### NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF PUBLIC SERVICE

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The application and adaptation of the public service motivation (PSM) theory in the Hungarian civil public services

AUTHOR'S GUIDE TO DOCTORAL (PHD) DISSERTATION (THESIS)

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#### The scientific problem

According to the Magyary Program 11.0 the government's main goal is to procreate the good state. The attribute of the good state is providing services for citizens, communities, and organizations through the procreation of public interest. The good state counterbalances not only different political entities, but it also protects natural and social values.

The Public Administration and Civil Service Development Operative Program 2014-2020 aims to make public servants in public administration more motivated and qualified to behave ethically and gain a national sense of duty, since this is the basic criterion of the good state. The good state cannot serve citizens without motivated public servants. In order to achieve these aims public human resources management must be renewed and career models must be developed.

UNDP (2017) (United Nations Development Program) distinguishes between intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. While intrinsic motivation arises if someone does something for enjoyment, extrinsic motivation is gained by receiving compensation. Regarding public service, UNDP (2017) calls for PSM (Public Service Motivation).

PSM as a new paradigm arose in the public administration literature first in the 90's. According to Perry and Wise (1990) PSM is an individual disposition to the organizational culture and structure of the public service. PSM is relevant in the public sector and it can be understood as a motivational force to convert public service jobs into meaningful work (Brewer and Selden, 1998). In the dissertation I combine the above mentioned two definitions and I define the PSM as a special predisposition of public servants as motivational aspect to serve the community and the public interest with their work.

Even though PSM has a history of 30 years, public scholars have hardly examined PSM in Hungarian context. Therefore, the impact of PSM in Hungarian civil public service is unknown. In a theoretical essay Hollósy-Vadász Gábor and Szabó Szilvia (2016) summarized the results of previous PSM studies and called the attention of Hungarian scholars to examine the adaption and application of PSM in Hungarian public service. Hollósy-Vadász Gábor (2018) examined the relationship between PSM and job satisfaction in case of a Hungarian local Mayor's office in a district of Budapest. Horváth Zsuzsanna and Hollósy-Vadász Gábor (2018) procreated a PSM model based on a representative sample for the Hungarian public administration.

The topic of choice is inspired as follows:

- Since regarding PSM the Hungarian public administration has not produced any sufficient research so far, PSM analysis in Hungarian context may explore some new results to serve as the basis of some cross-cultural research in the future. The results of the dissertation may contribute to the development of the public human resources management.
- 2. The effectiveness of public institutes depends on the level of loyalty, attitude, and willingness of public servants (Szakács Gábor, 2014). Regarding to literature reviews, Hungarian public administration scholars looked at the motivation of public servants and analyzed their motivation from some aspects. However, these studies ignore the PSM paradigm and the special value of public servants engaged to serve the community.

#### Hypotheses and objectives of the research

Regarding the complexity of my research topic I have studied three fields and I have arranged them in a research model. The figure 1 shows the research model of the dissertation. The research model presents my hypothesis based on results of the theoretical research. I have examined the hypothesis with quantitative and qualitative methods.

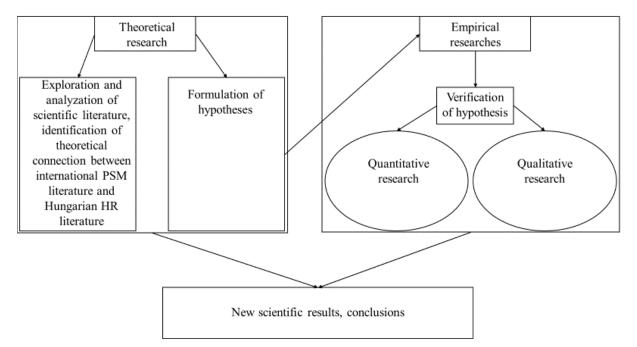


Figure 1: The research model of dissertation

Goals of the dissertation based on the research plan are:

- Analyzing international PSM literature in the theoretical chapter of the dissertation and searching for linkages between Hungarian and international public motivation literature.
   Research questions of the theoretical exploration are as follows:
  - a. What is the relation between PSM and other variables (for example organizational commitment) and how these connections affect public HR processes?
  - b. Is it possible to explore PSM in non-Anglo-Saxon countries (for example in China)? If PSM can be explored in non-Anglo-Saxon countries, how can PSM be explained?
  - c. Do scholars explain PSM as an individual personality trait or as a result of the socialization in public institutions?
  - d. What individual antecedent rises the PSM and how can it be applied by recruitment processes of the HRM in public service?
  - e. How does PSM affect the work loyalty of Generation Y?
  - f. How does different styles of leadership affect the PSM of public employees?
  - g. Does PSM have any negative effects on public servants? If PSM has some negative effects on public servants, how can HR managers be aware of them?
- 2. Based on previous PSM models (Horváth Zsuzsanna and Hollósy-Vadász Gábor 2018 and 2019) I demonstrate a new PSM model. The research questions are:
  - a. Can the model fit be developed if I change the variables in the model?
  - b. Can I detect differences in effects between PSM models of various professions?
- 3. I make qualitative interviews with public managers to gather information about their attitudes regarding the new PSM models. In this research I examine the following questions:
  - a. Do HR departments have capacity to deal with strategical tasks next to administrational ones?
  - b. How efficient is the incentives management?
  - c. Are public administration institutes able to motivate Generation Y successfully? Is Generation Y loyal to public administration in the long run?

The goal of the qualitative research is to add a holistic perspective of the results of quantitative research.

I evaluate hypotheses with quantitative and qualitative methods in the empirical chapter. The hypotheses of the quantitative research are as follows:

- 1. H(1) The model fit of the new model is improved compared to the original PSM model (Horváth Zsuzsanna and Hollósy-Vadász Gábor 2018) if:
  - a. I add job security as a new variable into the model,
  - b. I remove the Calling variable from the model.
- 2. H(2) I make comparison among professions in public sector considering
  - a. group-specific results (PLS-MGA),
  - b. total indirect effects,
  - c. indirect special effects,
  - d. mediation analysis.

Hypotheses of the qualitative research are as follows:

- 1. H(1) One tests the PSM level of the candidate during the recruitment process.
- 2. H(2) The mission of public administration, the service to society and the perception of social impact are active elements of the communication between managers and other contributors.
- 3. H(3) In public institutes HR professionals measure variables of the new PSM model (job security, work satisfaction, organizational commitment, perception of social impact, motivation) regularly and results are built into the development of HR processes.

#### Methodology of the research

The dissertation contains one theoretical research and two empirical research studies. The theoretical research uses description method and it analyzes both Hungarian and international PSM literature. In this chapter I refer to classic scholars of social science and I cite classic PSM scholars as well. I summarize studies that search for motivation and incentives management in Hungarian public service.

Révész Anna (2015) advises to public scholars to apply both quantitative and qualitative methods. This research design provides not only opportunity for scholars to get feedback about their quantitative results, but they can also evaluate conclusions of high verification.

(n=1626) public servants participate in the quantitative survey research. They work in local government offices, in public administration and in law enforcement. The survey was conducted by the National University of Public Service in 2018. In the dissertation I reanalyze

this database with PLS-SEM (Partial Least Squares-Structural Equation Modeling) methods. PLS-SEM is a path analyze running regression analyze and factor analyze simultaneously (Kovács Péter and Bodnár Gábor, 2016). I conduct PLS-SEM with SmartPLS program, and I use SPSS program to prepare the descriptive statics.

(n=11) public managers participate in the qualitative interview research. I contact managers via email, and we negotiate the appointment and location. The interviews take circa 45 minutes. I type interviews and I do content analysis with ATLAS.ti program. I code texts of interviews and I order codes in 5 categories.

#### **New scientific results**

New scientific results are that I verify hypotheses of the quantitative research. I verify H(1) and H(2) hypotheses of the quantitative research. New scientific results are as follows:

- I have prepared a new PSM model adapted to Hungarian public service. The model fit of this new model is more developed than the original PSM model (Horváth Zsuzsanna and Hollósy-Vadász Gábor 2018) because:
  - a. I add job security as a new variable into the model,
  - b. I remove the Calling variable from the model.

The validity of the discriminant and the convergence is statistically appropriate.

- 2. With PLS-SEM I prepared three PSM models adapted to the three professional areas of Hungarian public service.
- 3. I identify differences between professions regarding
  - a. group-specific results (PLS-MGA),
  - b. total indirect effects,
  - c. indirect special effects,
  - d. I also identify the mediation differences of job security among the three professional areas.
- 4. I identify a negative but significant connection in the aggregated PSM model. (The aggregated PSM model is adapted to the whole sample.) This negative connection can refer to the impairment of the PSM in Hungarian context.

The outcomes of the qualitative interview research are not new scientific results, but they extend the interpretation of quantitative results. I can partially verify H(1) hypothesis because managers evaluate the motivation of candidates during recruit processes but they do not examine, whether candidates can be motivated by the four PSM factors adequately (Perry, 1996). In most cases managers only investigate the PSM factor Attraction related to public policy making. In consequence managers evaluate the awareness of candidates about daily political processes. I cannot verify H(2) hypothesis. According to interviewees the service of society is part of the mission of a public organization, but the mission of public administration rarely turns up in daily communication. I can partially verify H(3) hypothesis. Managers may assimilate elements (for example work satisfaction) of PSM models and their effect, but this is neither a centralized nor widespread process in Hungarian public administration. So, the monitoring process of these elements depends on managers because public organizations do not have any policy or protocol about it.

#### **Summarized conclusions**

Conclusions based on the theoretical research are as follows:

- PSM has numerus direct and indirect connections to other variables. PSM can impress to
  all HR processes via direct and indirect connections. If managers of public service
  integrate results of PSM studies into HR processes, HRM in the public service can function
  more effectively and public servants become more motivated and faithful towards public
  service.
- 2. PSM originates from the USA, therefore PSM can be understood in social and historical context in the USA. Even though PSM can be detected in all countries, the interpretation of PSM differs by countries and cultures.
- 3. The scientific interpretation of PSM is not unified. Some scholars mean that PSM is an individual personality trait based on life experience, while others share the opinion that PSM is based on the socialization of public institutions.
- 4. Although PSM is a special motivator in case of Generation Y, it cannot reduce the fluctuation rate of Generation Y significantly.

- 5. There are numerous antecedents being able to decrease and increase the level of PSM. These antecedents result from individual life experience. One of the best predicting antecedent variables is the previous voluntary work. Therefore, recruiters can evaluate whether candidates have ever participated in motivating voluntary work.
- 6. Different styles of leadership can both rise and decrease the PSM level of employees in direct and indirect way. The style of leadership can reduce the PSM level of those, who are not committed to the values of public service. Transformational leadership is close to the values of public service; therefore, transformational leadership can rise the PSM of employees sufficiently.
- 7. PSM has also negative effects on public servants, this is the disadvantage of PSM. The drawback of PSM is a new research field in PSM literature. That is why, scholars have not identified all negative effects of PSM yet.

Conclusions based on the quantitative research are as follows:

1. Differences among professions are the amount and strength of correlations. I find more significant correlations in the model of public administration than in the model of local government or in the model of law enforcement. The correlations in model of local government and in the model of law enforcement are stronger than in the model of public administration. Therefore, less direct effects can be identified in the model of public administration than in the model of local government and in the model of law enforcement. If managers of local government and law enforcement pursued to raise the level of PSM, they should focus just on variables that correlate to other variables at level 0.5. I find only one correlation over 0.5 in the model of public administration. Some variables can affect each other in the model of public administration directly, but these effects are slight. Regarding organizational development, managers should take into consideration the effects of all identified variables in the model of public administration if they had the intention to rise the PSM of employees.

- 2. I find two group-specific results between public administration and local government. Effects of motivation and perception of social impact on organizational commitment differ in the model of local government and in the model of public administration. I mean, these group-specific effects derive from the organizational culture and structure of public administration and local government. Therefore, variables affect organizational commitment in public administration and in local government in different ways. Group-specific results could not be detected either between public administration and law enforcement or between local government and law enforcement. This result is a call for scholars to look at organizational cultural reasons behind the lack of group-specific results between public administration and law enforcement, since further studies should examine why group-specific results between local government and law enforcement cannot be recognized.
- 3. The strongest total indirect effect can be seen between motivation and organizational commitment in the model of local government. In the model of law enforcement, the total indirect effect between motivation and organizational commitment is less significant than in the model of local government, but the total indirect effect between motivation and organizational commitment is in the model of public administration the lowest. These results have HR practical consequences. Although the organizational commitment in the public administration is increased by the rise of motivation indirectly, this correlation is not significant. From my point of view, to increase organizational commitment in the public administration managers should not only focus on the motivation of employees. Job satisfaction has indirect connection to all variables of the three professional areas. Job security and work satisfaction affect organizational commitment in local government and in the law enforcement indirectly, while this connection cannot be recognized in the model of public administration at all. Work satisfaction has indirect specific effects on perceived social impact in local government, but this connection cannot be identified in the model of the law enforcement and in the model of public administration either. I assume that the perception of social impact in local government is more apparent than in public administration and in law enforcement, but this assumption needs further research.

The conclusions based on the qualitative research are as follows:

- 1. PSM paradigm appears in incentive management in a latent way, therefore scholars should conduct further basic and applied research in Hungarian context and draw the attention of public managers to the importance of public motivation.
- 2. It is the responsibility of managers to combine the elements (organizational commitment, work satisfaction, perception of social impact, job security, motivation) of PSM models and their effects. In my opinion, the validity of models is not declined by the results, since they show how PSM based incentive management may control and evaluate the effects of the above-mentioned variables.
- 3. If managers in public service do not recognize the reduction of satisfaction with one variable, then direct and indirect conjunctions can be used to decrease the motivation in public service. The low level of PSM reduces organizational commitment to the public organization, which can increase the turnover rate. Therefore, public managers should measure the effectiveness of incentive management regularly to renew the incentive management if the level of PSM decreases.

#### Possible theoretical and practical application of the results

Public organizations should adapt and test PSM models of the dissertation empirically. During this project scholars should monitor how motivation, work satisfaction and loyalty to public organization change and results of the dissertation could be integrated into HR processes:

- Incentives management: HR managers should emphasize the specific intrinsic motivation
  of public employees. Managers should emphasize values of public service (for example
  service of citizens, service development of society) because these values can motivate
  people with high PSM.
- 2. Recruit: public organizations may control the PSM level of candidates during selection processes with assessment centers. Recruiters should also pay attention to individual antecedents of candidates because some antecedents predict the level of PSM (for example voluntary work increases the level of PSM (Ward, 2014)).
- 3. Training: trainers could draw the attention of public employees to aspects of social impact of their work. Training programs should focus on enhancing the PSM level and on the mission of public administration, while managers should emphasize the importance of the mission of public administration to public servants.

The results of dissertation have theoretical consequences and they can drive to further research:

- 1. The main criticism against our previous research (Horváth Zsuzsanna and Hollósy-Vadász Gábor, 2018 / 2019) claimed that the model fit measuring SRMR was too high. Due to the correction of the PSM model the SRMR becomes statistically lower, accordingly SRMR can be accepted. This implies that Calling can be regarded as a variable of PSM in Hungarian context. Hungarian public administration scholars should evaluate the effect of Calling on Hungarian public servants.
- 2. Hungarian public administration scholars should make further research to examine differences among professional areas in public service:
  - a. One could procreate PSM questioners adapted to all professions in public service based on the identified differences among professions. These questioners can be applied both in HR process (for example recruiting) and in empirical research projects as well.
  - b. Hungarian studies have not investigated the verification of PSM dimensions and PSM factors yet. Therefore, Hungarian scholars could justify the existence of PSM dimensions and factors on representative dataset and verify the PSM dimensional differences among professional areas.
- 3. PSM scholars barley examine public service in Central-European countries and in the Visegrád Group, although cross-cultural comparative studies can explore new results. We should gather information about how dimensions of PSM differ in Central-European countries from each other and from the American concept.
- 4. Only employees in public administration have participated in qualitative research so far. The research should be renewed and participants from the other professional fields should be invited as well (for example, from law enforcement). Based on results of interviews we can compare and examine how PSM affects incentive management at different professional areas. Furthermore, differences between the attitude of managers and employees about PSM could be studied in the future as well.
- 5. In my opinion, there is a significant negative correlation between job security and detected social impact. This result can refer to the negative effect of PSM. Public administration scholars may examine further this result and look at the reasons. Can scholars understand this result as a new evidence for the disadvantage of PSM? Does this negative correlation exist in other Central-European countries or it only appears in the Hungarian public service?

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#### **Curriculum Vitae**



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