The Contribution of the Symbolic Recognition to the Motivation of the Moroccan Public Service Managers-Case of the Province of Guelmim Es-Smara Region

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Abstract

The public service modernization came along with an in-depth revision of the management practices of government services, with the aim of endowing them with more flexibility in their functioning to answer the new requirements of the national and international environment. In this innovative context, the government officials experience the feeling to make more commitment and to show more efforts towards the administrations' demands to meet the requirements and the standards of efficiency of their services. This commitment, better asserted by them, induces a need to be recognized and motivated. However, the administrations have impeded this need for a long time by their limited scope regarding the levers of motivation (remunerations, bonuses ...). Otherwise than by financial compensations, can practices of symbolic recognition be a motivation lever for the public service managers? An empirical study with the managers of the province of Guelmim Es-Smara region verified the existence of a positive causal relation between the practices of symbolic recognition and the motivation at work in the Moroccan public service.

Keywords: modernization, public service, motivation, symbolic recognition

1. *Introduction*

Guided by a managerial spirit borrowed from the private sector, the public service knew important transformations these last years. Confronted with sensitive evolutions, the public service has to show its efficiency in fulfilling the missions and reaching the goals that it is aiming at.

In this sense, the human dimension remains crucial. We cannot conceive a modernization of the public management without questioning the management of men.

In this way, reconsidering the place and the role of the human factor in the context of a renovated public management seems to stand out today as a necessity to mobilize the officials around the project of government service modernization.

However, for many people, public service is associated to officials that are little inclined to work, and especially worried about their advantages and privileges.

These prejudices caused a professional faintness that people observe in a large number of public services. This situation seems to lie heavy on the relationship to work, and calls out the managers to rethink the officials' motivation.

For a long time, professionals viewed motivation as a purely financial need. However, more advanced researches showed that the collaborator also has social and fundamental psychological needs, and, of whom the satisfaction contributes to his/her motivation. The individual needs to establish and maintain satisfactory and reassuring interpersonal relations with his/her environment (Ryan and Deci, 2000).

In this way, the interpersonal relation between the superior and the subordinates quickly became a field of interest for the researchers, more exactly, the daily interactions, as well as the punctual feedback between superiors and employees. These researches gave rise to a theory concerning the recognition of work.

Based on a special context of the public service marked by a maneuver margin limited of the levers of motivation, we have chosen to focus our reflection on the usefulness of the symbolic practices of recognition in the public service, as well as their effect on the motivation of officials. Our objective is to associate the dimensions of both concepts, namely recognition and motivation in a causal approach to determine the nature of the relationship between them through the following problematic:

Otherwise, than by financial compensations, is that the practices of recognition may be a lever of motivation to the managers of the public service?

To understand this problem, we formulated the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis

H1: Recognition at work has a positively relationship to the motivation of public service managers.

2. Research Context

Everybody believes that any organization progresses through its human capital. However, only an eminently and well-managed organization treats intelligence and human potential as resources to be actively and consciously developed.

In fact, in order to move towards a modern public administration, managers should mobilize women and men every day, make good use of their intelligence, their talent for creating, communicating, observing...in brief, all their richness, and diversity.

Today, the public administration in Morocco, as elsewhere in the world, must satisfy the needs of a modern public service that focuses on the rapidly changing technologies that evolve in a hyper-competitive environment. This satisfaction will depend largely on the administration's ability to adapt continuously, and to improve constantly by rethinking its modes of action.

Thus, the importance of the human factor is not, any longer, to demonstrate when it comes to reform administrative structures, or to adapt and modernize them. The new organizational systems should clearly reflect the real needs of men. These systems have to be accepted, and viable; and have to bring consideration to the man as actor and purpose of the administrative change.

3. Motivation at work: Definition attempt

The concept of motivation has emerged for the first time in 1930 in the USA within the field of Marketing. Professionals use it primarily to study consumer behavior before experiencing a rapid development in the field of management about employees' behavior. After its appearance in the context of business management, it took the place of stronger terms like impulse, desire, need, and tendency.

3.1 What is motivation?

The word motivation derives from the Latin "motivus": "motive" and "movere"; which means in old French, `that puts a movement. Motivation concerns the deepening of the motives that urge us to act, or that put us in movement.

The work on definition generated a plentiful literature because the notices, opinions, analyze and managerial practices diverge on this subject.

Le Robert, the French language dictionary, gives several definitions to motivation: 'relation of an act to the motives that explain or justify it'. 'It is the motives that drive a decision'. 'It is all the factors determining the behavior of the economic agent'. This last definition gets closer to that of organizational psychologists.

Stemming from the works of Jones in 1955 and taken over by a long line of researchers after him, the definition of Porter and Lawler although old, it is more or less holistic."Motivation is what stimulates human behavior: it is the energy forces that push individuals to behave in certain ways, and environmental forces that often trigger these behaviors".

3.2 The theoretical approaches of motivation

Motivation is a concept that has been the subject of an abundant literature and extensive research. Theories are roughly oriented in two directions: those relating to content, seeking what could be the essence of motivation; and those of process, examining what could well have an influence on the process of motivation.

➢ **Theories of content**

These are theories that seek to detect the various expectations that can mobilize workers. They try to specify what motivates us. In fact, in ordinary language, the term motivation includes a set of content. According to these theories, needs that individuals try to satisfy motivate them.

These theories correspond to the currents of needs, which hold the same assumption that the motivation of the individual follows his desires to satisfy his needs. The main models having illustrated these words are:

• **The theory of Maslow's hierarchy of needs:** according to which, the needs are set according to a hierarchy of five levels: basic needs versus secondary needs. These needs are universal. The basic needs must be satisfied so that the secondary needs become factors of motivation. As long as a need is not satisfied, it constitutes a source of motivation. The satisfaction of a lower need activates the upper need immediately.
• **MC Clelland's Acquired Needs Theory:** it focuses on the needs of achievement, affiliation and power
• **Alderfer's ERG Theory:** it summarizes the human needs in three categories: existential, relational and developmental.
• **Herzberg's Two-Factor theory or bifactorial theory:** according to which there are two types of factors:

Hygiene factors: (or maintenance factors) they are related to the working environment (physical working conditions, salary, employment security...). These factors that can prevent dissatisfaction; however they do not guarantee job satisfaction. **Motivational factors:** they relate to the nature of the work (content, interest ...). These factors can increase job satisfaction.

➢ **Theories of Process**

These theories try to specify how variables interact to mobilize the behavior of the workers. They look for what to offer to people to motivate them; they are concerned with the cognitive processes that bring people to make such or such choice in their work environment.

The most significant works in this area are Vroom's Expectancy Theory, and Adam's Equity Theory.

• Vroom's **Expectancy Theory**: it results from a rational calculation based on the relation perceived between the displayed efforts, the level of output achieved, and the value that it attributes to the reward. This theory presents motivation as the result of three variables: **Expectation (E)** it is the relation perceived between the displayed effort and the accomplished performance. **Instrumentality (I)** it is the ratio: expectations on performance. **Valence** is the value attributed by the individual to an expected result.
• **Adam's Equity Theory**: this theory focuses on a phenomenon of comparison. When the individual compares what he/she receives for his/her work to what others receive from it. Any perceived inequity becomes a source of motivation or demotivation

4. Theory of Recognition

The issue of the individual's recognition arises with acuteness in the public place today. Little by little, this issue is becoming a theme of reflection for organizations that are facing the extension of their field of responsibility, the risks of the environment, and social conflicts

At the heart of new management approaches that aim to optimize organizational efficiency, recognition at work became an important way to boost and retain employees and managers.

4.1 Definition of the Concept

Recognition symbolizes a reward that takes an emotional value, be it concrete or financial. It is a form of compensation which results in various practices other than official direct compensation plans , aiming at tangibly or intangibly recognizing individual and collective performances , add St -Onge & al. (2006), According to Stajkovic & Luthans (2001, p.582), recognition is the personal attention given verbally through attentive expressions , approval and appreciation for a well done job.

The first two definitions focus essentially on the symbolic dimension of recognition.

Others like Siegrist (1996); Niedhammer, Siegrist, & al. (2000) or Brun & Dugas (2002) have proposed more comprehensive definitions to recognition at work. For example, Siegrist (1996) defines recognition at work in terms of appreciation and support from the superior and work colleagues, and in terms of salary adequacy, promotion opportunities, and job security. Brun & Dugas (2002) add that work recognition is « an unambiguous demonstration that our achievements, our working practices, and our person are valued at fair value».

To summarize these views, recognition is a fundamental need regardless of the position, role, or status. Any collaborator, employee or manager, feels the need for recognition by his/her peers, colleagues, clients and superiors. They all wish to receive fair recognition for what they are and what they do. Recognition is lived everyday through simple gestures and occasionally by events that are more symbolic. The sincerity of the message and its sender and the authenticity of the event lend credibility and value to the act of recognition.

4.2 Forms of Recognition

The concept of recognition at work is extensive and defined in many ways. Despite the variety of approaches, a summary of the principal works allows to distinguish four main forms of recognition:

- **Existential recognition:** Existential recognition relates to the employee as a separate individual, endowed with his/her proper intelligence, feelings and expertise (Jacob, 2001). It is a recognition given immediately to everyone, for the simple reason that he/she is a human being too. It shows in little daily actions during interpersonal exchanges.
- **Recognition of work outcome:**"It is about a judgment and a token of gratitude on the effectiveness, efficiency and quality of work done by an individual or group of employees. "(Brun and Dugas, 2002, p. 15) ».By recognizing the results of the accomplished work, it is the work product and the employee's contribution to the objectives that are the subject of an assessment.
- **Recognition of the work practice:** It is the recognition of the work performance, including behaviors, skills, and professional qualifications of the employee.
- **Recognition of the investment at work:** It is the recognition of the participation and contribution in terms of efforts and energy expended without regard to the results, it relates to employees' involvement and the risks they take to complete their task.

5. *Relationship between Recognition and Work Motivation in the Public Service*

5.1 Public Service Specificities

Analyzing the relationship between recognition and motivation in the public service requires discussing the specifics of public administrations that sometimes act as barriers or constraints to policies of promotion and motivation of human resources.

These elements may also contribute significantly to justify the need for recognition in the public service. Moroccan administrations are characterized by:

- **Demotivation Prejudices**: For the nonprofessional, officials, always too many, are either lazy or when they work, they are busy producing papers of dubious utility in order to cause further trouble to citizens. Actually, the conveyed image of officials for over a century is demotivating. This image seems to press weight on the relationship to work in the public sector. This situation calls for the need to pay particular attention to the subject of motivation in the public service to reward the pressure that public officials undergo from their environment.
- **A recurring feeling of dissatisfaction:** Identified by R. Sainsaulieu and by F. Dubet (2006), «The Culture of Complaint " is a feature of the public sector. » It has increased in recent years in response to the new demands of modernization.
- **A limited leeway**: This is a major characteristic of the public sector; because this sector is often faced with a pressing obligation to adapt to new realities of the economic situation, which affects subsequent administrations' budgets and influences their functioning.
  In this sense, the quantitative leeway (bonuses, gratuity, compensation ...) of these administrations is reduced, and gives way to the qualitative dimension, which encourages the symbolic recognition measures that are becoming strategic in the policy of human resources management of public service.

- **A constantly changing organizational context**: Following the efforts to modernize public administrations, the organizational context of public services is characterized by a situation of permanent learning, which equally requires permanent efforts (Bourcier and Palobart 1997; Brun and Dugas, 2002). Additional efforts to accomplish tasks that are getting heavier and more complex amplify workers' need for recognition.

5.2 Recognition is a social need

"The majority of studies support the idea that the need for recognition is experienced by a significant proportion of the workforce, whatever the status or the intervention sector of workers."(Brun and Dugas, 2005, p. 85)

5.3 The Theories of Motivation Emphasize on the need for Recognition

Theories of motivation also confirm the relationship between recognition and motivation. These theories emphasize on the need for recognition as a vital social need that recommends consideration and esteem as factors for motivation at work. Starting form Maslow's hierarchy according to which, the needs of belonging, self-esteem, and fulfillment are paramount to work and help explain the importance of being recognized.

For his part, Herzeberg asserts that job satisfaction depends mainly on motivational factors, namely autonomy and consideration, as well as on hygiene factors such as remuneration and working conditions.

In Alderfer's ERG theory, the individual acts, in his work, to satisfy three types of needs A need for existence, a need for social relations and a need for personal development.
Regarding the needs for social relations, they correspond to the will of the employee to seek contact with others and make friendly exchanges with colleagues.

In 1971, Deci showed that the individuals' persistence over a period of free choice is less important for rewarded subjects than for those who are not. This result, counter-intuitive at that time, showed experimentally for the first time in humans that the reward is not a motivating factor in all cases.

In the literature, the majority of research has considered recognition as an important factor of motivation, commitment and job satisfaction (Bourcier & Palobart, 1997. Wils & al 1998; Tremblay & al 2000. Stajkovic & Luthans, 2001, Brun & Dugas, 2005 St- Onge & al 2005. Lamontagne, 2006). It is also seen as an important way to boost and retain employees (Brun & Dugas, 2005). Moreover, it is an important source for human resources' mobilization (Siegrist, 1996) (Wils & al, 1998.)

According to Deci & Ryan (1985), supporting the autonomy and positive comments can enhance the perception of competence and the individual's intrinsic motivation; whereas the binding behavior and negative comments can produce the opposite effect. For others, like Gagné, Koestner & Zuckerman (2000) or Gagné & Deci (2005), the interpersonal style of the superior who supports autonomy, positive feedbacks and all the interactions that favor proximity to the employee, would have a direct impact on the employee's motivation. In the literature, these close relationships and these positive feedbacks, which are essential to the satisfaction of the psychological needs are considered recognition practices, called social or symbolic (Stajkovic & Luthans, 1997, 2001. Brun & al 2002, 2005 St- Onge & Thériault, 2006. Akremi El & al 2009).

To summarize, enhancing integrity, professionalism, and human resources expertise, and taking the time to highlight the success of everyone's work, are beneficial activities not only for organizations, but also for workers. Recognition allows confirming the importance of each employee within the organization, as well as his/her usefulness and relevance of his/her contribution to the achievement of the organizational goals (Brun & Dugas, 2005). These practices of symbolic recognition are simple, beneficial and especially not expensive, and their impact on employees' motivation is ample evidence in the literature.

This conclusion justifies their usefulness in the public service that demonstrates a permanant need for motivating its operators.

6. Research Methodology

6. 1 Survey

- ➢ **Object of investigation:** Our research is exploratory-oriented in order to test the nature of the relationship between the practices of symbolic recognition and managers' motivation in the public service. We conducted an empirical study by means of questionnaires. We carried out the survey in a public administration; it is the Province of Guelmim Es Smara Region.

- ➢ **Population and Sample:** The population of this research consists of the managers of the Province of Guelmim Es Smara region. Concerning the constitution of the sample, we have used several methods depending on the objectives of each research. However, in certain circumstances, it is not impossible to use a census when populations are very small; Henry (1990) recommends being exhaustive for reasons of results' credibility. This is the case for our research. Because this administration managers' number is not very high (30 managers), we opted for a comprehensive census.

- ➢ **Data collection:** The data collection tool is a questionnaire administered to the managers of the Province of Guelmim Es Smara region. The questionnaire consists of three main blocks:
    - The respondent identification
    - The symbolic recognition at work
    - The motivation at work

6.2 Measurement Instruments

- **Recognition**: We are inspired from the French version of the Recognition at Work Scale (Niedhammer, Siegrist, Landre, Goldberg, & Leclerc, 2000) to assess the perception of managers regarding the recognition they receive in their workplace. We adapted this survey so that it addresses to the managers of the public service, and focuses mainly on the recognition they receive from their administrations, their superiors, and colleagues. This adaptation allowed us to identify the statements of our questionnaire. We assessed each recognition practices' group through a set of items. We asked participants if they agreed with each statement on a scale of four-point Likert-type ranging from «strongly disagree» (1) to "totally agree" (4).

- **Motivation**: To assess managers' motivation towards their work we referred to the Motivation at Work Scale (Blais, Lachance, Brière, Riddle & Vallerand, 1993).

  It is composed of five subscales, measuring each type of motivation. proposed by the self-determination theory: intrinsic motivation (eg, " Because I have a lot of fun to learn new things in this job "; 4 items), identified regulation (eg, " Because it is the work that I chose and I prefer to reach a certain standard of living" , 4 items) , introjected regulation (eg, " Because I want enormously to succeed, otherwise I shall be ashamed of myself " , 4 items) , external regulation (eg," for the different benefits associated with this type of work " ; Four items) and amotivation (eg," I do not know. I feel like I do not have what it takes to make this work well "Four items). Each statement is a possible reason why the worker performs his work. The answers to these items are on a Likert-type scale ranging from seven-point "does not correspond at all" (1) to "strongly corresponds « (7).

  We have grouped the subscales of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation by identified regulation to create a self-determined motivation score, and the subscales of extrinsic motivation by external and introjected regulation as well as the amotivation to create a motivation-controlled score (Vallerand, 1994).

6. 3 Results Analysis and Discussion

The majority of respondents are men 60% against 40% women. On age distribution, there was a predominance of age group [25-35] and [35-45] with 40 % each, against 20% for age group [45-60].

- ➢ **Correlation between the variables**
  With reference to the study of the correlation between variables performed using SPSS 19 software (see figure at end), we notice that the correlations between the variables measuring motivation and those measuring recognition at work are all positive and significant. This result is a good sign of the significant relationship between the practices of symbolic recognition and motivation at work.
  To analyze this relationship further, we have used a multiple regression to assess the explanatory power of the independent variables (the three forms of recognition) on the dependent variable (autonomous motivation). The results of this analysis allowed us to conclude that:

- ➢ **Multiple regressions between self-determined motivation and the three forms of recognition**
  Through this first analysis we notice that the signs of the regression coefficients are all positive, which means that managers' self-determined motivation reacts positively to all the practices of recognition at work. However, the most important explanatory power is that obtained by recognition from the part of the organization, followed by that obtained by the recognition from superiors. (See figure at end)

➢ **Multiple regressions between controlled motivation and the three forms of recognition**

This second type of analysis allows us to identify almost the same point as the previous analysis. Given that in this case too, we obtained regression coefficients with positive signs; which also means that controlled motivation reacts positively to the three recognition practices' types. However, in this case the most important explanatory power is the one obtained by the recognition from superiors.

Multiple regressions helped us in both cases highlight the existence of a positive link between motivation at work and recognition practices; a result that a correlations' study between variables had already confirmed. These elements have allowed us to confirm our assumption that the practices of symbolic recognition positively relate to motivation at work.

➢ **Discussion of results**

The objective of this research was to analyze the nature of the relationship that can bind the symbolic recognition practices and motivation at work in a special context, which is that of the public service marked by the lack of material means likely to boost officials' motivation.

Correlation and regression analyzes allowed us to confirm our main research hypothesis that recognition practices at work are positively associated with motivation. Indeed, the correlation analysis between variables shows that the three forms of recognition in the workplace all positively and significantly correlate with motivation. However, multiple regression analyzes allowed us to note that the association levels between different forms of recognition and motivation at work are significantly different. The multiple regression analysis allowed us to identify that among the three forms of recognition in the workplace, public service managers pay more attention to recognition practices coming from their superiors and administration. It is because these two stakeholders evaluate the results of their work and they are responsible for their promotion and their advancement. Concerning colleagues' recognition, employees consider it much more as an element of support needed to overcome difficult situations at work.

Conclusion

Symbolic recognition is a determinant factor for motivating public service managers. Indeed, being recognized at work, especially by one's superiors and colleagues promotes motivation and lead employees to develop a sense of well -being and efficiency at work.

It plays an important role in the process of officials' motivation at work because it helps to increase the pleasure felt in the accomplishment of the task, the interest shown by the collaborator, and the importance that he/she attaches. It would therefore lead to very favorable trust resulting from a sense of well-being. By focusing on these recognition practices, called symbolic, officials will have a favorable impression from their superiors and colleagues and will therefore be motivated to excel at work. Moreover, according to some authors, the forms of non-monetary recognition have several specific attributes that make them significant practices. They are spontaneous and manifested with praise or symbolic gestures from the part of the supervisor or colleagues. (St-Onge & al 1994 . Tremblay & al 2000. Simard & al, 2005).

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Correlation between the Variables

		self-determined motivation score	controlled motivation score	Superior's recognition	Colleagues' recognition	Organisation's recognition
self-determined motivation score	Pearson's correlation	1	,163	,647[**]	,178	,633[**]
	Sig. (bilateral)		,390	,000	,347	,000
	N	30	30	30	30	30
controlled motivation score	Pearson's correlation	,163	1	,315	,429[*]	,241
	Sig. (bilateral)	,390		,090	,018	,200
	N	30	30	30	30	30
Superior's recognition	Pearson's correlation	,647[**]	,315	1	,436[*]	,666[**]
	Sig. (bilateral)	,000	,090		,016	,000
	N	30	30	30	30	30
Colleagues' recognition	Pearson's correlation	,178	,429[*]	,436[*]	1	,330
	Sig. (bilateral)	,347	,018	,016		,075
	N	30	30	30	30	30
Organisation's recognition	Pearson's correlation	,633[**]	,241	,666[**]	,330	1
	Sig. (bilateral)	,000	,200	,000	,075	
	N	30	30	30	30	30

** The correlation is significant at level 0.01 (bilateral)

Results of Multiple Regressions between Self-Determined Motivation and the Three Forms of Recognition

Model Summary

Model	R	R-two	R-two adjusted	Standard Error Estimation
1	,684[a]	,468	,407	3,394

a. Predicted values : (constant), Organisation's recognition, colleagues' recognition, superior's recognition.

Coefficients

Model		Unstandardized coefficients		Standardized coefficients	t	Sig.
		A	Standard Error	Bêta		
1	(Constant)	2,989	5,298		,564	,578
	Superior's recognition.	,535	,326	,331	1,641	,113
	Colleagues' recognition	,307	,327	,150	,941	,355
	Organisation's recognition	,467	,191	,469	2,439	,022

a. Dependent variable : self determined motivation score

Results of Multiple Regressions between Controlled Motivation and the Three Forms of Recognition

Model Summary

Model	R	R-two	R-two adjusted	Standard Error Estimation
1	,660[a]	,435	,370	4,995

a. Predicted values : (constant), Organisation's recognition, colleagues' recognition, superior's recognition

Coefficients

Model		Unstandardized coefficients		Standardized coefficients		
		A	Standard Error	Bêta	t	Sig.
1	(Constant)	2,053	7,797		,263	,794
	Superior's recognition.	1,385	,480	,600	2,887	,008
	Colleagues' recognition	,475	,481	,162	,989	,332
	Organisation's recognition	,224	,282	,157	,795	,434

a. Dependent variable : controlled motivation score