer to more extrinsic motives for public sector employment including job security and work-life balance.

Commitment to public values (CPV)

The study discovered that, majority of participants are motivated by the fact that, they are committed to Public values. It is significant to the respondents that, they can contribute to the community. For them, meaningful public service matters a lot. Moreover, they want to be useful members of the community.

One respondent had this to say: As a public servant in environmental science and sanitation I feel myself responsible to the community. Without clean and sound environment, the society could not develop due to poor environment-related problems like disease hence; it is my responsibility to make sure that the environment is clean all the time. For this I feel am playing an important role in my community and country in general.

Compassion (COM)

Majority of the respondents affirm that they consider the welfare of others important to them even though sometimes it hurts them. The study revealed that majority of respondent report feeling like the work they are doing is for the benefit of human kind, not just for their personal advantages.

One respondent had this to say: As the name suggests 'public servant' means I am serving the public and it is my responsibility to make the community prosper and achieve better standards of life. I believe that as a public servant I have a greater responsibility of promoting development of the society and the nation at large.

Self-sacrifice (SS)

The study also discovered that majority of the respondents were in the view that, collective welfare is important to them than personal welfare. They sometimes accept personal losses for the sake of citizen's welfare.

One respondent had this to say: As an engineer, most of my tasks are requires my presence in different sites. Sometimes I face some transportation difficulties but I keep on pushing and make it to the site because I am well aware that If I fail to reach the site and keep the deadlines, some of the important services will be missed by society therefore this drives me positively to tirelessly serve the community at all costs.

Another respondent added: As a public human resource officer, I have the responsibility of making sure that other workers are getting their lawful services on time. This may require me to spend far extra hours mostly without payment in office just to make sure that they get their services as it helps to avoid some other problems. Provision of better services to the employees and citizens of Ikungi District Council means a lot to me.

Public service motivation has received a considerable research attention among the scholars of Public administration both in theory and practice. Studies from different parts of the world have underlined the significant roles that Public service motivation can play in determining the motivation of Public service employees and ultimately improve the performance and effective public service delivery. (Perry, 1996; Wright & Pandey, (2008); Vandenabeele, (2009); Taylor & Taylor, 2011; Yung, B (2014); Desmarais & Gamasson, 2014; Bozeman & Su, 2014; Vandenabeele & Schott, (2020); Amegavi & Mensah (2020) These studies highlight the facilitating role that PSM plays. The results of this study support the premise that Public service motivation can be used to examine why people choose to work in the public service. However, the first dimension (the attraction to public service) do not support this view rather, it displays that job security and the opportunity to be exposed to multiple practice areas in the public service are the leading factors considered when making career choice to join in the public sector. Public sector employment in Tanzania provides a stable employment opportunity than its counterpart. It is also important to comment that having self-interested motive for choosing to work in the public sector might not necessarily make it impossible to simultaneous public service motivation study revealed.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

5.1 Conclusion

The present study investigated the potency of intrinsic motivational drivers to motivate Tanzanian public service employees from the lens of Public Service Motivation. The study empirically, supports the idea that public employees value the opportunity to perform the public service and those public employees are more likely to be motivated by intrinsic aspects of work. These results confirm with many previous studies conducted in different parts of the World. (Perry, 1996; Wright & Pandey, (2008); Vandenabeele, (2009); Taylor & Taylor, 2011; Yung, B (2014); Desmarais & Gamasson, 2014; Bozeman & Su, 2014; Vandenabeele & Schott, (2020); Amegavi & Mensah (2020) Hence, PSM theory can be used to understand motivational drivers of public servants in Tanzania moreover, PSM could also become an important bedrock for the Human Resources Management practices in the public sector. Public Service motivation offers important opportunity to rethink about policies, processes and practices of Public Personnel management in Tanzania. Apparently, one of the most common problems about public sector in Tanzania is the lack of appropriate motivational leverages for the public servants. There is still a strong focus on extrinsic motivational drivers like monetary incentives. See (Public Service Management and Employment Policy, 1999; Public Service Pay and Incentive Policy, 2010; The Public Service Act, 2002; The Public Service Regulations, 2003 and Standing orders for the Public Service, (2009).

People are happier when they feel they like the work; they are doing something for their life. If you think

deep-down, we all want to leave our mark of contribution somehow. Working in public service is viewed as helping people, public employees feel that the work they are doing is for the benefits of the human kind, not just for commercial profit-making.

It is of great importance to admit that the study is limited to only one local government authority this may limit the application and generalization of its findings across other public institutions in Tanzania. Therefore, the future research of this nature should focus on using samples from different public organizations or different levels of the government such as central government and local government. However, the study has succeeded to make a modest contribution in advancing PSM scholarship in Tanzanian context.

5.2 Recommendations

The public service of Tanzania should rethink about its strategies in its attempt to achieve high motivational levels among its employees. Intrinsic factors should be given critical respect in motivation rather than merely monetary incentives. PSM values should be integrated in the reward, promotion and performance appraisal systems. The observation of PSM behavior in performance appraisal system could inspire and develop public service motivation. The current practice of Performance management in the Tanzanian Public sector is fundamentally output-related. Nchimbi (2019) Work structures should be developed in such a way that improves self-regulation and there should be continuous interactions and dialogue between superiors and subordinates and superiors should create rooms for engagement and dialogue about institutional challenges, this will lead to better understanding about institutional challenges and ultimately improves innovation and organization operations Amegavi & Mensah (2020).

Recruitment and selection in the public service should consider Public service motivation dimensions. The current practice in recruitment and selection in the Tanzanian Public Service Put a greater weight in academic qualifications and experience, other behavioral drivers are not given important weight. See Public Service Standing Orders (2009), Public Service Recruitment Code of Good Practice (2007), Public Service Management and Employment Policy (1999), Public Service Act (2002) and Public Service Regulations (2003). The Tanzania Public Service Recruitment Secretariat should take initiatives to attract citizens who display high levels of Public Service Motivation to work in the Public Sector.

The development and enhancement of Public Service Motivation of the next generation of the Public Service should be promoted through the introduction of Public Service Motivation values in the educational curriculum as well as the training programs organized for public servants. Public Service Motivation should not be merely a theory but it should be the culture. Culture defines what the next generation does. Those who are responsible to manage the human resource which is considered to be the most valuable asset in the management scholarship should learn more about public service motivation.

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