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ABSTRACT

Employees' complaints about the routinisation of jobs and a decrease in their autonomy have been cited as major reasons for employee turnover in government organisations. This study analyzes the relationship between job characteristics and public service motivation (PSM) to shed light on this issue. Employing an online survey completed by employees from Turkish Regional Development Agencies, we examined the effect of job characteristics on the PSM of highly-skilled employees. The results show that employees' PSM is fostered when they use high-quality skills in implementing their duties. Autonomy, an employee's self-direction to decide the methods and timing of work, is another important factor affecting PSM. We found that job redesign would foster PSM of highly-qualified employees.

Introduction

Scholarship about public service motivation (PSM; Perry & Wise, 1990), which has focused primarily on Western countries and their institutions, has grown rapidly. Recently, public administration scholars have pleaded to broaden the field's locus to give more attention to developing countries and non-Western traditions (Moloney & Stone, 2019; Mussagulova & van der Wal, 2021; Ripoll & Rode, 2022; Roberts, 2021), including the Asia-Pacific region. Non-Western research might generate different results and interpretations due to local and contextual interpretations even if the same or similar concepts are used. Thus, we believe that there is a need to give more attention to non-Western cases. As Welch and Wong (1998) argue, if research is designed for or fed mostly by Western contexts and concepts, it rarely fits well when applied to non-Western contexts.

This article aims to contribute to the extant literature in two ways. First, there is a growing plea in public administration scholarship to provide more room for developing country cases. There is a niche in the extant literature concerning PSM studies implemented in developing and non-Western countries. Second, we aim to shed light on whether and how job characteristics affect PSM in Turkish Regional Development Agencies (RDAs), which were designed to attract highly-qualified employees to serve the regions for local development. Since the extant literature on PSM is on public servants by default,

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irrespective of their qualifications, we add to the extant literature by focusing on highly-qualified public personnel and whether job characteristics affect their PSM levels.

For this purpose, we have analysed the effect of job characteristics on PSM through regression analysis. We have collected data from highly qualified personnel (experts) of RDAs by sending them an online link to complete a survey. Nearly one-third of the experts completed the survey. We present descriptive statistics and regression analyses to show how job characteristics are related to PSM.

We present this research in five parts. We begin with the theoretical and conceptual foundations. Then, we provide contextual information about the Turkish public administration and its structures. In the third part, we present the research methodology. Next, we present the results, and finally, in the discussion part, we compare the results with the extant literature. In the conclusion, we summarise the research and propose future directions for this type of research.

Conceptual and theoretical frameworks

We present the structure of conceptual backgrounds with a ready-made map for the research. We detail the concepts and theoretical background on PSM and the job characteristics model.

Public service motivation

Employees are motivated by various factors, but there can be differences due to the nature of workplaces. When compared to private firms, the public sector offers some incentives that can attract potential employees, such as job security (Chen & Hsieh, 2015; Lee & Choi, 2016; Mussagulova et al., 2019), career opportunities (Gabris & Simo, 1995; Taylor & Taylor, 2015), and opportunities to serve prosocially (Grant, 2007). However, these incentives could barely direct someone to work in the public sector if PSM is disregarded, particularly for some public services that require personal sacrifice. Bearing in mind that PSM and prosocial motivation are different concepts (Ritz et al., 2020; Van der Voet & Steijn, 2021), PSM is based on the idea that individuals are attracted to work in the public sector for the sake of serving the public at large (Crewson, 1997), rather than serving for a person, group, or a narrow clique.

The concept of PSM was first coined in 1982 to refer to a particular type of motivation related to designing or implementing public services (Rainey, 1982). Perry and Wise (1990) defined public service motivation as "an individual's predisposition to respond to motives grounded primarily or uniquely in public institutions and organizations" (p. 368). According to them, there is a strong relationship between personal intention and personal performance to work for the public. They asserted that "the higher the individual's motivation for public service, the greater the likelihood that he will want to work in a public institution. In public institutions, public service motivation is positively related to individual performance. Public institutions need less utilitarian incentives to increase the individual performance of employees with high public service motivation" (Perry & Wise, 1990, p. 370).

Perry and Wise (1990) argued that PSM includes rational, norm-based, and emotional motives. Rational motives refer to the utility maximisation attitude; norm-based motives

refer to the pursuit of the common good, and emotional motives stand for the willingness to help others. Based on these considerations, they formulated three propositions. Rational (instrumental) motives are about choosing suitable means for performing meaningful public service. Thus, they are mainly related to the maximisation of personal utility. It includes working in the public sector, contributing to public policy processes, irrespective of design or implementation, and participating in social development activities. Norm-based motives relate to desires to accomplish the public interest or having public values realised in addition to being loyal to the state. Emotional motives are characterised by a tendency to help others, particularly those who need help and assistance. Thus, emotional motives include patriotism, benevolence, and commitment to social programmes.

Since Perry and Wise's (1990) seminal article, relational job design, self-determination theory, and several additional frameworks supported many of the predictions embedded in PSM research (Perry, 2021). Relational job design theory is an important construct in the context of motivation since many studies in the PSM field have headed towards identifying "organizational factors that moderate and to a lesser extent mediate the relationships between PSM and organizational outcomes" (Taylor, 2014, p. 902). Studies in the relevant literature try to shed light on job design factors that contribute to the prosocial behaviours of public employees. Grant (2007) argues that job design can help unleash prosocial motivations. As Grant (2007) asserts, "relational job design enables employees to construct identities as competent, self-determined, socially valued individuals" (p. 408).

Self-determination theory is an empirically-based theory of human motivation (Deci & Ryan, 2008), which addresses contextual parameters and factors that enhance or diminish employee motivations. Self-determination theory asserts that satisfying an individual's "basic psychological needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness" (p. 182) is a foundation for psychological well-being. Steijn and van der Voet (2019) argue that "the job satisfaction of employees with high PSM levels will be higher when their tasks satisfy their basic psychological needs" (p. 68). Thus, self-determination theory implies that the motivational situation of a person, irrespective of the nature of the job, may be affected by external factors. According to self-determination theory, any pursuit of external rewards in selecting a job in public services may result in undesirable outcomes (Mussagulova et al., 2019). However, interpreting both the pursuit of job security and high pay as external rewards may be inappropriate. Job security, unlike pay incentives, may satisfy one's basic needs. By contrast, pay incentives may be a symbol of the root of unethical behaviours and it may be incompatible with PSM. (Chen & Hsieh, 2015). Yet, there are possible contexts where SDT and PSM could converge (Perry, 2021).

Concerning the literature on the motivation of the employees, Perry (2000) highlights the significance of PSM as an alternative to the focus on extrinsic material rewards and self-interest-based motivation theories. As argued above, PSM is built on motives and incentives related to serving society. In essence, entering public service requires an individual's self-sacrifice for the common good, a desire to serve the public rather than merely seeking material gains (Perry, 1996). To meet the instrumental, value-based, and identity motives of public service, people may be willing to self-sacrifice and focus on lesser material rewards. The higher the power of the PSM, the more likely the employee is to engage in behaviour that benefits the public, even if there is no increase in financial gains (Wise, 2000).

As Ritz et al. (2016) presented empirical evidence for PSM from many countries, there is a consensus that it is a universal phenomenon, though hard to frame its details due to contextual factors. Although most research is from Western countries, there is growing evidence regarding developing and non-Western countries (Arslan & Ceran, 2021; Battaglio & Gelgec, 2017; Tasdoven & Kapucu, 2013), including the Asia-Pacific region (Hue et al., 2022; Kim et al., 2021; Mussagulova & van der Wal, 2021). Vandenabeele and Van de Walle (2008) argue that PSM is a universal concept, but its dimensions could vary in different countries. Institutional and historical diversities may require different PSM models in different contexts.

As Perry (2014) stated, while significant advances have been made in the understanding of PSM in recent years, there are unanswered questions. Many studies investigate whether and how individual and organisational characteristics affect the level of employee PSM. Individual variables include educational level, types of reward preferences, self-perceptions, pride, and ritual elements, whereas organisational variables include the inner structure of the organisation, seniority, organisational policies, and job characteristics. Perry (1997) called for research on variables that are expected to affect the dimensions of the PSM, with a particular focus on the role of educational and organisational influences on PSM. In this way, he asserts that "expanding the investigated variables would help explain larger parts of the variance of the PSM and help identify interventions to change it" (Perry, 1997, p. 193). In our study, we investigate the effect of job characteristics and develop propositions for decision-makers with implications for redesigning jobs.

Job characteristics

A person's motivation can be affected by the job (Perry & Porter, 1982). Although PSM process theory (Perry, 2000) argues that PSM develops through the organisational climate, job attributes also affect motivational bases. Wright (2004) argues that job characteristics are closely related to job motivation.

The job characteristics model put forward by Hackman and Oldham (1975) was developed to reveal the effects of job enlargement and job enrichment on employees' motivation and job satisfaction. According to the model, the characteristics of the job positively affect the job satisfaction of the employee conditional upon a certain perceptual process (Hackman & Oldham, 1976). Hackman and Oldham (1980) argued that skill variety, task identity, task significance, autonomy, and feedback from the job will affect the motivation of employees. The model identifies features that enable jobs to increase motivation and performance. It defines how the qualities of the tasks performed by the employees in the organisation affect the work attitudes of employees and conditions under which these features lead to positive results. It argues that redesigning jobs according to these features will make positive contributions to the individual's performance and motivation.

The job characteristics model posits that five job characteristics explain three critical psychological states of employees. The first three factors, task variety, task identity, and task significance, affect the meaningfulness of an employee's work. An employee's autonomy supports the experience of responsibility necessary for positive results, and feedback from the job informs employees about the results of their activities (Hackman &

Oldham, 1976). The job characteristics model does not specifically claim that motivational traits are related to predefined outcomes; rather they, in general, affect both positive personal and organisational outcomes (Humphrey et al., 2007). Bakker (2015) argues that a high level of PSM is crucial regarding the execution of job demands and burnout prevention on the condition that employees are provided with resource mobilisation and engagement. However, according to Bakker (2015), "if job demands are consistently high and job resources are consistently low, highly motivated public servants will lose their psychological resources, resulting in lower PSM. Reduced PSM, as a consequence, may strengthen the loss cycle of job demands and exhaustion and weaken the gain cycle of job resources and engagement. Public service managers and employees may use this model to optimize their work environment on a day-to-day basis" (p. 723). Thus, it is crucial not only to have highly qualified personnel attracted to public service but also to support them with necessary resources, including psychological well-being.

The job characteristics model is important in that it shows that leaders can affect the intrinsic motivation of employees by changing or redesigning their work structures to boost the results of employees' efforts. Hackman and Oldham (1976) suggest that intrinsically motivated jobs require a high level of skill variety, task identity, task significance, autonomy, and feedback from the job. Skill variety reflects how many different skills and abilities a job requires, and how many diverse activities a person engages in executing the job. If an employee has a repeating or routine job, it requires low skill diversity. Such routine work environments highlight the importance of skill variety as a motivational job attribute. If the job requires employees to use more than one skill in performing the job, a variety of skills are functional to keep the employees enthusiastic. Studies in the literature argue that skill variety has a positive effect on the motivation of civil servants in Belgium (Vandenabeele et al., 2005). In contrast, a low level of skill variety decreases the motivation of government employees (Koppell & Auer, 2012). The first hypothesis of the study therefore is:

H1: There is a positive relationship between skill variety and public service motivation.

Task identity is the extent to which a job is done from the very start to the end. Employees are motivated if they have the autonomy to decide about the business cycles, so they can choose how to execute the job from start to finish (Hackman & Oldham, 1976). Task identity is the degree to which assigned work requires the design and completion of an entire job from start to finish. When public servants are responsible for work procedures as a whole, they will be motivated by contributing and marking a value. Therefore, the second hypothesis of the study is:

H2: There is a positive relationship between task identity and public service motivation.

Task significance is the extent to which an employee's identifiable task affects other stakeholders in or outside the organisation (Hackman & Oldham, 1980). Although the job characteristics model focuses on how employees respond to the characteristics of their job, the construct of task significance provides clues that jobs may increase the motivation to make a prosocial difference by shaping the interaction among employees and relationships with the people affected by their work.

Perceiving a high degree of task significance provides employees with opportunities to fulfill self-actualisation (Wright, 2004). Task significance has a positive effect on PSM levels and job significance was found to be critical in the development of PSM among public sector employees in Korea (Kim et al., 2015). Workers are motivated by the extent to which their work affects the welfare of society (Hackman & Oldham, 1980). The third hypothesis of the study is:

H3: There is a positive relationship between task significance and public service motivation.

Autonomy refers to an employee's freedom to decide on the method and timing of work and procedures used for its execution (Hackman & Oldham, 1980). High autonomy gives employees the latitude to independently decide how to carry out business (Hackman & Oldham, 1976). Particularly in this regard, highly-qualified employees need to have autonomy.

Park and Rainey (2008) suggest that autonomy improves employees' PSM by allowing employees to integrate rules with their values. Centralised decision-making structures may limit the participation of employees and lower their PSM (Paarlberg & Lavigna, 2010). When employees do not have enough autonomy in their work, they weaken their public service behavior by considering how their decisions affect the public interest (Moynihan, 2008). The employee's autonomy directs them to take responsibility for the results of the business process (Hackman & Oldham, 1980). The employee feels like the one who decides about work only if their performance directly affects the outputs. Employing the SDT as a framework and testing the mediating effect of autonomy, bottom-up innovations are positively associated with employee job satisfaction (Demircioglu, 2021). People are motivated to control and understand aspects of the work environment and to follow opportunities for personal development (Barrick et al., 2013). Autonomy-seeking employees act together as a team seeking common goals and experiencing a sense of autonomy. Thus, autonomy is an important part of work environments where personal results are to be observed and evaluated. Behson et al. (2000) argue that autonomy is the job attribute with the strongest relationship with the outcomes. Therefore, the fourth hypothesis of the study is:

H4: There is a positive relationship between autonomy and public service motivation.

According to Hackman and Oldham (1976), feedback from the job is the degree to which the job provides the employee with direct information about their performance. If employees get and accept feedback from the job, their motivation can increase. Feedback from the job permits employees to see what is expected from them and how current duties are related to the organisation's mission. Job feedback helps employees learn the effectiveness of their performance (Hackman & Oldham, 1980). Feedback from the job permits employees, particularly qualified employees, to be highly involved in their work and to improve their ultimate performance. Thus, the last hypothesis of the study is:

H5: There is a positive relationship between feedback and public service motivation.

Job characteristics and PSM in Turkish RDAs

Turkey, as a candidate for membership of the European Union (EU), has built a novel public administration structure to supplement government agencies' existing and traditional framework. Public values such as efficiency and compliance with shareholder satisfaction have led to adopting new approaches in the delivery methods of public services in Turkey. In this context, the RDAs, a new governance model, were established for the first time in 2006 in Turkey, as an alternative and novel implementation of regional development. The establishment of the agencies was an important step taken to eliminate the "lack of institutional capacity and human resources at the local level", one of the most important reasons for the failure of regional development efforts previously implemented in the country.

Unlike the traditional public sector, the selection, recruitment, and remuneration of civil servants were different in RDAs. As stated by Perry and Hondeghem (2008), traditional public institutions offer extrinsic motivators such as security of tenure, career, and personal development opportunities. A fundamental assumption was that employees oriented to work for serving the public interest, with higher PSM, would perform better in their jobs (Perry et al., 2010; Perry & Wise, 1990). Although most of the extrinsic motivators referred to above were absent in RDAs, many people with high exam scores were attracted to serve in the RDAs for the common good of society.

Carrying out a wide range of duties for the regions by taking the initiative created an attractive source of motivation for RDAs. Personnel recruitment, periodically, has continued since 2010. Although most graduates of top colleges preferred metropolitan cities, new graduates with high scores have been employed by RDAs in the provinces. The wide range of tasks of RDAs and their decentralised decision-making mechanisms, in addition to their closeness to hometowns, attracted people to the job market for an opportunity to serve the public good.

Over time, significant changes occurred in the number of highly-qualified employees with high rates of resignations resulting in a high rate of employee turnover. By the end of 2015, among 1600 employees, the total number of resignations reached about 700. During exploratory interviews before our survey, some former employees argued that the nature of the job was making the duties more routine than advertised. They complained that jobs began to require less skill variety than before. They noted that the board of directors and other governing bodies interfere in the procedural processes, reducing employee autonomy and diminishing their ability to take initiative and use their expertise. Some RDAs or their units were inept in providing conditions that permitted staff to realise high skill variety and autonomy. The former employees with high growth-need strength claimed that less skill variety and less autonomy had negatively affected their PSM levels while working in the RDAs, whose establishment philosophy and personnel regime are arguably based on altruism and PSM.

Research methodology

Our research topic is aligned with previous studies and conceptual frameworks. Employees' complaints about the routinisation of jobs match the skill variety component of the job characteristics theory. Thus, a decrease in their freedom

corresponds to the autonomy component. Employees' orientation to act in the RDAs to do good for society is based on their PSM. This research sets out to investigate the relationship between job characteristics and the level of RDA employees' PSM. It was hypothesised that skill variety, task significance, task identity, autonomy, and feedback from the job positively affect PSM. Employing a web survey distributed to 670 employees working in the RDAs, we sought to measure the job characteristics and PSM of the employees. We obtained 202 responses. In addition to the online survey, we also conducted interviews with survey respondents. By integrating qualitative and quantitative research methods through a mixed-methods analysis, we sought to advance the theoretical understanding and empirical operationalisation of the main concepts – PSM and the job characteristics of highly-qualified employees in autonomous public agencies in Turkey. Although studies regarding PSM have increased in the last twenty years, we argue that there is still a void in PSM studies in developing and non-Western countries like Turkey. Recent research has begun to fill this void (Akilli & Cingoz, 2015; Battaglio & Gelgec, 2017; Celik, 2014; Hue et al., 2022; Kim et al., 2021; Tasdoven & Kapucu, 2013).

Sample and survey procedure

This study reveals the relationship between skill variety, task identity, task significance, autonomy, feedback variables, and PSM in Turkish RDAs. We contacted all experts working in all 26 RDAs through various means including emails, phone calls, and mass messages through WhatsApp expert groups. We directed the experts to the online survey by sharing the survey link. Since the link was not disseminated openly to the general public, we are sure that the link has just been sent to the experts. As asserted, the universe and the survey sample are the same: all qualified personnel in RDAs in Turkey.

   As asserted above, an online survey was sent to 670 experts working in RDAs in the second half of 2020 and the survey was filled by 202 employees working in all the 26 RDAs with a 30% response rate. Characteristics of the respondents are given in Table 1 which reflects the general characteristics of employees in RDAs.

Table 1. Characteristics of the respondents.

Variable	Characteristics	Percent	Number of Respondents
Tenure	0–1 Year	1.98%	4
	2–5 Years	12.87%	26
	6–9 Years	66.83%	135
	10 + Years	18.32%	37
Department	Investment Support Office	27.23%	55
	Unit Of Result Oriented Programme	24.26%	49
	Program Management Unit	11.88%	24
	Control Evaluation Unit	16.83%	34
	Planning Programming Unit	13.86%	28
	Support Unit	3.96%	8
	External Affairs Unit	1.98%	4
Title	Expert	89.60%	181
	Coordinator/Head of Unit	10.40%	21
Total			**202**

Measures

The Job Diagnostic Survey (JDS) is a tool designed to measure job characteristics (Hackman & Oldham, 1975). The JDS was employed to measure skill variety, task significance, autonomy, feedback, and task identity. To measure PSM, we employed the scale used by Kim (2009) and Bright (2007), which used 12 of Perry's (1996), p. 24 questions. All responses were on a Likert-type scale. The JDS and PSM surveys used in this study appear in Tables 2 and 3.

We observed in a pilot study that respondents avoided giving information on age and gender to eliminate the possibility of being identified when responses were associated with RDAs by name. Therefore, we removed the questions about age and gender. Tenure, department, and titles are the control variables of the survey.

Results

As expected, autonomy and skill variety are positively correlated with PSM. The analysis of survey data shows that the PSM level of experts in RDAs is not fostered by task identity, task significance, and feedback. Thus, these attributes do not have a remarkable effect on PSM.

We have performed regression analysis to measure the effects of job characteristics on PSM. The results of the analysis appear in Table 4.

We have included the job characteristics in the regression equation in the regression model. We have observed that skill variety positively predicts PSM in this model and explains PSM by 66.4% (t = 19.87; p < .05). In the model, task identity significantly predicted PSM negatively and explained 2.7% (t = −2,377; p < .05), while autonomy has a significant positive effect on PSM and explained 20% (t = 7.078; p < .05). The level of feedback predicted PSM negatively and explained 2.3% (t = −2.162; p < .05). Finally, the effect of the task significance variable on PSM was negatively significant (t = −1,988; p < .05) and explained the variable by 12.7%.

Since skill variety and autonomy levels affect public service motivation significantly in a positive direction, regression analysis was performed to measure the effect of these variables on PSM. The results of the regression model are given in Table 5.

Task significance and autonomy variables were entered into the regression equation and 68.3% of the variance in PSM is explained just by these two variables, shown in Table 5. Skill variety (t = 17.564; p < .05) and autonomy (t = 3.783; p < .05) are positively and significantly associated with public service motivation.

Autonomy accounts for some, but not all, of the relationship between skill variety and PSM. Related analyzes are given in Tables 6 and 2, respectively. We have concluded that there is not only a significant relationship between autonomy and the PSM but also some direct relationship between the skill variety and the PSM of RDAs experts.

Discussion

The results show that the highly-qualified employees' PSM is fostered when employees perceive that multiple skills are necessary for their jobs. There is a positive relationship between the level of skill variety and the level of PSM. As we previously stated, RDAs

Table 2. Questionnaire for measuring job characteristics.

#	Question	Sample Calculation 1: Completely Disagree 2: Disagree 3: Neither agree nor disagree 4. Agree 5. Completely Agree
1	I have almost complete responsibility for deciding how and when the work is to be done.	5
2	I have a chance to do a number of different tasks, using a wide variety of different skills and talents	5
3	I do a complete task from start to finish. The results of my efforts are clearly visible and identifiable	5
4	What I do affects the well-being of other people in very important ways.	5
5	My manager provides me with constant feedback about how I am doing.	5
6	The work itself provides me with information about how well I am doing.	5
7*	I make insignificant contributions to the final product or service.	1
8	I get to use a number of complex skills on this job.	5
9*	I have very little freedom in deciding how the work is to be done	1
10	Just doing the work provides me with opportunities to figure out how well I am doing	5
11*	The job is quite simple and repetitive.	1
12*	My supervisors or co-workers rarely give me feedback on how well I am doing the job.	1
13*	What I do is of little consequence to anyone else	1
14	My job involves doing a number of different tasks.	5
15	My managers let us know how well they think we are doing.	5
16*	My job is arranged so that I do not have a chance to do an entire piece of work from beginning to end.	1
17*	My job does not allow me an opportunity to use discretion or participate in decision-making.	1
18*	The demands of my job are highly routine and predictable.	1
19*	My job provides a few clues about whether I'm performing adequately.	1
20*	My job is not very important to the company's survival.	1
21	My job gives me considerable freedom in doing the work.	5
22	My job provides me with the chance to finish completely any work I start.	5
23	Many people are affected by the job I do.	5
	*: In these questions, the calculation should be done by assuming 1 as a positive and 5 as a negative answer.	
	SKILL VARIETY (SV) $(2 + 8 + 11* + 14 + 18*)/5$	5,0
	TASK IDENTITY (TI) $(3 + 7* + 16* + 22)/4$	5,0
	TASK SIGNIFICANCE (TS) $(4 + 13* + 20* + 23)/4$	5,0
	AUTONOMY (AU) $(1 + 9* + 17* + 21)/4$	5,0
	FEEDBACK (FB) $(5 + 6 + 10 + 12* + 15 + 19*)/6$	5,0

drafted highly-skilled graduates granting them not just high levels of salaries but also a promising role in contributing to local development. Thus, employees engage their skills in executing their job. This is one of the study's contributions to the extant literature that highly-skilled employees' PSM is fostered when assigned to jobs that are compatible with their skills. In this context, this finding is consistent with the literature; for example, Ritz et al. (2016) assert 14 practical recommendations from the literature. One of the most mentioned practical recommendations is: "Design jobs for public service-motivated individuals and assign them to such jobs" (p. 420). Christensen and Wright (2011) argued that "certain job characteristics or even job classes may be more attractive than others to

Table 3. Questionnaire for measuring public service motivation.

Questions		1: Completely Disagree2: Disagree3: Neither agree nor disagree4. Agree5. Completely Agree
Attraction to policymaking	I am interested in contributing to the formulation of national/regional plans, programmes, and policies.	
	It gives me great satisfaction to see that people benefit from the programmes, projects, and activities that I am involved in.	
	It gives me great satisfaction to see my ideas incorporated into plans, programmes, and policies.	
Commitment to the public interest	Even if public services and policies harm my interests, I am glad that it benefits society as a whole.	
	I see my job as a civic duty rather than a means of income.	
	Public employees must take individual initiative within the scope of the principle of accountability in all expenditures made by the public.	
Compassion	I would like to do something for the poor and disadvantaged groups, even though it will cost me individually.	
	The difficulties that others experience in accessing public service create a feeling of pity and compassion in me.	
	I help people who need help in accessing public service, even if it's not my job, I take individual initiative.	
Self-sacrifice	I volunteer outside working hours when necessary to provide public service.	
	Producing useful services to society is more important to me than personal success.	
	I am one of those people who can sacrifice my personal interests to help others.	

individuals motivated by prosocial or altruistic values" (p. 738), so employees with higher PSM may be inclined to accept or keep on doing jobs if they provide a greater service emphasis.

Autonomy is another important factor affecting PSM. In this regard, the findings support that highly-qualified public employees with various skills seem eager to have autonomy. In alignment with the theory, autonomous employees can independently decide how to respond to task difficulties (Hackman & Oldham, 1976, p. 80). The job characteristics theory assumes that all five job characteristics are related to motivation and work efficiency. Our results suggest that only autonomy and skill variety have a meaningful relationship with PSM. We explain the conditional and contextual factors for the weak relationship between PSM and three job characteristics: task identity, task significance, and feedback.

Assigning tasks to employees in RDAs depends on their departmental functionality (i.e., department of planning and programming, programme management, or monitoring and evaluation). Yet any job is not entirely done from the very beginning to the completion within the department due to organisational structure. Since all 26 RDAs are organised in the same way through the regulations, our results do not have relational repercussions to present a meaningful relationship between task identity and PSM. Thus, the current organisational structure in development agencies is insufficient to describe and show a clear picture of providing such a relationship.

Although most studies have found a positive relationship between task significance and PSM, our results indicate a low level of negative correlation between

Table 4. Relationship between job attributes and PSM.

Variables	B	T	P	R^2	sd	F change
Skill Variety	0.815	19.87	<.001	0.664	1	395.029
Task Identity	−0.166	−2.377	0.018	0.027	1	5.650
Autonomy	0.448	7.078	<.001	0.200	1	50.10
Feedback	−0.151	−2.162	0.032	0.023	1	4.675
Task Significance	−0.356	−5.389	<.001	0.127	1	29.044
Model 1		**7.783**	**<.001**	**0.683**	**2**	**217.82**
Skill Variety	0.753	17.564	<.001			
Autonomy	0.162	3.783	<.001			

Table 5. Regression analysis of the effect of skill variety on PSM.

Direct Effect						95% Conf. Int.	
		B	Std. Err.	z	p	Up	Low
Skill Variety	PSM	0.701	0.040	17.696	< .001	0.624	0.779

these two concepts. The employees in the planning and programming department responsible for preparing five-year regional development plans and financial grant programmes assert that their task is less significant than those in the monitoring department which is just responsible for checking the bills and paying the budget of the undertaken projects. It was unexpected, and we conducted short interviews with some of the employees in the planning and programming departments. In the interview, the employees stated that they assume budget payments are more important for the stakeholders. Respondents were inclined to answer the questions about task significance based on perceptions of stakeholders rather than their perceptions.

Results of the analysis also failed to show a significant relationship between feedback from the job and PSM. The rationale behind these results can be explained with the help of our observations that employees get different and sometimes confusing feedback. The view that development agencies were unsuccessful also caused employees to receive negative feedback. We also observe that employees working in an RDA are compared with those of other RDAs, though circumstances could be significantly different. As the SDT (Deci & Ryan, 2016) suggests, negative feedback decreases motivation. As we previously argue, some factors such as lessening meritocracy, political polarisation, and worrying about job loss (highly qualified employees in RDAs are drafted through contracts, thus not benefitting from status law) seem to have effects on the data collection process. For these reasons, the mixed results may fail to give a significant and healthy relationship between feedback and PSM as expected.

Conclusion

Public service motivation is supported when employees think that different skills are necessary for their jobs and are engaged in doing the job by using these skills.

Table 6. Correlation matrix for job characteristics and public service motivation dimensions.

		Skill Variety	Task Identity	Autonomy	Feedback	Task Significance	Attraction to policy-making	Commitment to the public interest	Compassion	Self Sacrifice	PSM	MPS
Skill Variety	r	1										
	p											
	n											
Task Identity	r	-0.249	1									
	p	0										
	n	202										
Autonomy	r	0.379	-0.119	1								
	p	0	0.09									
	n	202	202	202								
Feedback	r	-0.232	0.383	0.008	1							
	p	0.001	0	0.913								
	n	202	202	202	202							
Task Significance	r	-0.423	0.19	-0.149	0.231	1						
	p	0	0.007	0.035	0.001							
	n	202	202	202	202	202						
Attraction to policy-making	r	0.777	-0.245	0.46	-0.238	-0.406	1					
	p	0	0	0.031	0.001	0						
	n	202	202	202	202	202	202					
Commitment to the public interest	r	0.733	-0.022	0.373	-0.087	-0.327	0.764	1				
	p	0	0.758	0	0.22	0	0					
	n	202	202	202	202	202	202	202				
Compassion	r	0.739	-0.181	0.423	-0.137	-0.283	0.791	0.795	1			
	p	0	0.01	0	0.052	0	0	0				
	n	202	202	202	202	202	202	202	202			
Self Sacrifice	r	0.701	-0.143	0.362	-0.078	-0.272	0.724	0.732	0.76	1		
	p	0	0.043	0	0.267	0	0	0	0			
	n	202	202	202	202	202	202	202	202	202		
PSM	r	0.815	-0.166	0.448	-0.151	0.356	0.908	0.906	0.925	0.885	1	
	p	0	0.018	0	0.032	0	0	0	0	0		
	n	202	202	202	202	202	202	202	202	202	202	
MPS	r	0.434	0.266	0.546	0.556	0.026	0.373	0.543	0.477	0.519	0.53	1
	p	0	0	0	0	0.716	0	0	0	0	0	
	n	202	202	202	202	202	202	202	202	202	202	202

A positive and high correlation was observed between the level of skill variety and the level of PSM. Autonomy is another important factor affecting PSM. The level of autonomy and skill variety also had a positive relationship. In this context, it is important for those working in jobs that require various skills to have autonomy. Employees who run jobs of a different nature and need to use different skills must be able to independently decide how to handle the job challenges. Similar studies in the literature show that autonomy is a complementary and important element in jobs with various skills. Autonomy and skill variety together explained 73% of the PSM level in our study.

While measuring PSM, it was observed that employees tended to give positive answers to the questions about the sub-dimensions of PSM. Although the scores for the PSM level provide sufficient distribution in terms of detecting the relationship with job characteristics, a measuring method can be developed for a more objective evaluation. For example, scoring the statement "I voluntarily worked overtime outside of working hours in the last one year" instead of the statement "I voluntarily work overtime outside of working hours" in measuring PSM may provide a more realistic assessment. In small-scale organisations, managers' evaluation of the PSM levels of the employees' can also be integrated into a measuring model for more objectivity.

Although some scholars provided evidence that the four dimensions must be supplemented with culturally specific dimensions, others have suggested that some of the dimensions must be omitted or combined when conducting research in other countries (S. Kim et al., 2013). In particular, some scholars argued that the items of the dimension of attraction to policy making might lack face and content validity (Camilleri, 2006; Coursey & Pandey, 2007; Kim, 2009; Ritz, 2011). Since most of the departments in RDAs have duties related to public policy, there has been no problem measuring the sub-dimension of "attraction to policy making" in general. However, the scores of employees who deal with accounting or human resources were not significant. In future studies to be conducted on different occupational groups, the dimension of attraction to public policymaking in the scale should be carefully evaluated. It may not be appropriate to use this sub-dimension in studies to determine the level of PSM for employees in institutions that do not have any duty, authority, or responsibility for making public policy.

Disclosure statement

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