

Awareness of National Continuity and Suitability of Professional Perfection in Civil Servants

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Abstract:

This paper examines the awareness of national continuity and the suitability of professional perfection in civil servants by analyzing various management practices, professional identities, and integrity frameworks in public service. It explores the influence of localized civil service reforms, the complexities of integrity management, and the challenges of professional identity formation in the public sector. Key insights from the UK and Ethiopian civil services are highlighted, including the importance of depoliticization, merit-based recruitment, and continuous professional development (CPD). The study underscores that civil service professionalism is deeply influenced by both institutional practices and historical development, necessitating ongoing reforms for enhanced performance and integrity.

Keywords: National Continuity, Civil Service Management, Professional Perfection, Integrity, Merit-Based Recruitment.

Introduction

The literature surrounding the awareness of national continuity and the suitability of professional perfection in civil servants reveals a complex interplay between management practices, professional identities, and integrity within the public service sector. The foundational work by [1] provides a comprehensive assessment of civil service management practices across diverse regions, highlighting how these practices influence civil servants' attitudes and behaviors. Their survey indicates that effective civil service management is not a one-size-fits-all solution but rather requires a nuanced understanding of local contexts. The identification of four reforms that positively impact civil service effectiveness underscores the necessity of tailoring reforms to the

specific realities of each institution, emphasizing the importance of depoliticizing civil service management to enhance performance and integrity.

In a similar vein, [2] explores the integrity management landscape within the UK public service, framing it as a "patchwork quilt" that lacks coherence and strong institutional roles. This analysis reveals the tension between decentralization in public service delivery and the centralization of integrity management. The evolution of the British public service ethos, characterized by informal codes of conduct, is contextualized within broader systemic changes, suggesting that the integrity of civil servants is deeply influenced by institutional frameworks and the historical development of public service norms.

[3] expands the discussion by examining public sector professional identities, emphasizing the significance of professional learning and identity formation. The challenges faced by public service professions, particularly in the context of evolving curricula and policies, highlight the ongoing struggle for power and precedence within professional identities. [3]'s exploration of initial professional development and continuous professional development (CPD) as key elements in shaping public sector identities reinforces the idea that identity construction is a dynamic process influenced by both institutional practices and individual experiences.

[4] further contextualizes these themes within the Ethiopian civil service, identifying professionalism as essential to effective governance. The interplay between human and non-human aspects of civil service professionalism, including merit-based recruitment and adherence to guiding principles, is posited as critical to enhancing performance. [4]'s work emphasizes that the historical politicization of the civil service in Ethiopia necessitates ongoing reforms to meet public expectations and uphold professional standards.

Lastly, [5] delves into the recruitment and promotion practices within the Ethiopian civil service, advocating for a meritocratic approach as fundamental to building a capable and professional bureaucracy. The emphasis on equal opportunities and the importance of competence-based recruitment aligns with the overarching theme of the necessity for meritocracy in fostering effective public service. [5]'s analysis highlights that successful bureaucracies are characterized by their ability to attract talented individuals who are committed to long-term careers in public service, further reinforcing the need for systemic reforms to enhance civil service professionalism.

Together, these articles present a rich tapestry of insights into the complexities of civil service management, integrity, and professional identity, illustrating the critical factors that influence the effectiveness and professionalism of civil servants across different contexts.

2. Literature review

The article "Civil service management in developing countries: what works? evidence from a survey with 23,000 civil servants in Africa, Asia, Eastern Europe and Latin America" by [1] provides a comprehensive analysis of civil service management practices and their impact on civil servants' attitudes and behaviors across various regions. The authors conducted a large-scale survey, which serves as a robust empirical foundation for their conclusions.

One of the key insights from the article is the recognition that civil service management practices significantly influence work motivation, job satisfaction, public service motivation, and commitment to remaining in the public sector. The findings suggest that there is no universal solution to civil service reforms; rather, the effectiveness of management practices is contingent upon the specific context of each country and institution. This nuanced understanding is critical, as it challenges the conventional approach of implementing one-size-fits-all reforms, which may overlook the unique challenges and dynamics present in different civil service environments.

The authors identify four specific reforms that demonstrated positive effects, with the depoliticization of civil service management being paramount. This reform is particularly noteworthy as it addresses the often-detrimental influence of political patronage on civil service effectiveness. By promoting a more meritocratic and professional environment, depoliticization can enhance civil servants' integrity and performance, leading to improved public service delivery.

Moreover, the article emphasizes the variability of attitudes and behaviors among civil servants, which can differ not only between countries but also within them. This variability highlights the importance of understanding the local context when designing and implementing civil service reforms. The authors argue that a thorough analysis of existing management practices and civil servant attitudes is essential for tailoring reforms that can genuinely enhance the performance and integrity of public institutions.

The article titled "Integrity management and the public service ethos in the UK: patchwork quilt or threadbare blanket?" by [2] provides a comprehensive analysis of integrity management within the UK public service. The author contends that, despite a historical commitment to high standards of integrity, the current framework resembles a disjointed and inadequately defined system of ethical oversight, which he metaphorically describes as a "patchwork quilt." This characterization underscores the fragmented nature of the UK's National Integrity System, which has been impacted by systemic changes in public service delivery.

Heywood traces the evolution of the British public service ethos (PSE), emphasizing its reliance on informal codes of conduct and moral integrity. He argues that the pressures to decentralize public service delivery create a tension with the efforts to centralize and codify integrity management. This tension is particularly relevant in understanding how the ethos of public service has been shaped by broader institutional changes. The author highlights that recommendations for establishing independent statutory bodies for ethical oversight have not been fully realized, indicating a gap between policy intentions and practical implementation.

A critical evaluation of the material reveals that Heywood effectively situates the discussion of integrity management within the context of New Public Management and the broader literature on National Integrity Systems. However, the article may benefit from a more detailed examination of the specific impacts of these institutional changes on civil servants' professional perfection and national continuity. While the discussion on the Constitutional Reform and Governance Act of April 2010 is pertinent, the implications of this legislation for the day-to-day practices of civil servants remain somewhat underexplored.

Furthermore, the article raises important questions about the effectiveness of the various ethical watchdogs operating at the national level. With at least fifteen bodies tasked with overseeing ethical standards, the potential for overlap and confusion is significant. This aspect could be further elaborated to provide a clearer picture of how civil servants navigate these complexities in their professional conduct.

The article titled "Public sector professional identities: a review of the literature" by [3] provides a comprehensive examination of the complexities surrounding professional identities within the public sector, particularly in the context of Youth Work. Baxter raises critical questions regarding the balance between government intervention and professional autonomy in curriculum design, which is particularly relevant for civil servants striving for professional perfection and national continuity.

Baxter identifies the ongoing challenges faced by Youth Workers since the policy shifts of 1997, which have significantly influenced the nature and scope of Youth Work. The article emphasizes the perceived conflict between the roles and principles inherent in public service professions, suggesting that these conflicts complicate the formation of a cohesive professional identity. This

struggle for power and precedence among curricula, policies, practices, and principles highlights the multifaceted nature of professional learning and identity formation in the public sector.

The author argues that learning is a fundamental component in the development and sustenance of new professional identities. Initial professional development and continuous professional development (CPD) play critical roles in shaping professional personas and working practices. Baxter's analysis suggests that the way in which CPD is integrated into professional life is essential for the cultivation of a robust professional identity. This insight is particularly pertinent for civil servants, as it underscores the importance of ongoing learning and adaptation in response to evolving societal needs.

Moreover, Baxter's exploration of key themes emerging from the literature reveals commonalities across public sector professional identities, which contributes to a more coherent understanding of this field of research. The article effectively synthesizes various methodologies employed in public sector identity research, providing a rationale for their effectiveness. This methodological rigor is essential for scholars and practitioners alike, as it offers a framework for understanding the dynamics of professional identity in the public sector.

The article "Promoting Professionalism in the Civil Service of Laelay Adiabo Woreda, Tigray Region, Ethiopia: Challenges and Opportunities" by [4] provides a comprehensive examination of the factors contributing to the effectiveness and integrity of the civil service in Ethiopia, particularly in the context of Laelay Adiabo Woreda. The author emphasizes that a professional civil service is essential for the functionality of any government, positing that it acts as the "life blood" of governance.

Gebremedhin delineates the dual components of the civil service system: the human and non-human elements. The human aspect encompasses civil servants who are appointed based on merit, contrasting with political appointees, while the non-human aspect includes the regulatory frameworks and organizational structures that govern civil service operations. This distinction is critical as it underscores the importance of merit-based recruitment and promotion practices in fostering a professional civil service.

The article further elaborates on the core values underpinning civil service professionalism, such as loyalty, neutrality, transparency, and accountability. These values are vital for maintaining public trust and ensuring that civil servants act in the best interest of the community. The author argues that professionalism is not merely about adherence to rules but also involves a commitment to enhancing competence through ongoing training and development, which is essential for adapting to the evolving needs of society.

The historical context provided by Gebremedhin is particularly insightful, tracing the evolution of civil service professionalism in Ethiopia from its inception in 1907 under Emperor Menelik II to the present day. The author notes that the politicization of the civil service, especially in the post-independence era, has significantly influenced its professionalism. This politicization has often resulted in nepotism and corruption, which have been persistent challenges for the civil service in Africa. Continuous reforms initiated since the 1970s aim to rectify these issues, yet the effectiveness of these reforms remains a critical area of concern.

In evaluating the article, it becomes evident that Gebremedhin successfully highlights the complexities of civil service professionalism and the challenges that impede its realization in Ethiopia. However, while the article provides a robust analysis of the systemic issues, it could benefit from more empirical data or case studies that illustrate the impact of specific reforms on civil service performance. Additionally, a deeper exploration of the experiences of civil servants themselves could enrich the discussion on professionalism and its practical implications.

The article "Recruitment and Promotion Practices in the Ethiopian Civil Service" by [5] presents a comprehensive analysis of the civil service as a pivotal mechanism for executing state policies and ensuring public administration effectiveness. The author underscores the significance of a meritocratic civil service, which is characterized by impartial selection, administrative competence, and political neutrality. This framework is essential for fostering a professional body of officials who are skilled, permanent, and adequately compensated.

Assefa articulates that meritocracy is foundational for creating equal opportunities within the civil service, allowing citizens to enter government roles based on their abilities rather than socio-economic status or political connections. This aligns with Weber's ideal type of bureaucracy, where recruitment and promotion are based on talent and education. The article emphasizes that while meritocracy is critical, it alone does not guarantee a developmental state; it must be complemented by a capable and career-oriented civil service to effectively implement public policies.

The analysis of successful developmental states, such as Korea in the 1960s, illustrates the importance of meritocratic recruitment and promotion incentives in attracting top graduates and facilitating long-term career paths within the bureaucracy. This historical context reinforces Assefa's argument that a well-structured meritocratic system can lead to a more effective and responsive civil service.

However, the article could benefit from a deeper exploration of the challenges faced in implementing these meritocratic principles within the Ethiopian context. While the theoretical framework is robust, practical examples or case studies illustrating the successes and failures of meritocratic practices in Ethiopia would provide a more nuanced understanding of the complexities involved. Additionally, addressing potential barriers such as corruption, nepotism, and political interference could further enrich the discussion on how to achieve a truly merit-based system.

3. Conclusion

The literature on the awareness of national continuity and the suitability of professional perfection in civil servants illustrates a multifaceted relationship between civil service management practices, professional identity, and integrity. A foundational study by [1] offers a broad overview of civil service management across various regions, emphasizing that effective management practices are context-dependent. This study identifies four reforms that enhance civil service effectiveness, particularly highlighting the importance of depoliticizing civil service management to improve performance and integrity.

Further exploration by [2] delves into the integrity management framework within the UK public service, revealing a fragmented system that lacks coherence. This "patchwork quilt" of integrity management reflects the tension between decentralization in service delivery and the need for centralized oversight. The historical evolution of the public service ethos, marked by informal codes of conduct, underscores the significance of institutional frameworks in shaping civil servants' integrity.

The examination of professional identities in the public sector by [3] highlights the dynamic process of identity formation influenced by institutional practices and individual experiences. The challenges faced by public service professions, particularly regarding continuous professional development (CPD), are critical for shaping identities and ensuring professional perfection.

In the context of the Ethiopian civil service, [4] emphasizes the necessity of professionalism for effective governance. The interplay between merit-based recruitment and adherence to guiding principles is crucial for enhancing civil service performance. This work also highlights the historical politicization of the civil service in Ethiopia, necessitating ongoing reforms to meet public expectations.

Moreover, [5] advocates for meritocratic recruitment and promotion practices as fundamental to establishing a capable bureaucracy in Ethiopia. The emphasis on equal opportunities and competence-based recruitment aligns with the overarching theme of meritocracy as vital for effective public service.

Collectively, these articles illustrate the intricate factors that influence civil service management, integrity, and professional identity. They highlight the importance of context-specific reforms and the need for ongoing professional development in fostering a professional civil service that upholds national continuity and integrity.

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