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Public Sector Employee Empowerment and its Impact on Employee Motivation and
Performance

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Abstract

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This paper reviews the literature on employee empowerment in the public sector workplace, with careful attention to the fundamental theoretical assumptions of the body of work and the empirical research on public sector employee motivation and its impact on job performance. This paper highlights important research findings relating to the adverse impacts of economic approaches and financial rewards as motivating incentives for public sector employees in government jobs to be applied as an HRM practice. It further outlines the positive attributes of motivating public employees intrinsically. This study contributes to our understanding of the differences between public and private sector motivational strategies by demonstrating that, public sector employees are generally less extrinsically motivated. The current psychological research on employee motivation in the public sector developed in the literature review emphasizes on the importance of social cognitive theories and practices, such as the application of goal commitment and goal-setting theory, self-affirmation, P-O Fit theory, work autonomy, and transformational leadership as the most effective avenues for public administrators to empower and motivate government employees. Using an explanatory research design, the specific question this research aims to explore is whether or not employee empowerment programs are effective in terms of motivating employees and ultimately enhancing employee job performance in the City of Glendale.

Chapter 1: Introduction

In the realm of public administration, to streamline administrative and managerial decision-making process, research is conducted in the public agencies and nonprofit organizations (McNabb, 2013). Such research studies enable the public administrators to effectively and efficiently be able to allocate the scarce resources in terms of limited funding in various budgetary items and in the human resources spectrum. The main source of revenue in many municipalities and governmental agencies are driven by the taxation and federal and state grants. Therefore, as it may be expected, not only these resources are subject to certain limitations and restrictions, but they may also very likely be unpredictable and volatile, and consequently, difficult to estimate and count on. For instance, the funding coming from the property taxes, that is considered one of the major revenue sources in any public agency, is driven by the housing market. Due to the capricious nature of the housing industry, the revenues generated by the property taxes frequently fluctuate. Moreover, revenues coming from the federal or state grants are also unpredictable and impulsive; the decline in property taxes, the sudden drop in housing prices, and the increase in costs of servicing debt incurred post Great Recession are some of the factors that continue to assault the federal and state financial situation (Davidson and Ward, 2014). Such funding is also often contingent upon certain governmental regulations and changes in legislations, laws, or mandates.

Personnel, Largest Asset in any Public Agency: As a result of being the largest most important asset in any public organization, personnel and human resources spectrum is the first and most impacted element affected during an economic downturn or a budgetary shortfall. Due to being the main budget item, personnel salary is considered

the largest liability, in terms of compensation and fringe benefits, and the biggest expense item on any public budget document. Nevertheless, the key to have a successful workforce requires investing time and services in the development and advancement process of the employees. As a result of the diminishing benefits and perks of the government jobs and the continued budget deficit in many public agencies, today, several municipalities are faced with the challenge of recruiting and maintaining a healthy and sustainable workforce. In order to achieve this objective, it is imperative for the public administrators to be able to tactfully and resourcefully hire, train, empower, motivate, and maintain skilled and qualified staff and keep this momentum.

Managing and motivating employees in the public sector has important consequences. In summary, the social pertinence of this topic selection lies in the importance and significance of this issue and its inevitable consequences not only in the public sector workplace, but also on the lives and well-being of the livelihood of the general public, the constituents. The core responsibility of a public organization is to provide safety, sustainability, and livability to the constituency group it serves. A healthy and safe community needs public administrators who are motivated to perform well at their given capacities; such vision may only be accomplished with practices that continue the process of building and developing the future leaders of the organization.

Empowering and encouraging employees can give the staff outstanding leadership potential who will in-turn lead the future of the organization. Such human resources strategies will ultimately translate into more transparency and more accountability in government.

Unexpected Consequences of Oversight Failure: Research findings in the subject of oversight failure in government, meaning lack of proper audit and reviews in place, indicate that, generally speaking, “government personnel remain susceptible to temptation, whether prompted by illicit market efforts, improper suggestions regarding future employment, or even blatantly illegal bribery” (Schooner, 2001, p. 687). Moreover, in an article describing the fundamental failures of businesslike government, scholar Schooner (2001, p. 687) argues that “government purchasing officials have weaker incentives to make optimal procurement choices than their private sector counterparts.” Such oversight failures arise from situations where the employee is not motivated to perform their best in their job capacities and fulfill their responsibility of serving the constituency groups; therefore, they explore other avenues to feel more satisfied with their jobs. Another detrimental consequence of an oversight failure of ensuring employee job satisfaction in the public sector is related to the topic of emotional labor; “emotional labor called surface acting, [which] is [described as] often necessary in public service work, requires workers to suppress their truly felt emotions and create a fake emotional display” (Sloan, 2014, p. 1). Author Sloan (2014) defines this phenomenon as extremely harmful for the employees; this may likely lead to adverse impacts, such as psychological issues and ultimately lower job satisfaction which can translate into lack of performance. The findings of her research further “suggests that surface acting emotional labor is harmful to workers because it increases feelings of self-estrangement” (Sloan, 2014, p. 1). In addition, author Sloan (2014, p. 275) identifies self-efficacy as a moderator of “the negative relationship between emotional labor and worker well-being.” Hence, being mindful of the employee satisfaction and making

efforts for employee empowerment and motivation is not only necessary for the public agencies in terms of enhancing and improving employee performance, but it is also vital for the well-being of its employees and the overall health of the organization.

Limitations of Empowering Employees in the Public Sector Workplace

Environment: Despite of money not being classified as a motivational factor in the public sector, studies in this topic do suggest that, public employees are approximately underpaid about 25% compared to their private counterparts (Alonso, Lewis, 2001, p. 365). Nonetheless, empirical research in this topic outlines the ineffectiveness of the efforts to reform HRM in terms of pay and compensation, as because of the merit-based-pay system, it is not feasible to award financial rewards and monetary incentives to the public sector employees (Paarlberg, Lavigna, 2010). For this reason, “in an era where the desirability of public sector employment may be overwhelmed by the persistent poor image of government and [its] noncompetitive pay,” it is imperative to develop strategies to recruit and retain competent employees in the public sector (Naff, Crum, 1999, p. 5). Scholars have yet to understand or mention precisely the identification of resolutions, propose remediation, and to resolve this issue with feasible and practical proposals that can rectify this problem; hence, it is essential to conduct a research in the topic of public sector employee empowerment and its effects on the employee motivation level and job performance (Naff, Crum, 1999, p. 5).

Explanatory Research Design: The focal point of this research is to link the cause and effect relationship between the two variables of public sector employee empowerment and its impact on employee motivation and their job performance. Through a non-experimental observational research design using only secondary data, both qualitative

and quantitative, utilizing an explanatory approach and incorporating other cross-sectional research methodologies, this study will look at various factors in relation to employee empowerment and aim to examine their impact on employee motivation and job performance (Bellé, 2013).

General Question: Does employee empowerment techniques increase employee motivation level and impact job performance? To answer this question, this research will study various sub-groups of public servants and further focus on a specific public organization, the City of Glendale, in order to uncover the motivational factors executed and geared towards employee motivational and its potential links to empowerment and performance. The following sections will look at the literature review pertaining to this topic.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

In summary, today's dynamic workforce environment consisting of various demographics, has resulted in increased retirement, rise in the demand for succession-planning, and higher needs for developing strategies to attract the next generations of future employees; as a result, recruitment and retainment of an effective workforce has become one of the most important and significant agenda items for the public administrators (Bright, 2008). Given the dynamic nature of today's public workplace environment, which consists of a multi-generational workforce all with their unique needs and job expectations, it is absolutely essential for the public administrators to develop and acquire the necessary leadership skills and expertise in order to be able to effectively and efficiently cultivate a resourceful teamwork atmosphere and successfully fulfill their managerial roles, ranging from planning, organizing, staffing, directing, coordinating, reporting, and budgeting, while in the meantime, satisfying organizational overarching objectives and sustaining momentum (Gulick, 1937). The researchers and practitioners in the field of public administration have looked at the employee empowerment and motivational factors, have assessed these elements' potential influence on the employee job satisfaction which ultimately impact, employees' overall performance; this process has become especially more cumbersome as the employment interest in the public sector has declined drastically amongst the new generation (Bright 2008).

The pertinence of this research topic in the realm of public administration is associated with the negative impacts, such as job dissatisfaction, emotional labor, and higher turnover. These negative outcomes are as a result of lack of proper employee

empowerment HRM methodology; consequently, this shortcoming has an adverse impact on the overall wellbeing of the organization (Bright 2008).

Public Service Motivation (PSM): One of the most important definitions pertaining to this topic noted in the literature review relates to the subject of public service motivation, also known as PSM. Scholars refer to this phenomenon as a stimulating factor and an altruistic intention that motivate employees in the public sector HRM spectrum (Bright 2008). Similar to this ideology, PSM is also broadly defined as “the beliefs, values, and attitudes that go beyond self-interest and organizational interest to energize the employee to do good for others and contribute to the well-being of the organization and society” (Paarlberg and Lavigna, 2010, p. 710). While there is conformity in the belief that individuals with higher PSM generally perform better at public sector jobs, there are contradictory claims arguing against this point of view by asserting that there are inconsistencies that challenge this hypothesis (Bright, 2008). The opponents of this view argue that the literature in the topic of PSM has fallen short in establishing a strong relationship between PSM and the employee attitude and behavior (Bright, 2008).

Another important factor studied in the literature review pertaining to the topic of PSM is focused on tenure identified as a threat when it comes to job satisfaction burnout in the public sector workplace (Bright, 2008). Scholar Bright (2008) highlights the negative impact of late retirement in the public sector work environment by stating that tenure can adversely impact employee job satisfaction, and therefore, the longer the government employees stay at their jobs, the less motivated they are to perform well in their job capacities. While this viewpoint agrees with the concept that employees with high PSM tend to be more congruent with the overall characteristics of the public sector in general

which will ultimately have a favorable impact on their job satisfaction, this connection does not necessarily guarantee a *perfect fit* between the employee and the specific organization (Bright 2008). Consequently, job environment that are ill suited and incompatible with the basic needs and beliefs of the government employees who have high levels of PSM will eventually have an adverse impact on the job satisfaction of the employee which will lower job performance and increase turnover rate (Bright 2008). Therefore, in order to manage an effective and resourceful workforce environment, it is important for the public administrators to be mindful of employees' personal values and belief and attempt to match and align such principles with the overall standards and objectives of the organization.

Private Sector Models in Public Service: One of the other important dimensions of this study focuses on the notion of running government like a business and applying business HRM in the public sector spectrum. In an article explaining the idea of consultancy in the public sector, author Adams (2012, p. 200) cites the Goodhart's Law "after the British economist who observed that as soon as governments adopted monetary targets the aggregates they targeted changed their meaning and significance." Similar to this ideology, scholar Brewer highlights the role of economic rewards in the public sectors and explains that the aspiration for financial incentives is not a determining factor of the four concepts of the PSM (Brewer 2000). The author further illustrates this approach by defining the Samaritans and communitarians outlook in terms of PSM; he claims that willingness to forgo economic rewards and focusing on doing good deeds rather than doing good financially in order to serve the citizens is what constitutes as a high level of PSM. Author Bright also (2008) agrees with this viewpoint asserting that, monetary

opportunities have minimal, if any, impact on incentivizing people with high PSM levels. Furthermore, in a study on the motivational factors of public sector employees, scholar Paarlberg and Lavigna (2010) indicate that economic approaches in human resources management in government can actually have limited positive contributions in motivating employees and may in fact negatively impact their employee performance. Hence, the findings of the studies mentioned above all confirm the previous researches and demonstrate that giving the public sector employees economic incentives or financial rewards does not necessarily motivate them or increase their PSM level. Financial rewards and monetary incentives are implemented using a performance based approach which will be discussed in the next section of this analysis.

Performance Pay: Congruent to the idea of incentivizing employees with the application of business HRM techniques, one of the other key trends and definitions mentioned in the literature review relates to the topic of performance pay. In the aim of high performance, managers and administrators often facilitate avenues for promoting better performance by incentivizing and motivating employees through which they utilize performance based pay indicators to rate an employee's performance, and depending on the rating, punish or reward the employee (Hawke, 2012). This theoretical framework is defined as performance based methodology. Theories in this line of thinking oppose this methodology by arguing that the administration of performance management is inherently ineffective due to its contradiction with the public sector culture, its complex structure, and its unique nature in terms of moral and leadership (Hawke 2012). Scholar Hawke (2012) defines performance pay as a "hierarchical dynamic" that is solely based a judgment rather than feedback. Similar to the previous research findings, Hawke's

(2002, p. 21) study also assesses the value of performance pay application in the public sector workplace and concludes that employee bonuses that are linked to performance pay management involve risks such as “issues of equity, rating moderation, and forced distribution” (Hawke, 2012, p. 21). He asserts that in the public sector HRM, it is not only through monetary rewards that employees may feel motivated to perform well; it is rather through satisfaction of their self-interest, such as motivating factors relating to recognition and achievements that an employee strives to enhance their job performance (Hawke, 2012).

Noncompetitive Salaries and Government Restraints on Wage Rises: One of the most prominent findings in the literature review is the earnings comparison research performed by the Office for National Statistic in 2010 (Groom, 2014). This study indicates that the compensation for the same work in the public sector is slightly less than their private counterparts (Groom, 2014). In addition, due to government’s merit-pay structure, public administrators are faced with restrictions when it comes to salary wages, pay incentives, and raises. Furthermore, as a result of the aftermaths of financial crisis in 2007-2008, decline in growth productivity, and increase in inflation, most government agencies are still faced with wage freezes and salary raise restrictions. Consequently, as an employer, it is relatively more difficult for the public administrators to promote an employee by giving salary raises or monetary incentives. The next sections of this paper will outline some of the other limitations associated with employee empowerment in the public sector workplace.

Limitations of Empowering Employees in the Public Sector Workplace: One of the most important and prominent dimensions of the literature review in this topic is

associated with the limitations and shortcomings of empowering employees in the public sector workplace. Scholar Paarlberg and Lavigna (2010) assert that empowering employees in the public work environment may result in inconsistencies with the public values and the obligations for accountability towards constituents. Along the same line of thinking, the concept of tight loose coupling suggests that in the organizations with complex structures, the application of giving employees discretion to make their own decisions while still expecting them to perform consistently with the organizational overarching values can allow employees to perform better at their jobs (Paarlberg and Lavigna, 2010). The literature review in this research topic investigates the possibility of this value alignment, also known as the P-O fit theory, which is the likely relationship between an employee's personal values and the organization he or she is a part of; it further examines the potential positive impact such alliance might have on the employee's job satisfaction, and ultimately, their overall performance.

Another research in the field was a case study which looked into antecedents and influential factors in terms of employee empowerment and motivation and its potential direct and indirect outcomes in the government workplace. This research was conducted based on various case studies and sub groups of public servants. This research was performed in Bariadi District Council and it analyzed the role of motivation on the employee performance (Lameck, 2015). Using a stratified sample size of 150 employees with age distribution 18-56 years old respondents, this study assessed various dimensions of this theoretical framework.

The analytical research was executed by a set of questionnaires sent to the employees. Some of the results indicated that approximately 71% of the employees

believed that their performance was depended on their work environment and, therefore, their successful execution of their work duties was conducive to their job atmosphere (Lameck, 2015). Around 51% of the respondents were of the view that monetary incentives can have an adverse impact and influence zeal without incentivizing the employees by providing and maintaining a harmonious and healthy work environment (Lameck, 2015). Therefore, the analytical data in this case study placed a special emphasis on work atmosphere and characterized this factor as a yield for high performance (Lameck, 2015). In addition, another finding of this data analysis was in relation with logistics in terms of necessary work tools and equipment that facilitates job performance; this area, however was only rated by 13% of respondents as a facilitator of good work performance and was not regarded as a major source of employee motivation (Lameck, 2015). While one fourth of the respondents chose time off with pay as their ideal form of recognition for their performance, 12% indicated “time-of-the-month-award” as their preferred method of acknowledgment (Lameck, 2015). In addition, “appreciation for good job done” and “years of service award” were rated 9% and 5% as a great influencer and effective variable to increase motivation (Lameck, 2015).

Based on these distribution indicators and the above mentioned findings in the literature review, it can be concluded that employee recognition and appreciation can be constituted as one of the strongest and most influential internal forms of motivation in the public sector workplace that can positively impact job performance and result in sustainable growth (Lameck, 2015). The next section of this literature review will critique this theoretical framework.

P-O Fit Theory: One of the major theories that were developed in the topic of public sector employee motivation and its impact on employee job performance is the P-O fit theory (Bright, 2008). This theory is presumed to be the main influential factor in job satisfaction and turnover ratios and it is supposed to have a positive effect on the employee PSM level and their perception of the fit with the organization (Bright 2008). Based on his research findings and observation of different variables involved in his studies, scholar Bright (2008) suggests existence of a causal direct or possibly bidirectional relationship between employees fit with the organization and the probability of their sound performance (Bright, 2008). In the same line of thinking, author Paarlberg and Lavigna agree with this trend in alignment of the employees' personal values and organization's ideology by asserting that "articulating an organizational mission that clearly reflects individual pro-social values" (2010, p. 711) maximizes social significance of the work which helps the employees to be more eager to perform better at their jobs.

Moreover, in a study to mediate the relationship between PSM and the job performance of public employees, scholar Bright (2007, p. 364) examines the characteristics of both variables and assesses the casual relationship between the two asserting that "as the congruence between individuals and organizations increases, employees become more satisfied, committed, and productive." In addition, in testing the relationship between PSM and work attitudes, author Kim (2012) highlights potential congruent between individuals and organizations which validates the findings of the previous studies; the results of his research show that PSM and P-O Fit theory are complementary in terms of work behavior. With that said, the bidirectional relationship occurs when the employee is empowered, motivated, or influenced due to a certain

leadership style employed in the organization, which in-turn influences his or her individual beliefs and values and the overall job performance (Moynihan, Pandey, and Wright, 2012).

Transactional and Transformational Leadership: The empirical research in the field of public administration show clear findings confirming that leadership and the form of its application and utilization in the public workplace setting matter (Moynihan, Pandey, and Wright, 2012). The literature review further notes that, in certain situations, it is likely that leadership type overlap in the context of employee empowerment and motivation and performance use (Moynihan, 2012). Authors Moynihan, Pandey, and Wright (2012) draw on the most prominent organizational leadership behaviors, transactional and transformational. The transactional model of leadership is defined as a “provision of direct exchange in return for performance” (Moynihan, Pandey, and Wright, 2012, p. 6).

On the contrary, transformational leadership is about making a difference, being a change agent, and appealing to the utmost needs of the followers, asking them to go beyond their individual self-interest and strive to satisfy the core needs of the organizations; hence, this type of leadership style is described as the best suited techniques especially for fostering a change environment and promoting creativity (Moynihan, Pandey, and Wright 2012). In his research, author Paarlberg and Lavigna (2010) agree with this viewpoint stating that, transformational leadership is best to be applied in today’s dynamic and diverse work environments where it is required to attract a transient workforce in order to raise motivation, encourage initiative, and stimulate creativity. Studies in this arena have confirmed the effectiveness of the transformational

leadership and its positive impact on employee satisfaction and performance, specifically in the government and public sector work environment (Moynihan, Pandey, and Wright, 2012, p. 5).

The primary motivational factor of the transformational leadership is to influence followers' primary self-interest; by doing so, a transformative leader is likely to be able to stimulate intrinsic motivation that can in-turn increase employees PSM level and enhance the quality of job performance (Moynihan, Pandey, and Wright, 2012, p. 6). The literature review pertaining to the transformational leadership highlights some of the significant research gaps noting that in the practice of employment of transformational leadership, public administrators and managers have "been hindered by various problems including concepts that are difficult to operationalize, casual paths that remain unclear, and the need to assess the impact of this leadership approach under varying situations or conditions" (Moynihan, Pandey, and Wright, 2012, p. 6). Facing resilience when implementing a change and being forced to follow status-quo are among the biggest challenges of transformational leaders.

Nevertheless, research shows that this type of leadership has been effective in empowering employees. The literature review pertaining to the transformational leadership highlights the unique nature of this leadership style as an effective tool for shaping the culture of the organization, specifically a developmental culture (Moynihan, Pandey, and Wright, 2012). By emphasizing on innovation and problem-solving abilities, transformational leadership focuses on the organization's level of "flexibility, adaptability, and readiness, growth and resource acquisition" (Moynihan, Pandey, and Wright, 2012, p. 8). Hence, this leadership style is "characterized [as an] idealized

influence, intellectual stimulation, and inspiration motivation” (Paarlberg and Lavigna, 2010, p. 711). Providing strong leadership skills, exchanging knowledge and expertise, and promoting professional excellence and public awareness through education, advocacy, and employee developmental initiatives and programs enables the public sector employees to serve their constituency groups more effectively and it further empowers them to respond to the community’s various governmental needs in a more efficient and resourceful manner. This is not always an easy task as often times public administrators are continuously faced with budgetary constraints, governmental regulations and policies, and bureaucratic red-tape that make it cumbersome for the government officials to carry out their leadership duties successfully and effectively abide by their social contract.

The three psychological processes that are expected to form the employee behavior and raise innovation, purposefulness, and commitment in the workforce are through inspiring a sense of “awareness of the importance of the organizational values and outcomes,” being a role model for the employees, and promoting a change-adaptive work environment (Moynihan, Pandey, and Wright, 2012, p. 6).

A large part of the literature in this topic focuses on the importance of creating a “compelling vision for the organization to foster organizational goal clarity” and facilitate an effective goal-setting environment where public employees can benefit from this visionary atmosphere and feel more motivated and devoted to fulfill their responsibility of serving the constituency groups (Moynihan, Pandey, and Wright, 2012, p. 7). By developing the following theoretical model, author Moynihan, Pandey, and Wright (2012) propose this the application of transformational leadership as an avenue of

achieving this vision. Transformational leadership stands out to be the most effective leadership style that increases employees' growth and improvement by formulating a vision of success and transformation, nonetheless, this methodology is accompanied by various impediments and barriers such as political dilemmas and bureaucracy.

Goal Setting Theory: The importance of the goal setting theory lies in its positive impact on the employees' job satisfaction and performance (Moynihan, Pandey, and Wright, 2012). By clarifying goals, underlining their importance, eliminating distractions, and focusing on the individual employees' need for success, public administrators can be able to set into motion a chain of required steps and essential techniques that will enable the employees gain "benefits of clear organizational goals cascade to the job level" (Moynihan, Pandey, and Wright, 2012, p. 7). Doing so will not only benefit the employee by giving them a clear goal to pursue, but it will also help them in incorporating "the organization's goals into their sense of identity so that they are more likely to find meaning and self-affirmation" (Moynihan, Pandey, and Wright, 2012, p. 9). "Linking the followers' identities or values to those of the organization" increases intrinsic motivation and job performance (Moynihan, Pandey, and Wright, 2012, p. 9). When an employee's personal values match with those of the organization, this alignment increases job satisfaction, organizational commitment, higher motivation, lower turnover, and greater overall feelings of personal success.

Empirical research in this topic validates this point by acknowledging the positive attributes of the goal setting theory through the application of transformational leadership, which can give the leader the "ability [to] create a shared vision, articulate clear and meaningful goals, empower employees, and model an ethical and trustworthy

behavior” (Paarlberg and Lavigna, 2010, p. 711). Proponents of the goal-setting theory argue that by utilizing this managerial reform and leadership tool as a management strategy, public administrators can better be able to effectively and efficiently energize and empower employees and increase employees’ perception of goal attainment (Paarlberg and Lavigna, 2010).

Imaginative Leaders: One of the outcomes of the shift to employee empowerment in the public sector human resources management spectrum was the origination of the imaginative leadership, “valuing intuition in leadership rather than rationality alone” (Adams and Tovey, 2012, p. 9). This leadership style is defined as having the capacity to listen and empathize with the followers and constituents and being able to influence their thoughts and decisions by changing their minds (Adams and Tovey, 2012). The literature review in this area of research highlights the positive aspects of imaginative leaders by focusing on their ability to stimulate motivation and their transformative potential to change the status-quo (Adams and Tovey, 2012).

Oblique Problem-Solving Approach: In an effort to empower public sector employees to be more motivated and increase the quality of their job performance, scholar Adams and Tovey (2012, p. 6) propose “transforming organization to [be] more innovative nature rather than adaptive.” Keys makes a similar argument asserting that “the complexity and chaos of change in the contemporary world [requires a more] innovative and creative approaches to management” (Adams, 2012). He claims that a response based on *intuition rather than rationality* is what the administration in the public sector needs in order to tackle the problems more effectively and resourcefully; he calls this methodology an oblique problem solving approach (Adams, 2012). This line of thinking

“relies on constant experiment” (Adams and Tovey, 2012). Authors Adams and Toney underscore the benefits of this strategy as an ancient wisdom that can relate to the inconsistencies of the contemporary issues of the modern world.

Power of Delegation, Work Autonomy, and Participatory Management: One of the other important dimensions illustrated in the literature review is the topic of delegation and work autonomy. Author Paarlberg and Lavigna (2010) emphasize on the constructive aspect of delegating in the decision-making process and its positive impact on increasing employees’ level of skills and intrinsic motivation. Under the self-determination theory, these researchers assert that “autonomy in the workplace enhances employee’s PSM” (Paarlberg and Lavigna, 2010, p. 712). With a similar ideology, scholar Adams and Tovey (2012, p. 7) points out the importance of delegation in the public sector workplace affirming that people in the front line often times have the best understanding of the operational problems and, are, therefore, “best placed to use their expertise [as the] creative energies are those closest to the problems.”

Correspondent to this viewpoint, Maslow’s motivational theory depicted in his five-tier model of hierarchical levels of human needs indicates that for an individual to reach their highest level of satisfaction, which pressures inner talent, creativity, and sense of fulfillment, their highest of level human needs known as self-actualization should be contented (McLeod, 2007). Research findings in this topic further illustrate that extensive research has demonstrated that excellence in employee performance builds self-efficacy which in turn “provides employees with the confidence to persist in the face of setbacks” (Wright and Grant, 2010, p. 695).

On a similar note, Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory research findings identifies work condition as the biggest influential factor impacting job satisfaction and turnover intentions of public employees (Hawke, 2012). In this theoretical framework, "intrinsic nonmonetary characteristics of work such as social relationship with coworkers and supervisors, promotion opportunities and professional development opportunities and participatory management strategies" are found to be the most effective and influential factors for increasing motivation and job performance (Bright, 2008, p. 156). Author Paarlberg and Lavigna (2008, p. 712) agrees with this philosophy by validating this point and stating that "employing participatory management techniques that allow employees to participate in job related decisions" which adds meaningfulness to their work and gives them a sense of recognition, responsibility, and job advancement. Hence, promoting employee engagement and participatory management techniques are more effective tools in terms of employee motivation and performance in the public sector rather than economic approaches or financial incentives.

In another research study, authors Sharma, Srivastava, Ningthoujam, and Arora (2012, p. 2) define job involvement "as an integral component of employee engagement construct" by asserting that this managerial strategy "is not only one of the several manifestation of employee motivation," but it is also a motivational factor that increases organizational commitment and citizenship. One of the potential positive impacts of job involvement can be employee's willingness to take on initiatives geared towards civic engagement and community building when performing their civil service.

Furthermore, in his research study concerning the topic of participatory work practices, scholar Shukla and Singh (2014) introduce the idea of High Involvement Work

Processes, also known as HIWP, as one of the main conceptualizations suggested in the literature review. From a standpoint of work involvement as a positive attribute, the findings of his research indicate that HIWP promotes “a sense of control and empowerment and result in many favorable workplace outcomes, including generous outlook towards one’s role in the organization” (Shukla and Singh, 2014, p. 2). The author notes shortcomings of “the traditional Tayloristic vision of employees where they are seen as mere passive cost centers” assert that modern management theories “call for a humanistic vision that breeds empowerment and allows for active participation from employee” (Shukla and Singh, 2014, p. 3). Hence, the literature review in this topic “overwhelmingly shows that the job satisfaction of public employees is mainly influenced by the intrinsic nonmonetary characteristics of their work” such as professional development and career advancement opportunities (Bright, 2008, p. 156). Therefore, without motivating the employees intrinsically and empowering them through recognition and work acknowledgment, it is not feasible for the public administrators to manage and retain an effective workforce environment. The next sections of the literature review will outline some of the recommended practices to implement educational contributions and citizenry engagement to increase employee intrinsic motivation in the public sector work environment.

Educational and Academic Contributions and Citizenry Engagement: In a study on the reformer’s spirit and training for good governance, scholars Witesman and Wise (2012, p. 712) highlight the important of access to training and “seeking and using citizen input” as useful tools for administrative control, performance measurement, and an effective evaluation process. The findings of their research further indicate that such

“strong performance management approaches can support democracy by integrating citizen concerns through political accountability,” and provide performance information that can facilitate an effective employee performance evaluation (Witesman and Wise, 2012, p. 5). It is through citizenry engagement and community building activities that employees can connect with their constituents and better be able to serve their specific public needs.

In summary, the literature review focused on the effects of monetary incentives in addition to the other motivational factors that impact employee behavior, such as the application of transformational leadership, the utilization of goal setting theory, the power of delegation, work autonomy, and participatory management in the public sector workplace. The main research gap that was not outlined in the literature review pertaining to the topic of employee PSM and its impact on job performance was related to demographics in terms of whether or not, employee’s demographical factors could impact their PSM level. The next sections of this paper will outline some of the limitations and shortcomings associated with this topic.

Limitation 1 - Contradictory Findings: One of the most prominent points emphasized in the above-mentioned literature review content is that participatory decision-making management strategies increases employees’ intrinsic motivation which ultimately results in higher PSM levels; high PSM subsequently translates better quality job performance. Contrary to this point of view, in a review of eight meta-analyses, authors Perry, Mesch, Paarlberg (2006, p. 508) claim that the participative organizational decision-making system “has positive effects on affective attachments to the organization but only small

positive effects on performance.” Therefore, participative decision-making techniques will not necessarily translate into higher PSM level and ultimately higher performance.

Limitation 2: Unresolved Aspects: As a result of budgetary shortfalls and economic downturn, to remain fiscally prudent, efforts are introduced to “modernize bureaucratic structures in order to sustain the current financial crisis” (Jurisch, Ikas, Wolf, and Krcmar, 2013, p. 3). Due to this dynamic nature, “the public sector is subject to constant changes” which transforms its various processes and procedures (Jurisch, Ikas, Wolf, and Krcmar, 2013, p. 3). To increase efficiency while maintaining performance, there is a growing trend in the realm of the public organizations which promote business HRM practices “as a means of rightsizing government, cutting red tape, and reducing bureaucracy” (Jurisch, Ikas, Wolf, and Krcmar, 2013, p. 5). It is worth to note that based on the past literature, “between 60 and 80 percent of all [business process change] efforts fail partially or even completely” (Jurisch, Ikas, Wolf, and Krcmar, 2013, p. 3). Starting with the New Public Management (NPM) era, today there is a constant pressure to run government like a business in order to render public services more efficiently and be able to hold the public servant accountable more effectively. Proponents of this viewpoint, however, fail to recognize the adverse impact of the business-like practices on the public as a whole and how these strategies can potentially distort the very purpose of government, which is serving the constituency group and leading the society. Unlike the private sector, monetary incentives are not the sole motivating factors in the public sector. It is rather through trust, legitimacy, community building, growth, and development that government employees can realize the public value of their jobs and their role in safeguarding democracy and constitutional administration. This realization

can in-turn increase employees' motivational level and job satisfaction, and subsequently, result in better job performance.

Limitation 3 - Other Research Gaps: One of the main unanswered questions and major research gaps documented in the literature review pertaining to the topic of public sector employee empowerment and motivation and its impact on job performance is in relation to understanding why leadership matters and what form of leadership matters (Wright and Grant, 2010). The research in this arena shows that “understanding remains limited in critical ways” and such research still fails to answer “important causal questions about the emergence and effects of PSM” in the public sector workplace setting (Wright and Grant, 2010, p. 691). Authors Wright and Grant (2010, p. 692) question the internal validity of the casual relationship between PSM and job performance and indicate that in contextual realism, “these issues must be addressed if PSM research is to reach its full potential.” Similar to this line of thinking, in an experimental study on the relationship between PSM and job performance, scholar Bellé (2013, p. 151) agrees with this viewpoint asserting that “the levels of PSM found among an organization’s employees may be not wholly determined by attraction-selection-attrition mechanisms but may also be influenced by the organization to some extent.” Focusing on efforts to identify dimensions of motivating factors in the public sector and concentrating on strategies to gain insight on drivers of employee engagement and employee retention can be one of the most influential techniques public administrators can employ in order to attract and maintain an effective workforce environment and sustaining momentum.

Limitation 4 - Absence of Evidence and Under-Reported Issues: Although there is empirical research evidence showing that PSM originates from unique motives to the

public sector that are not found in the private sector, such as altruism, pro-social motivation, and synthesis, “a strategic question for future research is how to create balance between utilitarian and service incentive systems” (Perry, Hondeghem, and Wise, 2010, p. 687). The literature review in this topic notes that, in a value-driven future, “the empowerment approach to consultancy should be value-based” and the value principles should be benefitting people (Adams and Tovey, 2012, p. 11). There is, however, lack of evidence in terms of how such change and transformation can impact the employees’ overall motivation and job performance.

Summary and Research Gap: In summary, the purpose of this research study is to investigate “the extent to which PSM affects employee motivation, job satisfaction, and ultimately job performance” (Bright, 2008, p. 163). In an era where the image of government is distorted by its non-competitive pay, it is imperative to examine various dimensions of PSM and examine what constitutes public employee intrinsic motivation (Naff and Crum, 1999). Another important trend highlighted in the literature review was attributed to the P-O fit theory, which emphasized on the importance of alignment of employees’ personal beliefs and values and the organization’s overarching goals and objectives (Bright, 2008). Furthermore, work autonomy, delegation and discretionary authority, and participatory managerial techniques were listed amongst other variables influencing public sector employee motivation and job performance (Adams and Tovey, 2012).

The emerging patterns that can be highly valued here is that PSM remains to be a very productive area for forthcoming research studies (Naff and Crum, 1999). One of the main research gaps that future research should focus on is “carefully the demographic

and work-related factors that affect these attitudes and behaviors as well as to more fully understand their effect, such as the relationship between both recruitment and retention” (Naff and Crum, 1999, p. 10). Such research findings will not only help the public administrators in the recruitment process, but it will also enable them to intrinsically motivate their employees and effectively and efficiently manage the public sector workforce.

Chapter 3: Aim and Research Question:

This research will aim to study the relationship between public sector employee empowerment and motivation and its potential impact on the job performance. The main question this study intends to respond to is whether or not there is a relationship between employee empowerment and motivation. How do employee empowerment programs motivate public employees to perform better at their jobs? The specific question this research intends to respond to is whether or not employee developmental programs and initiatives have been effective in terms of motivating employees and enhancing job performance in the City of Glendale.

Chapter 4: Research Design

Description of the Research Methodology: Through a non-experimental observational research approach, this analysis focuses on the employee empowerment and motivation element in the public-sector workplace and it further assesses its impact on the employee's overall job performance. To operationalize the aim of this study, the research design chapter primarily focuses on the discussion and analysis of the data gathered capturing various aspects of employee motivation with special reference to its impact on the performance of the employees in the City of Glendale. The next section of this paper will propose a methodology of the data collection strategies implemented throughout the course of this research.

Data Collection and Analytical Methods: As a road-map used to guide the direction of this paper, the type of the data collection methodology and the sampling technique that will be used for this analysis is primarily data collected from the City of Glendale human resources and management services departments. In an effort to give a detailed blue-print about the nature of the study and the scientific inquiry utilized in this process to uncover the role of empowerment and motivational factors in the enhancement of the public employees' performance, data will be obtained in the form of qualitative structure. As the data collection criteria for examining the relationship between the two variables and their potential outcome will be based on behavioral aspect which is theoretical, quantifiable data collection involves intricacies leading the research to a more qualitative explanatory approach rather than quantitative experimental methodology.

The area of research in the design chapter of the data collection will be conducted on the City of Glendale's existing employee empowerment and motivational programs'

effectiveness and its possible linkage to the advancement of job performance. The City of Glendale is chosen as the public agency to represent local authorities and government municipalities in the County due to its current recognition as the fourth largest city in Los Angeles County surrounded by Southern California's leading commercial district (City of Glendale, 2018). Hence, it is considered an appropriate data collection source to utilize for the purposes of the sampling procedure of this research analysis. The data collection will be obtained from the information provided by a City of Glendale Human Resources Department. This information identify the following three existing trainings as the existing key employee developmental programs in the City; Glendale Supervisory Academy, Glendale Leadership Program, and Glendale University.

Both based on nomination as a selection format, each year, the Glendale Supervisory Academy and the Glendale Leadership Program serve approximately a total of 60 employees. Through a nomination process, the Human Resources department nominates star employees to the department and division directors. Depending on the managements' decision, the nominated employee gets an approval to attend the selected training. Starting from the Supervisory Academy level, the classes offered are focused on supervisory skills, principles of leadership, effective communication, performance evaluations, written communication, legal issues related to hiring, City's leave policy, customer thinking, employee discipline, conflict resolution, and workplace violation. Upon completion of the program, after successfully passing all levels and attending the entire course, the employee is then eligible for being nominated for a second round; this time for the Glendale Leadership Program. Focusing on building competency among managers and creating alignment in management approach between manager and senior

staff, this program combines formal discussion of specifically selected leadership topics in an in-depth manner with facilitation of group conversation regarding current organizational challenges. The objective is to expose participants to the most current thinking in a selected area, and to take advantage of the collective wisdom and experience of this group in considering solution to the present challenges. The nominated participants are expected to attend a series of training sessions on the leadership fundamentals, communication, conflict, innovation and creativity, leading change, ethics, social sector leadership, and creating a path to success. The Glendale University program on the other hand is a wide-range of trainings open to all City employees. Depending on the employee's specific training needs for a given job, the supervisors and managers recommend the employee to attend various classes.

Similar to the Citywide Employee Engagement Survey formed and administered by the Glendale Innovation Team #2 (GIT2) in February of 2013, a survey will be developed and conducted to request the participants' input of City's offered leadership programs after their attendance and their overall rating of the programs' effectiveness in terms of enhancing job performance. The purpose of the survey will be to obtain information from City of Glendale employees regarding their concerns about work place issues. The main task of the survey will be to solicit the thoughts, feelings, and attitudes of the City's workforce as it related to employee feelings and experiences with the City of Glendale, including concerns, motivating factors, and the morale.

Additionally, this survey will provide a snapshot of an organization in flux, and can serve as a benchmark for future surveys. Further, the survey will seek to determine if the City is best utilizing the wealth of knowledge, talents, and experience of its

employees to provide consistent and excellent value to the citizens and businesses in the City of Glendale. In developing the employee engagement survey, the GIT2 members worked through the critical issue of participant anonymity and confidentiality. The team agreed that anonymous surveys would facilitate open and candid responses as well as maximize participation rates. At the same time, the team established control measures to ensure that each employee could participate in the survey only once. Different control measures were applied to the web and paper surveys. Similar controls should be in place when administering the survey for the City's leadership programs' effectiveness.

To conduct a secured administration, online surveys features, such as SurveyMonkey should be used. Using an outside survey provider, such as SurveyMonkey, rather than the City's Intranet will allow for a third party to effectively manage data collection, serve as a communication tool, and maintain anonymity. The survey questions will be developed based on dimensions that impact employee opinions, namely; Future/Vision, Work Itself, Growth & Development, Recognition, Communication, Community, Values, and Leadership containing both quantitative and 5 open ended questions and will be distributed electronically to employees. In addition, hard copies should be provided to employees who do not have access to a computer or who do not feel comfortable taking the survey online. Measures should be taken to ensure the integrity of the survey results and to assuage concerns regarding anonymity.

Stratified Purposive Sampling: To avoid biasness, the stratified random sampling method will be utilized to randomly send City staff to attend the Glendale university for the purposes of training, development, increasing knowledge, and grooming them into effective leaders. As this technique uses small groups of employees within the

organization, the likelihood of an increase in consistency and statistical accuracy is highly anticipated. The small group size also reduces the amount of time, energy, and money spent on exploration. Furthermore, this method allows human resource as well as the upper management to observe the current relationships between the subdivisions of the organization.

Discussion of Limitations: Despite of the purposive sampling method applied in the data collection and the stratification technique utilized, limitations associated with this type of research approach are still inevitable. Although the sources may be considered empirical research, limitations with respect to this particular research topic still exist. For instance, the consistency of the research findings may be questioned. Assessing the transferability of this research, one might question the reliability of this approach and the relevance and pertinence of this methodology to another public organization.

Ethical Consideration: To reduce biases and increase transparency, it would be best if this research had included actual before and after data of the participants' performance evaluation results. In the case of the City, information on the program participants' performance evaluation prior to attending the empowerment and training programs and collecting the same data a few years subsequent to the program attendance would better reveal the relationship between such employee empowerment program and job performance. Nonetheless, due to confidentiality agreements, employee performance evaluation results are not considered public records, and therefore, such data is not readily accessible.

Validity and Credibility of Research (Internal and External): In terms of validity and credibility, this type of research approach can potentially signify a lower level of internal

validity and higher level of external validity. Internal validity, which refers to evidence supporting the claim of a cause and effect relationship between the variables within the context of same study (McDermott, 2011). External validity, on the other hand, relates to the relationship between the variables of the study and its applicability to other outside variables (McDermott, 2011). Although research findings indicate that the employee empowerment training programs have been effective in enhancing employee performance in the City of Glendale and it can potentially be applicable and useful for other public agencies, it is not to say that if an employee attends the program, he/she will automatically perform better at their job.

Expected Contributions: The drive for this qualitative research was to define and recognize the phenomena of employee empowerment and its impact on job performance from staff's perspective as they solely increased the validity of the outcomes of this research. Results concluded that employees who attended the supervisory, leadership, and the Glendale university academy, tend to be exceptionally motivated, happier, confident, loyal, and content with respect to their careers.

City of Glendale's strategy of empowering employees via these additional training programs to increase efficiency and performance strengthens the external validity of this qualitative research. As demonstrated above, there is a high correlation between employee empowerment programs and increased performance as well as high transferability and generalization capacity in relation to a larger populace or equivalent conditions.

Research Closure Criteria: The intended objective of this research was to understand the relationship between the employee empowerment and motivation and its impact on

job performance within the context of public sector human resources management.

Qualitative data was collected and analyzed to explore different dimensions of this process and understand various factors involved that result in employee motivation and higher performance in the government workplace environment.

Chapter 5: Discussion

In any organization, the overall health of its workforce is the key to its continued success. Some of the factors to consider in defining “success” include the morale, motivation, engagement, and sense of purpose of the organization’s employees. This research demonstrates that employee development programs are generally effective in motivating employees intrinsically and enhance job performance in the public sector workplace environment. In addition, although monetary incentives may bring short term job satisfaction, in the long run, such factors do not necessarily increase employee motivational level or job performance. Giving employees job autonomy and appropriate level of discretionary authority is rather considered an effective method of increasing employee motivation level which will in-turn translate into higher job performance.

Personal Interpretation/Contribution: One aspect of employee motivation that the research did not cover was the possibility of offering public employees flexible hours and the option of working from home. This could potentially be a motivating factor if the responsiveness to the constituency groups remains the same and is not jeopardized.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

Due to its dynamic nature, the public administration arena is constantly faced with rapidly changing societal, demographical, economical, and technological influential factors. Public administrators are continuously faced with the challenge of recruiting and retaining a successful workforce while maintaining a cost-effective and yet satisfactory motivational workplace strategies and continuing to keep up this momentum (Brooks-Immel, 2014). As public servants, government employees carry out a fiduciary duty towards the society they serve, and therefore, it is of the essence to be accountable to the constituents and be motivated to perform the assigned tasks effectively and efficiently.

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