




Impact of public service motivation on work evaluation and counterproductive work behaviour



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Orientation: Public service motivation has increased in prominence in recent years, even though the influences on employee behaviour and attitudes have not received as much emphasis.

Research purpose: This research investigates the impact of public service motivation on job satisfaction, organisational commitment, work engagement and counterproductive work behaviour.

Motivation for the study: Counterproductive work behaviour of public service employees results in the citizenry developing negative perceptions about the government. Notwithstanding, the behaviour and attitudes of public service employees and the motivation that drives them are less explicit.

Research approach/design and method: A positivist correlational research approach was implemented by administering a questionnaire to a sample of 1031 public service employees in the North West Province using a simple stratified sampling method. Statistical analyses included structural and regression modelling.

Main findings: Results reveal that public service motivation statistically significantly predicts job satisfaction, organisational commitment and work engagement. The results show that 28.9% of the variance in counterproductive work behaviour could be attributed to public service motivation. Thus, as public service motivation increases, counterproductive work behaviour decreases.

Practical or managerial implications: Strategies to improve public service motivation could putatively have an impact on the reduction of counterproductive work behaviour. Public service motivation could also improve service delivery to the citizenry by significantly impacting the public service employees' work engagement.

Contribution/value-add: Empirical evidence shows the influence of public service motivation on core work evaluation and counterproductive work behaviour, contributing to the corpus of knowledge with practical applicability.

Keywords: core work evaluation; public service motivation; counterproductive work behaviour; job satisfaction; work engagement; organisational commitment.

Introduction

Orientation

Public service motivation has increased in prominence in recent years because providing efficient and high-quality public services continues to be a chronic anomaly for most welfare states. High-quality public service is vital in contemporary society, and the discipline of public administration has continually attempted to enhance public service performance (Shrestha & Mishra, 2015). Despite these efforts, a popular perception of public service employees is that they are ineffective and less productive than their private-sector counterparts (Lapiente & Van De Walle, 2020). Previous research has opined that there is no unified theory of work motivation that can explain the vast range of workplace behaviours. Such behaviours are displayed by civil servants acting in the public interest rather than promoting their personal agenda (Shrestha & Mishra, 2015). Riba and Ballart (2016) described public service motivation as a desire to do good and impact society's well-being. Gould-Williams et al. (2014) defined public service motivation as a value or attitude that motivates public service employees to act pro-socially. Similarly, Homberg et al. (2015) described public service motivation as a subset of altruism or a prosocial initiative driven by certain dispositions and ideals generated by public institutions. Taylor and Taylor (2015) explained that public service motivation could be perceived as a psychological state, with

environmental conditions driving employees to adopt a public service motivational attitude that is context- and time-specific.

Notwithstanding, the motivation of public service employees is multifaceted and covers a range of elements, some of which are inherent employment qualities while others are extraneous, such as guidelines that apply to public service employees (Riba & Ballart, 2016). Furthermore, at the start of the 1990s, public service motivation received considerable attention from researchers (Pedersen, 2015) but the process through which this influences employee attitudes has not received as much emphasis (Gould Williams et al., 2014). The construct, core work evaluation (CWE), originates in the notion of employee attitudes and development and has been described as a psychological evaluation of one's work environment with a particular emphasis on occupational, organisational and work activities (Webster et al., 2014). Although attitude as a concept developed longitudinally, the most comprehensive definition subsumes a predisposition that has affective, cognitive and conative (i.e., behavioural) components oriented towards an object or collection of objects (Albarracin & Johnson, 2018). Furthermore, Webster et al. (2014) described CWE as a multidimensional concept comprised of three dimensions, namely, job satisfaction, organisational commitment and work engagement. These dimensions have been identified in classical and contemporary attitude theory, a well-established theoretical underpinning in the corpus of knowledge, in which the hierarchical character of the work context is comprehensively presented.

Within the South African work context, unethical behaviour, chiefly in the form of corruption, has reached crisis proportions (Van Der Walt et al., 2016). For example, bribery is rife in public sector organisations (Bashir et al., 2012). Counterproductive work behaviour is evidenced in destructive work behaviours – both towards co-workers and the organisation – as well as the effects of such behaviour on individual, group and organisational outcomes (Raver et al., 2013). Mehmood et al. (2022) explained that the negative work behaviour of government employees results in the citizenry forming negative perceptions about the government in power with severe implications. However, the behaviour of public service employees is not clearly understood.

Research purpose

A meta-analysis conducted by Homberg et al. (2015) reported a positive correlation between public service motivation and job satisfaction while identifying first mentioned as a predictor of job satisfaction. Crucke et al. (2021) found that public service motivation is a predictor of job satisfaction. Moreover, the corpus of knowledge (see e.g., Bright, 2021; Kim et al., 2013; Palma, 2016) revealed that public service motivation was significantly positively related to job satisfaction, indicative of high levels of public service motivation resulting in high levels of job satisfaction. This positive relationship was confirmed by research conducted in the public service context amongst police officers in Poland and Belgium, which showed

that officers with higher levels of public service motivation reported higher levels of job satisfaction (Prysmakova & Vandenabeele, 2020). In the same vein, Castaing's (2006) research revealed a positive association between public service motivation and organisational commitment facets, namely, affective, normative and continuance commitment, while Potipiroon and Ford (2017) likewise found that public service motivation had a significant positive effect on organisational commitment. A study done by Ugaddan and Park (2017) revealed a positive relationship between public service motivation and work engagement. Vogel et al. (2016) showed a negative association between public service motivation and counterproductive work behaviour. Similarly, Koumenta (2015) reported a statistically significant negative correlation between public service motivation and counterproductive work behaviour. According to Perry and Vandenabeele (2015), public service employees' decreased public service motivation, job satisfaction, organisational commitment and work engagement, coupled with a high degree of counterproductive work behaviour, have been of significant concern.

Considering the above, it is the contention of the research under discussion that high levels of public service motivation positively affect job satisfaction, organisational commitment and work engagement and negatively affect counterproductive work behaviour. To date, previous research could not be identified that investigated the influence of public service motivation (independent variable) on CWE facets, such as job satisfaction, organisational commitment, work engagement and counterproductive work behaviour (dependent variables) in the South African public service context. Hence, the purpose of the research is to investigate the impact of public service motivation on CWE facets (job satisfaction, organisational commitment and work engagement) and counterproductive work behaviour of public service employees in the North West Provincial Government.

Literature review

The research examines the nexus between public service motivation as an independent variable and CWE facets coupled with counterproductive work behaviour (viz. dependent variables). Webster et al. (2014) described CWE facets as a multidimensional concept comprised of three dimensions: job satisfaction, organisational commitment and work engagement.

Public service motivation

Public service motivation is a broad term that refers to an employee's commitment to providing services to others that are beneficial to individuals and society. Thus, public service motivation is considered an innate proclivity towards serving others (Caillier, 2014a). Shim et al. (2017) opined that a fundamental assumption of public service motivation is that an individual with innate prosocial inclinations is more likely than others to choose professions within the public sector to promote the public interest. Public service motivation as a

construct is theoretically underpinned by the theory of human motivation that encompasses three dimensions, namely, emotional, norm-based and logical motivations (Caillier, 2014a). On the contrary, Liu and Perry (2016) identified public service motivation facets as attraction to public policymaking, dedication to the public good, civic responsibility, social justice, self-sacrifice and compassion. While public service motivation is prevalent across a plethora of industries, it is especially critical in government institutions because government institutions have social goals that require employees to act in a humanitarian manner intrinsic to the nature of employment (Caillier, 2014a).

Research on public service motivation is multidisciplinary, dealing with the broader literature on altruism, other-regarding orientations, prosocial motivation and behaviour in psychology, organisational behaviour, sociology and economics (Koehler & Rainey, 2015). Public service motivation has been associated with retention, whistleblowing and performance, although the latter results are inconsistent (Caillier, 2014b). Bashir et al. (2021) reported that public service motivation positively impacts work engagement ascribed to the emphasis placed on the intrinsic wish to serve the public. However, the relationship between public service motivation and work engagement is dependent on the degree to which employees perceive the environment as conducive to fulfilling their innate public service motivation (Borst et al., 2019). Abugre (2014) found that public service motivation correlates with job satisfaction in the Belgian public sector.

Job satisfaction

Top et al. (2015) defined job satisfaction as a positive emotional state that results from an evaluation of one's job or experiences associated with it. Thiagaraj and Thangaswamy (2017) described job satisfaction as a favourable orientation of an employee towards all aspects related to work circumstances. Jessen (2015) explained that job satisfaction is an emotive response towards a plethora of factors, namely, supervision, position, colleagues, remuneration, job content, extrinsic rewards, physical conditions and organisational structure. Lee (2017) included individual values by describing job satisfaction as a feeling experienced when employees perceive that the work fulfils their core values. Principally, job satisfaction can be divided into two categories, namely, intrinsic and extrinsic job satisfaction (Khoza, 2019). Intrinsic job satisfaction includes aspects like perceived workplace success, good interpersonal relationships between staff, partaking in management and allowing employees to fulfil innate potential (Jessen, 2015). Extrinsic job satisfaction encompasses such things as rewards and a safe, non-abusive work environment.

Organisational commitment

Organisational commitment is a psychological condition that defines an employee's engagement with the organisation and has ramifications for employee retention. Albdour and Altarawneh (2014) defined organisational commitment as the degree to which an employee recognises and partakes in a

specific organisation. Organisational commitment has also been referred to as an employee's psychological relationship with the employer (Potipiroon & Ford, 2017). Organisational commitment is premised on the notion that committed employees are more likely to be retained in the organisation (Top et al., 2015). The construct of organisational commitment can be divided into three components: affective, continuance and normative. Affective commitment is an attitude-forming process in which individuals consider their values and goals concerning organisations. It entails employees' emotional commitment to, identification with and participation in the organisation (Top et al., 2015). Organisations with high emotional commitment retain employees ascribed to the desire to work there. Hence, an organisation with a high degree of continuing commitment retains workers because they tend to remain with the company unless they find a better position. On the contrary, normative commitment refers to an employee's sense of obligation to remain in a job position considering their values and beliefs. Organisations with normatively committed workers retain them because the employees are of the view that they should remain with the organisation. Normative commitment is positively connected to the organisational culture in that the organisational purpose is aligned with the individual's values (Top et al., 2015).

Work engagement

Work engagement is defined as a positive, satisfying and work-related state of mind with three components, namely, physical, emotional and cognitive (Wang et al., 2017). Rather than a transient and specific state, engagement refers to a more enduring and ubiquitous affective-cognitive state that is not directed towards any item, event, person or behaviour (Schaufeli et al., 2009). Work engagement can furthermore be regarded as a psychologically motivated state with three dimensions, namely, participation, commitment and vigour (Yalabik et al., 2017). Dedication is characterised by inspiration, identification, enthusiasm and involvement in one's work. Vitality relates to energy, mental fortitude, resolve and applying persistent effort in one's work. The final component, absorption, relates to detachment from one's surroundings, a high level of focus and immersion in one's work, and a general lack of awareness of the time spent on the job. Thus, an engaged employee is eager and engrossed in his or her work (Yalabik et al., 2017). Vigour is defined by a high level of energy and mental resilience while working, a willingness to invest effort in one's work and perseverance in the face of adversity (Schaufeli et al., 2006). Costa et al. (2016) presented a similar three-dimensional structure of work engagement characterised by vigour (high levels of energy when working), devotion (strong involvement in one's job, experiencing a sense of enthusiasm) and absorption (complete concentration on work tasks).

Counterproductive work behaviour

Counterproductive work behaviour is defined as any purposeful act by a member of an organisation who is deemed to go against the organisation's legitimate

interests (Whelpley & McDaniel, 2016). The construct of counterproductive workplace behaviour is pervasive and impairs one's capacity to create and sustain meaningful interpersonal connections, professional achievement and a favourable reputation (DeShong et al., 2015). Counterproductive work behaviours include workplace hostility involving detrimental conduct aimed at other employees rather than organisations. In extreme cases, counterproductive work behaviours reduce an individual's performance and increase absenteeism and turnover (Spector & Fox, 2010). Workplace incivility encompasses unproductive work behaviour, workplace misbehaviour, workplace deviance and workplace bullying (Fatima, 2016). According to DeShong et al. (2015), counterproductive work behaviour results in undesirable consequences, such as financial losses (e.g. paying or accepting bribes, fraud) and damage to the organisational reputation (e.g. discriminating against co-workers). These behaviours have been further classified according to their intended recipient. For example, interpersonal counterproductive work behaviour can cause bodily or emotional harm to another employee (e.g. mocking or harassing a co-worker), while organisational counterproductive work behaviour directly influences organisational productivity (e.g. consuming alcohol while working or working slowly) (DeShong et al., 2015).

Conceptual framework and hypotheses

A conceptual framework was established and graphically illustrated in Figure 1, where public service motivation is the independent variable, while the dependent variables are job satisfaction, organisational commitment and counterproductive work behaviour.

In accordance with Figure 1, the following hypotheses were tested:

H₁: Public service motivation statistically significantly influences job satisfaction.

H₂: The variance in organisational commitment can statistically significantly be attributed to public service motivation.

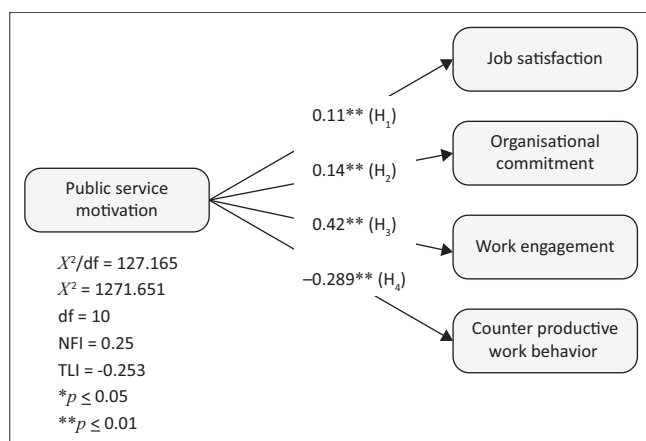


FIGURE 1: A conceptual framework for public service motivation, organisational commitment, work engagement and counterproductive work behaviour.

H₃: Public service motivation statistically significantly influences work engagement.

H₄: Public service motivation statistically significantly influences counterproductive work behaviour.

Research design

Research approach

Empirical research was conducted and operationalised through a quantitative survey design underpinned by a positivistic paradigm. More specifically, in a positivist paradigm, causal research deals with cause-and-effect relationships among variables (Akter et al., 2022). An online questionnaire was used to collect numerical data from respondents with inferences drawn based on a statistical analysis of quantitative data (Mokoena et al., 2022).

Population and sampling

The study population comprised public servants employed at 11 provincial government departments in the North West province, including the Department of Education and Sports Development; Department of Public Works and Roads; Department of Community Safety and Transport Management; Department of Social Development; Department of Rural, Environment and Agricultural Development; Premier's Office; Department of Health; Department of Local Government and Human Settlement; Department of Tourism; Department of Economy and Enterprise Development; and Department of Culture, Arts and Traditional Affairs. A total number of 2250 respondents were targeted to participate in the study using a stratified simple random sampling method consisting of four strata, namely, senior management echelon (SMS salary levels 13–16), middle management (MMS salary levels 11–12), junior middle management (JMM salary levels 8–10) and elementary employees representing salary levels 1 to 7. The staff complement of the North West Provincial Government at the time of data gathering consisted of approximately 61 954 employees. A total number of 1031 ($N = 1031$) questionnaires were returned via email, which was found to be on the 95th confidence level representative of the population with a 3.5% margin of error. The study obtained a response rate of 45.8%.

Research participants

The sample consisting of 1031 ($n = 1031$) respondents was nearly evenly distributed by gender, with 50.2% of respondents ($n = 518$) identifying as male and 49.8% ($n = 513$) as female. Most respondents ($n = 370$; 35.9%) fell into the 40–49 age bracket, followed by respondents in the 50–59 age bracket ($n = 242$). Additionally, 22.4% ($n = 231$) of the sample fell into the 30–39 age bracket, while 10.1% ($n = 104$) fell into the 20–29 age bracket. Respondents aged 60 and over had the lowest representation ($n = 84$; 8.1%). The 16 post-salary levels were divided into four subpopulations, namely, senior management (SMS – salary levels 13–16), middle managers

(MMS salary levels 11–12), junior middle managers (JMM salary levels 8–10) and elementary staff (professionals' salary levels 1–7). Most respondents ($n = 431$; 41.7%) have worked for the North West Provincial Administration (Departments) for 6–10 years, while the fewest respondents, 1.2% ($n = 12$), had at least 21 years' work experience. The Department of Community Safety and Transportation Management employed 18.5% ($n = 191$) of the respondents, followed by the Premier's Office ($n = 158$; 15.3%), and the Department of Culture, Arts and Traditional Affairs employed only 4% ($n = 41$) of the sample (CATA). This was expected, as CATA is the province's smallest department. Finally, most respondents (36.7%) had a diploma as their highest qualification, followed by 22.8% ($n = 235$) with a master's degree and only 4.1% ($n = 42$) with a Doctor of Philosophy (PhD).

Measuring instrument

A questionnaire is a written, structured document comprising items designed to collect data from respondents in support of a primary research purpose (Setsena et al., 2021). The measuring instrument was divided into six sections. Section A comprised of items related to respondents' demographic characteristics (i.e., gender, age, salary level, tenure, provincial government department and qualification). Section B contained questions relating to public service motivation, while Section C measured job satisfaction. Section D measured organisational commitment, Section E contained work engagement and Section F contained counterproductive work behaviour.

More specifically, the International Public Service Motivation Scale, developed by Kim et al. (2013), was used to measure public service motivation. The questionnaire consists of 16 items measuring four factors, namely, attraction to public service, commitment to public values, compassion and self-sacrifice. A 5-point Likert scale was used, ranging from 1 representing strongly disagree to 5 representing strongly agree. In this study, the public service motivation scale obtained a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.833.

Job satisfaction was measured using the Facet Satisfaction Scale developed by Bowling et al. (2018). The 25-item Job Satisfaction Facet Scale consists of five factors, namely, work itself, supervision, co-workers, remuneration and promotion. A 7-point Likert scale was used to measure the responses where 1 represented strongly disagree and 7 represented strongly agree. The job satisfaction scale obtained a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.888 in the study under discussion.

Allen and Meyer's (1996) scale, as validated by Maqsood et al. (2012), was used to measure organisational commitment. The questionnaire consists of 22 items measuring three factors, including affective commitment, continuance commitment and normative commitment. A 6-point Likert scale was used ranging from 1 (i.e. strongly disagree) to 6 (i.e. strongly agree). Considering the research reported on, the organisational commitment scale obtained a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.664, indicating moderate sample reliability for the specified scales.

The shortened Work Engagement Scale of Schaufeli and Bakker (2004) was used to measure work engagement. The questionnaire contains 17 items measuring three factors, namely, vigour, dedication and absorption. The sub-scale utilised a 7-point Likert scale ranging from 0 – never, 1 – almost never, 2 – rarely, 3 – sometimes, 4 – often, 5 – very often and 6 – always. Cronbach's alpha coefficient for the work engagement scale was 0.947, which can be considered excellent, with subscales ranging from 0.849 to 0.876.

Lastly, the Counterproductive Work Behaviour Checklist, developed by Spector et al. (2006), was used to measure counterproductive work behaviour. The questionnaire consists of 45 items gauging two factors: Organisational (21 items) and individual (22 items) counterproductive work behaviours. A 5-point Likert scale was used, ranging from 1 representing never to 5 representing every day. The reliability coefficient for counterproductive work behaviour was 0.968, with the two subscales indicating 0.893 for organisational counterproductive work behaviour and 0.970 for individual counterproductive work behaviour.

A principal component exploratory and confirmatory factor analysis was performed to ensure construct validity and to identify the factors integral to each variable (Mokoena et al., 2022). Results indicated that the data were factorable, because the Kaiser–Meyer–Olkin (KMO) test for sampling adequacy returned values above 0.55 for most factors, and the Bartlett's test of sphericity reverted a statistically significant value on the 99th percentile. An exploratory factor analysis with an oblique rotation was computed, and 24 components had an eigenvalue exceeding 1, accounting for 93.173% of the total value. Confirmatory factor analysis was performed with results presented sequentially. Specifically, for public service motivation, three factors were retained which explain 60.03% of the variance, which included attraction to the public service, commitment to public values and compassion. Similarly, regarding job satisfaction, 5 factors were retained, explaining 73.97% of the variance subsuming supervision, promotion, remuneration, co-workers and work itself. Three factors were retained in the work engagement scale with eigenvalues exceeding 1. The three factors explain 75.2% of the variance in work engagement and include dedication, absorption and vigour. Three factors were identified considering organisational commitment, namely, continuance commitment, affective commitment and normative commitment. Lastly, two factors were acknowledged regarding counteractive work behaviour, namely, counterproductive work behaviour – individual and counterproductive work behaviour – organisational.

Statistical analysis

The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 27 was used in the main. Reliability and validity were confirmed by determining Cronbach's alpha coefficients and confirmatory factor analysis. Structural equation modelling using SPSS Amos version 27 was computed for the evaluation of the measurement model. The measurement model is

intended to evaluate the validity and consistency of the variables (Mokoena et al., 2022). Pearson product-moment correlation and multiple regression analysis were performed to determine the impact of public service motivation on job satisfaction, employee engagement, organisational commitment and counterproductive work behaviour, to test the structural model. Statistical significance was set at either the 95th ($p \leq 0.05$) or 99th ($p \leq 0.01$) percentile. Descriptive statistical analysis was performed to determine the measures of central tendency, such as the mean and standard deviation.

Ethical considerations

Ethical approval for this study was obtained from the Economics and Management Sciences Research and Ethics Committee (EMS-REC) reference number NWU-00667-19-A4. Moreover, a standard ethics protocol was adhered to, including permission to conduct the study, informed consent, voluntary participation, right to anonymity and confidentiality, and expectations of honesty in presenting the results. Data were anonymised before data analysis to ensure data confidentiality.

Results

Descriptive statistics

The primary aim of the reported research was to determine the influence of public service motivation on job satisfaction, organisational commitment, work engagement and counterproductive work behaviour in a sample of public service employees in the North West Provincial Government. To contextualise the inferential statistical analysis, Table 1 illustrates the findings from the descriptive analysis.

As can be deduced from Table 1, organisational commitment and work engagement were slightly negative. More specifically, organisational commitment had a mean of 76.72 and a median or mid-point of 77.00. Hence, organisational commitment was slightly below 50% towards negative. Work engagement had a mean of 86.75 and a median of 91.00, indicative of a slight absence of work engagement. All the other variables returned results above the mean towards positive. The recommended guideline for skewness is below ± 3 and kurtosis values below ± 10 (Kline, 2015). Thus, according to Table 1, the supposition of univariate normality was met, and normality was supported. Consequently, the use of the maximum likelihood method to evaluate the fitness of the model is supported.

TABLE 1: Normality tests and central tendencies.

Variable	Mean	Median	Std.	Skewness	Kurtosis
Public service motivation	71.67	71.00	5.599	-0.289	0.012
Job satisfaction	95.16	93.00	22.979	-0.194	0.284
Organisational commitment	76.72	77.00	12.697	0.455	-0.065
Work engagement	86.75	91.00	21.048	-0.065	-1.250
Counterproductive work behaviour	56.46	50.00	16.211	2.702	9.091

Structural equation modelling

The maximum likelihood estimation method in SPSS Amos 27 was used to test the structural model. Results indicated a minimum likelihood was achieved (chi-square = 1271.651; $p \leq 0.01$; $df = 10$; chi-square / degree of freedom [CMIN/DF] = 127.165; normed fit index [NFI] = 0.25; Tucker-Lewis's index [TLI] = -0.253; comparative fit index [CFI] = 0.249; root-mean square error approximation [RMSEA] = 0.35). Goodness of fit evaluates the general performance of the model; however, there is no threshold that allows for the determination of statistical significance (Mokoena et al., 2022). As well, Stone (2021) explained that the chi-square test is archetypally an appropriate indicator of fit for sample sizes under 400 ($n \leq 400$). The sample in the research reported on is 1031, which limits the usefulness of the chi-square model fit indicator. Hence, pluralistic methods over a single method are advised (Kline, 2016).

Regression modelling

A Pearson product-moment correlation (r) was performed in anticipation of standard multiple regression modelling and to determine the strength of the relationship amongst the variables, with results displayed in Table 2.

PSM, public service motivation; JS, job satisfaction; OC, organisational commitment; WE, work engagement; CWB, counterproductive work behaviour.

The correlation matrix results presented in Table 2 indicated that job satisfaction had a statistically significant small correlation with public service motivation as seen from the r -value of 0.106 howbeit significant on the 99th percentile. The correlation was positive, and thus, as one increases, there would be a concomitant increase in the other. Organisational commitment had similarly a small statistically significant correlation with public service motivation ($r = 0.137$; $p \leq 0.1$) and a medium statistically significant correlation with job satisfaction ($r = 0.430$; $p = 0.000^{**}$). The relationship was positive. Work engagement had medium associations with both public service motivation ($r = 0.417$; $p = 0.000^{**}$) and organisational commitment ($r = 0.368$; $p = 0.000^{**}$), while it had a large statistically significant correlation with job satisfaction ($r = 0.675$; $p = 0.000^{**}$). Lastly, counterproductive work behaviour showed negative small correlations with public service motivation ($r = -0.289$; $p = 0.000$), job satisfaction ($r = -0.127$; $p = 0.000^{**}$) and work engagement ($r = -0.223$; $p = 0.000^{**}$). Therefore, counterproductive work behaviour would decrease with an increase in job satisfaction, public service motivation and work engagement. However, counterproductive work behaviour had a small statistically significant positive relationship with organisational commitment ($r = 0.085$; 0.006^{**}).

To test the research hypotheses, a multiple regression analysis was performed with public service motivation as the independent variable and job satisfaction, work engagement and organisational commitment as dependent variables.

TABLE 2: Correlation matrix with selected variables.

Variables	R-value	PSM	JS	OC	WE	CWB
JS	R	0.106**	1	-	-	-
OC	R	0.137**	0.430**	1	-	-
WE	R	0.417**	0.675**	0.368**	1	-
CWB	R	-0.289**	-0.127**	0.085**	-0.223**	1

Note: $p \leq 0.05$, $p \leq 0.01$ **; small effect $r = 0.10$ to $r = 0.29$; medium effect $r = 0.3$ to $r = 0.49$; large effect $r = 0.5$ to $r = 1.0$.

CWB, counterproductive work behaviour; JS, job satisfaction; OC, organisational commitment; PMS, public service motivation; WE, work engagement.

TABLE 3: Multiple regression analysis modelling with public service motivation as the independent variable.

Independent variables	Unstandardised coefficients		Standardised coefficients	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
	Beta	Std. error	Beta		
Job satisfaction	0.437	0.127	0.106	3.433	0.001**
Organisational commitment	0.310	0.070	0.137	4.429	0.000**
Work engagement	1.569	0.107	0.417	14.728	0.000**
Counterproductive work behaviour	-0.836	0.086	-0.289	-9.670	0.000**

Note: $p \leq 0.05$, $p \leq 0.01$ **.

Multiple regression analysis modelling was computed to investigate the impact of public service motivation as presented in Table 3. Public service motivation statistically significantly impacts CWE facets and counterproductive work behaviour on the 99th percentile. Expounding on this, 10.6% of the variance in job satisfaction can be attributed to public service motivation ($\beta = 0.106$; $p = 0.001$). Therefore, H_1 is supported. Similarly, 13.7% of the variance in organisational commitment can be attributed to public service motivation with a *b*-value of 0.137 and a *p*-value of $p \leq 0.01$. Thus, H_2 is also supported. The biggest variance in terms of CWE facets which can be ascribed to public service motivation was related to work engagement. Thus, 41.7% of the variance in work engagement can be attributed to public service engagement ($\beta = 0.417$; $p = 0.000$ **). As a result, H_3 is accepted. Lastly, public service motivation negatively influences counterproductive work behaviour. Thus, as public service motivation increased, a decrease in counterproductive work behaviour would occur. The variance was 28.9% ($\beta = -0.289$; $p = 0.000$ **), resulting in the acceptance of H_4 . Based on the results presented, the North West Provincial Government departments could improve public sector motivation by promoting job satisfaction and work engagement.

Discussion and implications

Per the findings presented, it can be inferred that public service motivation statistically significantly predicts job satisfaction (H_1). This result aligns with research reported by Bright (2021), Crucke et al. (2021), Kim et al. (2013), Homberg et al. (2015), Palma (2016) and Stefurak et al. (2020), who found a positive correlation between public service motivation and job satisfaction.

This study further revealed that public service motivation predicted 13.7% of the variance in organisational commitment. Results verified research by Boyd and Nowell (2020), Castaing (2006) as well as Potipiroon and Ford (2017). More

specifically, Boyd and Nowell (2020) disclosed a statistically significant direct correlation between public service motivation and organisational commitment in addition to organisational citizenship. Similarly, a study conducted in the United Kingdom within a prison system revealed a significant positive correlation between public service motivation and organisational commitment after controlling for perceived organisational support and fairness (Boyd & Nowell, 2020). Castaing (2006) noted a positive association between public service motivation and organisational commitment facets: affective, normative and continuance commitment. Potipiroon and Ford (2017) posited that the relationship between public service motivation and organisational commitment would depend on leadership characteristics. It would appear as if the relationship between public service motivation and organisational commitment is more nuanced than perceived, as it is dependent on how much one enjoys and finds interest in the profession. Potipiroon and Ford (2017) found that the influence of public service motivation on organisational commitment was highest when intrinsic motivation and ethical leadership were high. As such, in the absence of intrinsic motivation and/or ethical leadership, the public service motivation and organisational commitment connection tended to be insignificant (Potipiroon & Ford, 2017). This result could not be validated by the findings presented.

Public service motivation had the most significant impact on work engagement with a *b* of 41.7%. In line with these findings, Mussagulova (2021) found that public service employees with low levels of public service motivation experience a negative association between red tape and work engagement more strongly. The previous author described the relationship between public service motivation and work engagement, referring to the role of public service motivation in enhancing the positive effect of job resources and mitigating the negative effect of job demands on the desired individual and organisational work outcomes. Moreover, Ugaddan and Park (2017) also found a positive correlation between public service motivation and work engagement. Similarly, Bashir et al. (2021) reported that public service motivation positively impacted work engagement. At the same time, public service motivation was negatively correlated with counterproductive work behaviour. Thus, counterproductive work behaviour would decrease with increased public service motivation. More specifically, 28.9% of counterproductive work behaviour could be attributed to public service motivation. Vogel et al. (2016) and Koumenta (2015) also found a negative association between public service motivation and counterproductive work behaviour.

Limitations

Firstly, acknowledged caveats include that reliability of data is reliant on the respondents' objectivity and honesty. Respondents might have subjective perceptions regarding innate public service motivation, job satisfaction, organisational commitment, work engagement and counterproductive work behaviour. Furthermore,

respondents might be reluctant to disclose their participation in a criminal act such as accepting a bribe or other counterproductive work behaviour. Secondly, the research was conducted within the quantitative paradigm using a cross-sectional correlational design. Hence, the survey could not capture in-depth the respondents' emotions, feelings, behaviour and attitudes.

Recommendations for future research

A follow-up mixed-methods research study could be conducted which could include semi-structured interviews. Finally, the results cannot be generalised to the remaining eight provincial government departments, and future research could be expanded nationally.

Conclusion

A dearth of research underscoring the influence of public service motivation on CWE facets, such as job satisfaction, organisational commitment, work engagement and counterproductive work behaviour in the South African public service context, is prevalent. This research attempted to address the identified research gap. As counterproductive work behaviour in the public service context has been shown to have adverse consequences in terms of public perceptions, strategies to improve public service motivation could potentially have a noticeable and positive impact on the reduction of such perceptions. An increase in public service motivation could also improve service delivery to the citizenry by significantly impacting the public service employees' work engagement.

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Competing interests

The authors have declared that no competing interest exists.

Authors' contributions

P.A.B., as the main supervisor, worked on the conceptualisation and refinement of the first draft. P.J. was responsible for data analysis, methodological rigour, and writing up of the results and the article. P.M.M carried out the literature review and data collection for the PhD study and was a registered student at the time.

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