

CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, NORTHRIDGE

The Impact of Motivation on Efficiency and Performance on Public Sector Employees

A graduate project submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements

For the degree of Master of Public Administration, Public Sector Management and Leadership

By

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December 2019

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Abstract

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The public sector faces various limitation which restricts the organization's ability to incentivize employees to increase employee morale. Leaders of all levels must find creative ways to motivate employees to positively affect performance and therefore, increase patient satisfaction. Patients have the option to be treated by private organization for their medical and mental health needs, creating a competition for our public hospitals and clinics. It is necessary to keep patients happy with the services that Health Services offers to retain the business of patients. Hospitals and clinics are scored, by a third party, based on surveys completed by patients, which ranks the hospitals and clinics in comparison to similar private and public facilities. The results of those surveys are deciding factors on the facilities' eligibility for government subsidies and grants.

Leadership of all levels are faced with staff shortages, high turnover rates and absenteeism which are all believed to be factors of low morale and job un-satisfaction. Unlike the private sector, managers and supervisors do not have the freedom to incentivize employees with monetary raises, bonuses or even small gestures such as food or gifts. In the public sector, employees cannot just be given promotions based on their performance or be given privileges

that are not approved. On the other hand, employees that do not perform at a high capacity cannot be punished without proper procedures which can be extensive and time consuming and cannot be a supervisor's priority due to high demands in relation to patient care.

The direct correlation between a leader's ability to motivate an employees and an employee's moral affect the satisfaction of the patients that are being served, makes the issue an administrative matter. Developing methods to engage employees and increase moral within civil service rules in a patient centered environment is the key to statistically improve the facilities ratings and therefore, retaining patients and organizational success.

Section 1: Introduction

Public services dates back to early civilizations such ancient Egyptians, China and Rome. According to Silvia Horton, public service has four different meanings. She believes that the term “public service” refers to those employed by a government to perform administrative functions. Secondly, public service also refers to service that the government funds and third, services that are provided to the public. Lastly, public service is the motivation of people who are fulfilled by the sense of duty and responsibility for contributing to the common good of the community or society. (Perry, 2008)

The importance of motivation of employees has changed drastically over years. Employees were once only considered as human capital and seen by organizations as part of a machine that could be motivated base on rewards or punishment. Theories that focused on hierarchy, labor specialization, and techniques of assembly line were derived from the economic change of the industrialization. Theories such as the scientific method, believed that workers were naturally lazy and monetary incentives were the best way to make them productive and willing to obey orders without questioning. Psychology influenced public administration with the observation that the productivity of workers could not be maximized if the employees were unhappy and not satisfied. According to Plitcher (1981). the Hawthorne Experiments statistically proved that productivity increased when mental attitude positively changed. (p.134). It is debatable if the rise of productivity is progressive long term and continuously, but the research did show productivity had an overall upward trend. (Plitcher, 1981, p. 134)

The evolution of management was a collaborative effort. Psychology, sociology and economics inspired changes in the field of management with research and finding intended for the various fields of study. The acceptance of management and administration as a field of study

was followed by the acknowledgement of public administration as its own field of study. Scholars and researches noticed the cultural difference between public and private organizations was extensive. The demands, needs, limitations and motivations in public administration were specific. Public administration employees find fulfillment in serving their communities, which we will discuss more extensively in the upcoming sections. Other variables made public administration necessary such as the shift in leadership power. It was recognized that leaders would not hold authority just based on organizational ranks. Employees demanded more from their supervisors in order to effectively serve the public. (Kellerman, 2012).

This study will attempt to ascertain whether motivation will impact the efficiency and performance of public service employees and therefore increase productivity based on the custom concepts intended for the public sector. It is necessary to first analyze the effects of leadership styles and grasp the affect that leaders have on employees. The environment fostered has an impression on workers' satisfaction. Then the study will focus on variations of motivation for employees and understanding the various aspects that can influence an employee's behavior.

Finally, the study will explore what motivates employees of a public organization specifically and provide reasoning to show that the public sector employees are motivated differently. These concepts are designed based on the believe that public sector employees are driven by more than just monetary compensation. The study explains the behavioral responses of employees based on variable internal values and personality traits. The desirability of the public sector is often formed from those internal values which attracts employees that are influenced or inspired by similar factors.

In public organizations, such as the Department of Health Services, the highest quality

of service must be provided. People's lives are often dependent on the care that is provided.

Employees serving those patients must be equipped with the technology, resources and skill sets to provide their community. It is the organizations responsibility that the department can sustain the necessary assets including the human capital.

Section 2: Literature Review

Researchers have found that public organizations are more likely to hire employees that share values with the mission of the organization. (Baldwin, 1984) The public-sector organizations attract employees that have altruistic, high-order needs which can be fulfilled by serving the public. (Wright, 2007) It is crucial that organizations understand how to nourish their employees full potential and help them stay dedicated to serving and remaining fulfilled. In order to keep employees motivated leaders must be familiar with the various ways to lead their workforce and which methods are most effective and appropriate. Managers are responsible to motivate employees to perform at their highest possible level. (Steers, 1987) Leaders must be aware of the different factors that influence motivation in the public-sector organizations. Therefore, this study will present literature that studies organizational theory and a variety of approaches to explore how to design work environments that create effective motivation. Secondly, literature defining the factors that impact motivation for employees will be addressed. Lastly, literature regarding motivation specifically for public sector employees will be presented.

Leadership Approaches and Styles

Altruistic employees have different needs than employees that are egocentric. Public sector employees have been known to call their jobs work “a sense of duty” rather than a job. (Houston, 2000) Understanding the workforce guides leaders to the appropriate analyzing method and leadership style. Transformational leadership, for example, is one of the popular theories in organization theory. The transformational approach is useful in public and non- profit organizations because these organizations have strong service and community-oriented missions that appeal to the altruistic employee. (Pandey, 2012) Transformational leadership has shown to be so effective because there is often a sense of purpose and feeling, like a family, due to shared

interest and interdependence which leads to long term commitment. (Bass, 1993) On the other hand transactional leadership uses rewards and punishment as motivation for employees to reach goals. Transactional leadership is thought to be restricting in terms of innovative behavior, but the leadership style offers clear expectations and feedback pertaining to meeting the expectations. (Pieterse, 2010)

Both the transformational and transactional leadership styles revolve around strategic methods intended to motivate employees to meet goals and be productive. The Laissez-faire leadership style is described as a non-strategic method. This leadership is often seen in the public sector with combinations of other leadership styles. Inju Yang believes there are positive effects of the “hand-off approach” stating that subordinates often appreciate being left alone to complete tasks which leads to the employee feeling respect an autonomous. (2015)

No two organizations are the exact same and using generic management and leadership theories can restrict an organizations ability to reach max efficiency. The situational approach aims to avoid generic theories and take situational analysis and social behavior to develop alternatives in which management can select the most appropriate for the situation being analyzed. (Staehele, 1976) Similarly the contingency approach emphasizes that it is important to take contextual factors such as nature of work, external environment and employee characteristics, into account when evaluating an organization. (Osteraker, 1999) Both approaches find it important to examine factors that are unique to each organization, situation, cultural environment on macro levels as well as micro levels, such as individual employees. The two leadership styles, situational leadership and contingency leadership, differ in one major aspect. The contingency theory expects the appropriate leadership style to match the situation based on the analyzed factors and situational leadership suggests that the leader needs to adjust

their leadership style based on the situation.

Similar to the transactional leadership style, the path-goal theory is highly dependent on a leader's ability to increase personal rewards for employees for obtaining their goals.

(Dessler,1977) Dessler explains that path-goal theory requires leaders to create the path for employees to make it easier for them to reach their goals by clearing any obstacles which increases the employee's personal satisfaction. The structure imbedded in the theory is meant to minimize the role's ambiguity and clearly defines the path.

According to Mitchell, motivation is a psychological process that gives people direction, gives them arousal, and leads them to act voluntarily to reach a goal. (1982) The theory lists four properties for his definition, (1) motivation traditionally has been cast as an individual phenomenon, (2) motivation usually is described as intentional, (3) motivation is multifaceted, and (4) the purpose of motivational theory is to predict behavior. The two important aspects of this theory are the arousal and the choice of behavior (Mitchell,1982) The motivational system is, according to Mitchell, constructed from the outside. It is based on the assumption made by management about (1) what behaviors are important and (2) the factors that influence these behaviors. (Mitchell, 1982)

Employee Motivation

Motivating employees requires understanding motivation, human behavior and studying the role of a manager or leader. To properly motivate anyone, we must know what makes people act and what makes them lose the desire to act. Each employee has their own mixture of needs that motivates them the most. Each employee has their own set of strengths which lead their desires from their jobs. Some are satisfied with their jobs knowing they have security while

others are driven by achievement. Understanding that employees are not just human capital allows managers to understand that employees have the capability of leading an organization to success and have the capability to stent the organizations growth and ability to be successful. (Dobre, 2013)

The scientific management theory was one of the earlies theories regarding work motivation and many other theories evolved from it. Frederick Taylor believed that the best way to motivate employees to perform in their jobs was by motivating them with money. He believed that above all other things, high wages would push employees to work the hardest. This theory was born and practiced in the early 1900s in an era where “the machine controll[ed] the man]”. (Kemp, 2013) Researches over time have discredited Taylors scientific theory and find it to not be applicable in today’s organizations.

In contradiction to scientific management, Elton Mayo and Fritz Roethlisberger conducted a study to incorporate the psychological aspect of human behavior and motivation. Their findings refocused the managerial strategies when the workers being studies responded positively to non-monetary incentives. They discovered that “behavior and sentiment are closely related, group influences significantly influence individual behavior, group standards establish individual worker output, and that money is less of a factor in determining output than were group standards.” (Lee, 2016) The Hawthorne studies shifted managerial methods from “scientific” focus to explore human behavior. It has been found that employees are often motivated by being trusted with more responsibility, feeling like they are a part of the impact of the organization, or special non-monetary perks such as a desk next to a window.

The evolution of management led to various management theories that revolved around the worker’s needs. Abraham Maslow developed the Hierarchy of Needs theory which include,

physiological needs, need for safety, affiliation, need for esteem and status, and self-actualization. Tuzzolino and Armandi assessed of the need-hierarchy and found that the framework has some weaknesses due to the subjective categorization of needs but in an era of social responsibility the need-hierarchy is needed for the governance of organizations. (1981)

Several theories have developed to assist organizations in motivating their employees. For example, Hackman and Lawler's approach suggested a job that lets the employee manage a meaningful portion of the task gives them a sense of personal responsibility. They also found that a job that provides results is meaningful and if that job offers feedback about the employee's performance, the employee is more motivated to work harder and effectively. (Hackman, 1971) In organizational behavior the idea of job attitudes is prominent and researchers are interested in how people feel about what they do when they work. (Salancik, 1977) The interface between the needs of an employee and the characteristic of a job is believed to be a motivating factor.

Understand what motivates an employee is beneficial in several aspects. That information is necessary to assure that employee remains driven and satisfied but it is also helpful to hiring managers. Knowing if the person is altruistic or egocentric can help the organization match employees to the job that suits the employee best and therefore, produce efficiently for the organization. It is crucial to have self-driven and highly motivated employees for the jobs that do not have clear performance measuring. (Prendergast, 2008)

Gruenberg explains that there are two explanations for high satisfaction by workers with manual or routine jobs. Their satisfaction is based on the degree that they value the job or the high level or reliability on the job due to limitations on other opportunities. (1980) Employers assume that because the employees that are limited in job choices they do not have a need for intrinsic rewards for their work. (Gruenberg, 1980) The average manual worker is

usually content with the simple idea that they will receive a paycheck to support their family. (Blauner, 1968) White collar workers, or manual workers, prioritize family and leisure and do not find a need to responsibility and therefore, job fulfillment will not be a strong motivator. The variation between different motivators for different people are due to two determinants of work motivation: the motives of the employee and the job satisfaction. (Wright, 2001)

On the other hand, people that are motivated by material wealth can be driven to produce more of what the organization need in a “pay-for-performance” transactional incentive. (Michaelson, 2005) This form motivating is straight forward and simple until the cost of the employee outweighs the benefit of the employee.

Motivating Public Sector Employees

Public organizations face different obstacles than the private sector companies when implementing methods for employee motivation. Due to funding limitations and policy restrictions most public organizations are constricted as to what they can offer employees in exchange for their efforts. According to Crewson, “the use of monetary incentive systems remains a dominant fixture in public organizations even though their utility continues to be debated by the academic community.” (1997) Past research has argued that private sector employees and public-sector employees are the same. The literature to follow argues that public sector employees are not the same as private sector employees and have different needs as far as motivation and fulfillment. The insinuation for a well-established government organization with cost-effectiveness and responsiveness is that failing to properly motivate their employees leads to poor job performance and displacement of public service ethics. (Crewson, 1997, p.500)

Research has shown that the private sector and the public sector have differences in

what motivates employees and how the employees interpret the work context which leads to difference in job satisfaction and job characteristics. (Wright, 2001) Research has shown that the employees of public sector find the values and needs of the organization to be consistent with their own. (Wright, 2001)

After comparing public sector managers and private sectors managers a study found that public sector managers rate higher items that are about public service or helping others. (Belle, 2012) The study was consistent with previous statements regarding the altruistic nature of public sector employees. Belle also found that public sector motivation is “found to influence variables such as the performance of an individual and an organization, retention and the appraisal process in both positive and negative ways. (2012) Employees of the U.S. Federal government find that enjoying and appreciating their job is more important than money in term of remaining in their jobs. (Belle, 2012)

Research to identify what factors create the most impact on public sector employees is difficult to conduct because many jobs are difficult to measure. Therefore, researches cannot reach a concrete conclusion because they are not able to measure the efficacy of the employees’ efforts and have to rely on extrinsic incentives. The issue with using extrinsic incentives is that a large number of public sector employees are not motivated in that manner. The lack of attention on the variables such gender and age also cause for concern. The way that an employee feels about their job and how they are motivated has a direct correlation with their hierarchal level. (Buelens, 2007) But researchers are able to state with certainty that intrinsically driven people are attracted to public sector jobs because of the nature of the work and the high satisfaction they receive from public service. (Georgellis, 2011)

Due to the nature of public sector employees, it is important for leaders to understand that

incentives can have negative effects. According to Ariely, the introduction to extrinsic incentives might lead employees to lose trust in the organization because the extrinsic motives might shift from a social framework to a monetary framework and the majority of public sector employees are not motivated by extrinsic incentives. (2009) Although it is not certain the extent of impact extrinsic incentives will cause, it is known that private sector employees prefer the monetary incentive, and prestige. Private sector employees also seem to desire challenge and autonomy. (Jurkiewicz, 1998) On the contrary, public sector employees are satisfied with job security and stability, as well as, working with teams. (Jurkiewicz, 1998)

Public organization have a difficult time evolving with the constantly growing technology. Employees experience frustrations which lowers motivation because they are having to work harder to complete tasks that could be completed more efficiently. Public organizations also have limitations due to the presence of unions. Parker's study to identify intrinsic motivators led him to a conclusion that employees are motivated by flexible working conditions, ability to reach new audiences, and the opportunity to enhance technical skills. (2003) These are all areas that the public sector has failed to evolve in and is now making efforts to reach the norms of the private sector.

Section 3: Methodology

As management and leadership has shifted from a punishment/reward system, or transactional approach, to a more transformational style of leading, we discover that each employee has their own motivational formula that will inspire them to work at their maximum potential. Researches know that an employee that is happy and fulfilled by their job will be more likely to carry out the organizations vision and maximize efficiency and productivity. The purpose of this study is to understand why a phenomenon occurs rather than the statistical forms of data analysis and therefore, a interpretive approach will be utilized. The qualitative method of in-depth interview and participant observation with quota sampling will be practiced to gather data and perspective on the impacts of experiences on the participants.

This study will be two-fold. First, we will analyze the awareness of leadership approaches of the average supervisor or manager in public organizations and survey their approaches of choice. Understanding the extent of knowledge that an average supervisor/manager knows in the public sector gives researchers a clearer picture because they will be able to estimate the variations on a important variating factor. This will provide executive leadership and researchers with in-sight on leadership development. Secondly, line staff employees will participate in in-depth interviews which will provide the study with perspectives and personal experiences. The insight will provide executives, researchers and policy makers with data to develop methods to effectively motivate employees and maximize efficiency. If the employees have had negative experiences, they will not work at their highest potential and not be as productive as possible leading to overall organization efficiency gaps.

Unmotivated employees also impact the culture of the organization and can spread their lack of motivation to their fellow employees.

Learning about the experiences of both classes of employees, the supervisor/manager and line staff employees, by interview will be focused in order to be able to compare related information. The interviews for this study will practice a general interview guide approach in order to focus on how motivation impacts employees and how managers/supervisors perceive motivation methods. The questions will be predetermined, not opened, to assure that the researches extract the appropriate information for comparison. The questions for managers and supervisors will concentrate on knowledge of motivation methods, believes about the impact of motivation, currently practiced motivation approaches and results of their attempts. The questions for the line staff would be on the receiving perspective. They would be concentrated on how they felt when they were being praised or motivated. The interviewer will ask if the employee likes their job, how important is it for the employee to do their job well and what would make them feel motivated to go to work.

Ethical Consideration

The study will practice quota sampling to fulfill characteristics required such as supervisory category, supervisor/manager or line staff, and public-sector employees. Employees should be aware that the study is completely voluntary. All participants will be asked to sign a consent prior to any interviews and employees should be made aware that they are free to drop out of the study at any point. To assure that the data represents the population of public sector employees, it is necessary that the sample for this study is diverse. Participants should represent people in various classifications such as gender, age, years of public service, level in

hierarchy, location that they serve. The study coordinators should also explain to the participants that the data collected will be used for the study and the researchers' intentions for the data and how long the data will be kept. Finally, participants should know that their information and the data will be kept confidential.

Section 4: Background

The Los Angeles County Department of Health Services serves approximately 600,000 patients through the Los Angeles county and employees about 22,000 people. DHS is the second largest health care system in the nation made up of 19 health care systems and four hospitals. The organization also partners with community-based clinics in order to service the large community. DHS dates back to 1856 when six Daughters of Charity of St. Vincent DePaul opened an eight-bed facility. The facility grew over time and for approximately 150 years the organization provided care to all residents regardless of their ability to pay. DHS has been impactful in Los Angeles County in desperate times. The organization offered relief to overwhelmed hospitals by opening a Tuberculosis Sanatorium. In the 1940 and 1950's, DHS was an innovator in polio treatment. The facility offered respiratory and surgical services to post-polio patients.

The Los Angeles County Department of Health Services has had the luxury of maintaining their patient's population over the years due to the lack of options patients caused by the patients limited income. In 2008 the medical reform gave previously uninsured patients the choice to select health care providers within a network. This shift in the supply and demand of the DHS facilities forced the organization to take patient experience and satisfaction as a high priority. It became crucial that patients were happy with the overall services that the organization provided so that they would voluntarily return for care. The organization quickly began to survey patients and looked to find ways to maximize satisfaction while remaining cost effective. It was found that extremely long waits and customer service were the biggest issues.

Hospitals and outpatient centers are evaluated and compared to other facilities with similar domains by a third party. Los Angeles County facilities evaluated by Press Ganey

Associates, Inc. Patients treated at any LA County facility, and other competing facilities, are asked to complete a survey based on an inpatient stay or an outpatient visit. The survey questions ask that the patient ranks the hospital or clinic on a numerical scale with zero representing a poor experience and ten representing a positive experience. The survey also asks patients if they are likely to recommend the facility to a friend or family member. Each facility is then ranked, based on the average percentile, in comparison to facilities that are similar in size and practice. Employees at LA Counties are reminded that the results of the surveys are important because the scores are often determinants for state and federal grants and funding.

Both LA County DHS and Press Ganey's missions focus on "high-quality patient-centered care" which also happens to be a strong motivator for public sector employees. Employees directly affect the success of LA County hospitals and facilities with the quality of care that they provide. The Press Ganey survey questions patients about their experience when communicating with their nurse and how well the physician listened to their needs. It asks questions about hospital staff's responsiveness and courtesy. Employees of all classifications and ranks are included in the survey and are required to perform in a pleasant manner at the best of their ability.

Identifying the gaps in patients' satisfaction allows DHS to implement plans and protocols to make the necessary adjustments. It also reminds leaders that employees of all levels make a direct impact on the community they are serving and the success of the organization. In 2015, while working at Olive View Medical Center, a "SHHH" campaign was launched in attempt to reduce the negative feedback identified by the survey. A committee was formed that made rounds around the entire hospital at various times of the day and identified noise that could be reduced or eliminate. The wheels on carts for blood drawing were lubricated to eliminate squeaking, the elevator speaker was lowered, and nursing protocols were adjusted to assure that

patients were able to get comfortable rest at night.

The organization also focused on reevaluating efficiency and processes. DHS migrated to electronic health records and set initiatives for retraining staff. One of the major findings was that employees were not working efficiently due to old established procedures. Employee productivity was also an issue. Throughout the last 5-10 years the organization has been working on focusing more on employee development and motivation.

Section 5: Recommendations

Motivated employees will be more efficient and will perform their jobs well. Public organizations like the Los Angeles County Department of Health Services face obstacles when attempting to motivate their employees. They are not able to offer certain monetary incentives such as bonuses or commission. According to the literature, most public-sector employees are more incentivized by the fulfillment of serving their community. Government organizations lack investment in their employees or focus on those of higher ranking. Training, employee development, and training involvement should be distributed through all rankings. Public sector organizations, like LA County DHS, look to utilize their resources in the benefit of their participants but it is important to understand that investing in the employees that serve the participants will directly benefit those participants.

Los Angeles County policy makers need to foster the natural instinct of their altruistic employees and help them feel like they have direct impact on the people they serve. Economic incentives offer motivation to a selective group in the public sector. Specifically, in the Department of Health Services, where empathy and compassion is crucial to the treatment of patients, employees need to be an important resource in the services that are provided. Aside from just providing a function, employees need to feel the direct connection to the connection to the patients' lives and their recovery. Employees need to feel like they are serving a purpose and that is being recognized. Employee evaluations is the current process for feedback on an annual basis and the most appropriate time to praise or coach employees. Due to the high demand to prioritize patients, the evaluation process is often considered once a year when it is due. In order to offer strong feedback to help the employee improve or make them feel accomplished, supervisors and managers should be diligently documenting about the

employee's performance all year around. Unspoken regulation exist in the evaluation process. It is difficult for supervisor to grade their employees with "outstanding" or "needs improvement." Either grades require a tremendous amount of work and due to the already overwhelmed raters, employees are often rewarded with a "competent" grade. The effortless grade results in loss of initiative and inspiration for those going above and beyond and provides those working below average with inaccurate feedback. Public organizations need to invest in their employees and they should begin that process by updating their current procedures including, but not limited to, the evaluation process.

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