



Considering and Validating the Leadership as a Driver in Public Sector Organizations Performance Management

Abdorreza Ghanizadeh¹ · Roohallah Noori¹  · Akbar Hassanpoor¹ · Yousef Vakili¹

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Abstract

The leadership component has not been acknowledged in many of the models proposed for performance management in public sector organizations. In addition, the concept and scope of this component fall short of consistency with theoretical foundations of organizational behavior management. This situation is not favorable to render optimal performance management. Hence, three levels have been devised within this model. These levels are (1) performance management components with regards to the appropriate balance between behavioral and process aspects, (2) leadership component dimensions: leadership traits, leadership behaviors, and leadership context, and (3) leadership subcomponents for each of the above dimensions.

Keywords Performance management · Public sector organizations · Leadership · Organizational behavior · Design science · Thematic analysis

Introduction

In administrative reform, focusing on performance management (PM) is a notable trend (Allegrini et al., 2021). Performance management models play a prominent role and significantly impact organizations' improvement and performance (Mir Sepasi et al., 2013). Undoubtedly, improved performance and excellence will bring many benefits to organizations, stakeholders, and employees. In addition, the public interest can be secured by improving public sector organizations' performance, ensuring the government's survival and legitimacy. Sovereignty is based on legitimacy (Noori

Roohallah Noori
rnoori@khu.ac.ir

¹ Human Resource Management Department, Kharazmi University, No. 43. South Mofatteh Ave, Tehran, Iran

et al., 2012). Despite this issue's significance, performance management systems are rarely implemented in an ideal manner (Maestro et al., 2020) and are scarcely updated for further improvements (Holzer et al., 2017). Although these systems are prevalent, several studies indicate that organizations do not manage their performance adequately for various reasons (Șerban & Herciu, 2019).

There is little recognition about improving performance management (Genest-Grégoire et al., 2018). Most PM models have fundamental weaknesses in human resource management components because they introduce generalities of their criteria (Mir Sepasi et al., 2010). This issue is also true of leadership component. In other words, the leadership subcomponents in performance management models are still limited to the general and symbolic affairs of the leader despite the prominent role of leadership in extracting the best performance (Pfeffermann, 2020). Even worse, the leadership component is not acknowledged in models to manage organizational performance, which does not appear enough for ideal organizational performance management.

In this study, an attempt was made to balance process and behavioral elements in the proposed performance management model by applying a behavioral perspective, which is an approach far from precedents. At the core of the study lies the role of leadership component as discussed in "organizational behavior." Therefore, the present study aims to determine the elements of the leadership component as a performance driver for public sector organizations.

Performance Management and Leadership's Role as a Driver

There is little agreement on the concept of performance in public sector management (Borgonovi et al., 2018). In a holistic view, however, performance is viewed comprehensively to cover the basic areas of public administration in a balanced way through financial and non-financial criteria (Král, 2021). Performance implies both operations (i.e., inputs and throughputs) and results (i.e., output, outcome, and impact) (Rafizadeh et al., 2016). In addition, various definitions have been proposed for PM. The most appropriate definition from the authors' point of view is: "Performance management is the management processes and the behaviors management uses/adopts to manage the performance of an organization" (Taticchi, 2010, p. 104). PM strengthens the achievement of organizational goals efficiently and effectively (Horváth & Partners Management Consultants, 2021). The performance management system operates in a continuous and renewable cycle consisting of (1) plan, (2) act, (3) monitor, and (4) review (Armstrong, 2009). Thus, it is a relatively comprehensive management process (Wu, 2020). Despite some global trends, some components of performance management models vary in different countries (Rashid, 2021).

In the performance management literature, enablers (drivers) are resources, merits, and core activities necessary to provide outputs and outcomes (Marr, 2008). The most important enabler is engaged leadership (Barrows & Neely, 2012). From the perspective of this article, the following definition is the most pertinent definition of leadership: "Leadership is the ability to influence a group toward the achievement of a vision or set of goals" (Robbins & Judge, 2018, p. 217).

Leadership is a complex issue (Certo & Certo, 2016). Despite extensive research in this field, there is still no theoretical consensus on the definition of effective leadership and ways to develop leadership effectiveness (Brooks, 2009). Leadership is a process that is similar to management in many ways. Managerial tasks such as planning, organizing, and controlling cannot be separated from the essential influence processes in leadership (Golensky & Hager, 2020). Leaders are crucial components of all organizations (Ngang Tang, 2019). Indeed, they are the most significant factor in implementing performance management (Moynihan, 2008). In this respect, various leadership styles can lead to different organizational performance (Muchiri et al., 2012). Leadership support is needed throughout the performance management process (Immordino, 2014). Implementing integrated PM requires many years of sustained effort and significant resources, cultural change, and organizational commitment. These issues need to be addressed through strong and sustainable leadership (Halachmi, 2011). The OECD noted that strong leadership is key to explaining success in performance management. The issue of leadership raises several questions:

- (1) What are the traits of a leader?
- (2) What are the important behaviors for performance leadership?
- (3) What is the position of performance leadership, and how can it be strengthened? (Van Dooren et al., 2014).

The competencies and skills of private and public sector leaders are not the same. For instance, conflict management and promotion of creativity and innovation are priorities in public sector leaders (Thach & Thompson, 2007). In most positions in government, leadership is important at two levels for a PM system. Senior executives in organizations should seriously support the process of setting up and implementing a PM system. However, it is equally important that political leadership supports developing, deploying, and implementing a PM system (McDavid et al., 2019).

Once the theoretical foundations of performance management and leadership driver are reviewed, it is necessary to summarize the importance of adopting a model in organizational performance management and examine the role of organizational behavior and leadership component in common models. Regardless of the organization's size, the sector in which the organization operates, or the current levels of success, organizations need a model that can position them on the overall path to excellence and determine development points (Norton, 2002). In essence, organizational goals' sustainable achievement relies upon ever-developing approaches and actions integrated within the performance management model (Tabatabaei Mozdabadi, 2015).

Investigating the Role of Organizational Behavior Management (OBM) in Performance Management Models

Tables 1 and 2 show the degree to which PM models consider human elements, especially specific OBM components. The models mentioned in Table 1 have paid more attention to the organizational behavior management elements than those in Table 2.

Despite the variety of models, most researchers have relatively neglected organizational behavior elements, especially leadership, in the model's core components. They have failed to strike a relative balance between the management processes and human dimensions of the model. Leadership focuses on the human aspect of management science. Therefore, it is important in this study to consider the behavioral components extracted from the models, tabulated as follows, yielding an appropriate view of the problem.

It is disappointing that the role of OBM components in Table 2 models is poor and sometimes no elements are present.

Investigating the Role of Leadership in Performance Management Models

First, the degree to which PM models consider the specific components of OBM is examined. Then, the models that considered the leadership component were further examined, and leadership subcomponents were examined at the bottom levels of PM models. The results indicated inconsistency between leadership subcomponents in current PM models and theoretical foundations of OBM. Insights can be gained on the issue by considering the leadership subcomponents listed in Table 3.

Method

The methodology used in this study is based on design science. Thematic analysis and two data collection techniques have been used including theoretical foundation review and interviews in the form of design science. In a broad definition, design is the arrangement of elements that is administered deliberately to fulfill the end (Fesenmaier & Xiang, 2017). In recent years, several top academic management journals have devised particular topics dealing with design science research and acknowledged the improvement of organizational performance due to its theoretical results (Hevner & Chatterjee, 2010). Peffers et al. (2012) outline the following steps for design science research methodology: (1) Identify Problem and Motivate, (2) Define Objectives of a Solution, (3) Design and Development, (4) Demonstration, (5) Evaluation, and (6) Communication.

Given that elaborations on Steps 1, 2, and 6 of the mentioned methodology are presented within different sections, the next two sections describe Steps 3, 4, and 5 in detail.

Design and Development

In this step, the artifact (i.e., model) was constructed by thematic analysis of theoretical foundations (Stage 1) and semi-structured interviews with experts (Stage 2).

Table 1 Comparison of the role of OBM in PM models that note at least 3 elements of organizational behavior, with a focus on public sector models

N.	Model name	Researcher/User	Reflection of organizational behavior management in the fundamental components of the model	Employee Motivation	Employee Growth	Cooperation	Commitment	Reference
1	Capability Review Program	Independent review commissioned by Australia	Direction					(Pal, 2016a)
2	Performance Cycle	Italy	Assess individual performance	Awards	Merit	-	-	(de Vries et al., 2019)
3	EFQM	European Foundation of Quality Management	Organizational Culture	Leadership	Engaging Stakeholders	Driving Performance and Transformation	Stakeholder Perceptions	(EFQM, 2019)
4	Public Sector Organizational Excellence Model	Mir Sepasi et al.	Leadership	Human Resource Management	Ethical and Value Principles	Clientele Satisfaction	-	(Mir Sepasi et al., 2013)
5	Organizational Performance Management Process Model	Rezaeian and Ganjali	Leadership	Coaching	Learning and Development	-	-	(Rezaeian & Ganjali, 2016)
6	The Content Model of Organizational Performance Management	Rezaeian and Ganjali	Organizational Culture and Atmosphere	Leadership and Management	Organizational Resources	-	-	(Rezaeian & Ganjali, 2016)
7	Performance Management Process (PMP)	Barth and de Beer	Coaching	Reward	Respect and Trust	-	-	(Barth & de Beer, 2018)
8	Model of A Performance Management System	Armstrong	Coaching	Commitment	Dialogue	-	-	(Armstrong, 2009)
9	The Baldrige Criteria for Performance Excellence (CPE)	National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST)	Leadership	Focusing on the Workforce	Core Values and Concepts	-	-	(National Institute of Standards and Technology, 2020)

Table 1 (continued)

N.	Model name	Researcher/User	Reflection of organizational behavior management in the fundamental components of the model	Reference
10	Peak Performance Model	Allen et al.	Culture	Leadership - (Allen et al., 2019)
11	Performance Management for Turbulent Environments (PM4TE)	Neely	Continuous Conversation	Improve human performance Accelerated Learning - Engaged Leadership (Barrows & Neely, 2012)
12	Organization Performance Model	Hanna	People	Rewards Culture - (Hanna, 1988)

Source: Authors

Table 2 Comparison of the role of OBM in PM models that note less than 3 elements of organizational behavior, with a focus on public sector models

N.	Model name	Researcher/User	Reflection of organizational behavior management in the fundamental components of the model			Reference
1	Results-Framework Document	India	-	-	- - -	(United Nations development programme, 2013)
2	National Performance Framework	Scottish Government	Participation	Cohesion	- - -	(Borgonovi et al., 2018)
3	Performance Prism	Neely and Adams	-	-	- - -	(Neely et al., 2002)
4	Comprehensive Framework for Performance Management System	Mizrahi	-	-	- - -	(Mizrahi, 2017)
5	Managing and Delivering Performance	Marr	Learn	Performance-Driven Culture	- - -	(Marr, 2008)
6	Performance Management Model	Moynihan	Inform employees about performance information	-	- - -	(Moynihan, 2008)
7	Balanced Scorecard (BSC)	Kaplan and Norton	Learning and Growth	-	- - -	(Alem Tabriz & Mohammad Rahimi, 2010)
8	Administrative and Recruitment Organization of Iran (ARO) Model	Iran	Human Capital Management	Organizational Culture Development	- - -	(Administrative and Recruitment Organization of Iran, 2018)
9	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development	OECD	Human Resources	-	- - -	(Pal, 2016b)
10	Improving Public Sector Performance	World Bank	Political Leadership	Incentives	- - -	(World Bank, 2018)
11	Deming Prize	Union of Japanese Scientists and Engineers (JUSE)	Creation of New Values	Development and active utilization of human resource	- - -	(Union of Japanese Scientists and Engineers, 2020)

Source: Authors

Thematic Analysis

Table 3 Comparison of leadership components in performance management models

N.	Model name	Researcher/User	Leadership components in the model
1	EFQM	European Foundation of Quality Management	Steer the organization's culture & nurture values
2	Public Sector Organizational Excellence Model	Mir Sepasi et al.	-
3	Organizational Performance Management Process Model	Rezaeian and Ganjali	Determining the leadership model and "leading the organization."
4	The Content Model of Organizational Performance Management	Rezaeian and Ganjali	Participation, cooperation, and interaction with stakeholders
5	The Baldrige Criteria for Performance Excellence (CPE)	National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST)	The role of senior executives (setting values, strengthening organizational culture, communication, creating value for all stakeholders, creating an organizational focus on action.)
6	Peak Performance Model	Allen et al.	Modeling
7	Performance Management for Turbulent Environments (PM4TE)	Neely	Responsibility for vision and strategy
8	Improving Public Sector Performance	World Bank	Innovation

Source: Authors

Thematic analysis was adopted by virtue of the method's ability to render interpre-

Table 4 Selected sources of organizational leadership for thematic analysis

N.	Title	Author(s) & Year
1	Armstrong's Handbook of Human Resource Management	(Armstrong & Taylor, 2014)
2	Organizational Behavior Management	(Boroumand, 2003)
3	Evolving Digital Leadership	(Brett, 2019)
4	Organisational Behaviour: Individuals, Groups, and Organisation	(Brooks, 2009)
5	The Human Nature of Organizations	(Brown, 2003)
6	Modern Management	(Certo & Certo, 2016)
7	Charismatic Leadership in Organizations	(Conger & Kanungo, 2011)
8	Fundamentals of Organization and Management	(Feizi, 2008)
9	Leadership: Inference of Lessons from the Context of the Organization	(Gholamzadeh, 2012)
10	Key Leadership Competencies	(Government of Canada, 2016)
11	Organizational Behavior	(Griffin & Moorhead, 2013)
12	Management of Organizational Behavior	(Hersey & Blanchard, 2004)
13	Beyond Performance	(Keller & Price, 2014)
14	Ten Effective Principles of Strategy	(Kiani, 2010)
15	Organisational Behaviour	(McShane et al., 2016)
16	Intra-Organizational Humility: A Core Competency in New Century's Organization Leadership	(Mohammadian et al., 2019)
17	Public Sector Leadership for the 21st Century	(OECD, 2001)
18	New Leadership in Strategy and Communication	(Pfeffermann, 2020)
19	Systems Thinking as a Platform for the Improved Performance of Leaders and the Effectiveness of Public Organizations	(Rahnavard et al., 2018)
20	Fundamentals of Organization and Management	(Rezaeian, 2020)
21	Organizational Behavior	(Robbins & Judge, 2017)
22	Leadership in Healthcare, Delivering Organisational Transformation and Operational Excellence	(Turner, 2019)
23	Leadership and Culture	(Van Wart et al., 2015)

tations with insight and explanations with explicit and implicit remarks (Mills et al., 2010). That process was conducted in the form of three macro phases and six steps proposed by Abedi-Jafari et al. (2011), as follows: (1) Text analysis (familiarity with data, creating raw codes and coding, search and identification of themes), (2) Text description (thematic network drawing, thematic network analysis), and (3) Text reintegration (report compilation). MAXQDA 2018 was used for thematic analysis.

In the first stage, a theoretical foundation review was used to collect data for designing the pilot model to understand the research topic and prepare the content needed to shape interview structure in the next stage. Accordingly, 240 sources were studied, and those selected were thematically analyzed in the form of the following three categories of data:

- (1) Thematic literature on PM, including concepts, points of view, and approaches, especially at the level of public sector organizations.
- (2) Performance management models at the level of public sector organizations as the core of the theoretical foundations of PM. The titles of the selected models can be seen in the “Model Name” column in Tables 1 and 2.
- (3) Thematic literature on organizational leadership was reviewed in the form of OBM academic references, including books, articles, and some country models in this field. Leadership sources are shown in the Table 4.

Note that the cited sources were selected once the options were approved by the experts until the attainment of theoretical saturation.

In the second stage, semi-structured interviews with experts were used to construct the target model. The experts were selected via snowball purposeful sampling based on their scientific, experimental, and perceptual conditions. At this stage, a total of 19 eligible experts with professional roles in device performance management were interviewed. On average, 60 net minutes were spent per interview. Data collection via interview proceeded until fundamental elements of the study were saturated, and those concepts relevant to the study did not add further data to the model’s themes when presented by the interviewees. Table 5 shows the demographics of the interviewed experts.

Table 6 summarizes the thematic analysis data of Stages 1 and 2 comparatively.

Table 5 Demographics of Interviewed Experts

Education Levels of Experts		Organizational Levels of Experts		Relevant Administrative Experience	
Education	Number of Interviewees	Organizational Role	Number of Interviewees	Years of Service	Number of Interviewees
Masters	11	Expert	9	5–15	11
PhD Student	7	Supervisor	4	16–25	6
PhD	1	Manager	6	26–35	2
Total	19	Total	19	Total	19

Table 6 Comparative view of thematic analysis data in Stages 1 and 2

Number of Codes/Themes	Stage 1	Stage 2
Total Number of Codes	155	188
Total Number of Duplicate Codes	802	1632
Number of Basic Themes	14	14
Number of Modified Basic Themes	-	5
Number of Organizing Themes	3	3
Number of Modified Organizing Themes	-	-
Number of Global Themes	11	11
Number of Modified Global Themes	-	1
Total Number of the Model's Themes	28	28

Trustworthiness and Reliability

Instead of the terms quantitative validity, trustworthiness includes four separate but related criteria: (1) credibility, (2) dependability, (3) confirmability, (4) transformability (Mohammadpour, 2010). It is worth noting, in this study, trustworthiness has been observed using the mentioned criteria.

The retest reliability (stability index) was calculated using three models and three interviews selected from all coded data. Each of them was coded twice at 30-day intervals. Accordingly, the reliability scores for stages one and two were 91.6 and 90.4%, respectively, both of which are acceptable.

Demonstration and Evaluation

These steps include applying and quantifying the model. According to public sector organizations' rules and regulations, it is impossible to apply the proposed model in a real environment and context (demonstration stage). Even if this is possible, measuring the quality and effectiveness of the proposed model requires going through a period of performance management cycle with consideration of multiple and complex dimensions and components (evaluation stage). This is beyond the scope of this article. Given that the artifact evaluation can be conducted by several experts (Peffer et al., 2012), the model was evaluated using Lawshe's Content Validity Ratio (CVR), which is one of the most extensively used methods for this purpose (Wilson et al., 2012). Accordingly, ten performance management and public sector leadership experts were called upon for remarks on the extracted model. All components were accepted as the content validity ratio for the model's components exceeded the value listed in Lawshe's Table (0.62).

Therefore, these steps were completed by observing the criteria of trustworthiness, reliability, and experts' approval.

Findings

After taking the above steps from design science and thematic analysis, a performance management model for public sector organizations was designed focusing on leadership driver, as shown in Fig. 1.

The components and features of this model are as follows.

(1) The model has three levels, including:

First level: Performance management main components at the level of public sector organizations include 10 elements: (1) strategic planning, (2) leadership, (3) human capital, (4) organizational culture, (5) implementation, (6) results, (7) performance evaluation, (8) performance feedback, (9) review and improvement, and (10) reward and punishment.

Middle level: Leadership dimensions are based on three components: (1) leadership traits, (2) leadership behaviors, and (3) context: leadership neutralizers and substitutes.

Bottom level: Leadership subcomponents consist of 14 elements, as detailed in paragraphs 2, 3, and 4 below.

(2) Subcomponents of leadership traits are listed as follows.

- Management and profession knowledge: The leader's knowledge of the organization and management enables her/him to decide with deeper insight. Importantly, leaders of an organization must possess the breadth of vision and sufficient skills to manage the area of responsibility.
- Personality: Most remarkable subcomponents of personality include the following traits: work conscience, precision and self-discipline, reliability, honesty, self-confidence and determination, emotional stability and maturity, flexibility, humility, and humanism.
- Motivation: It is defined as the attachment to the organization and service in the public sector. The leader's attentiveness and inner mobility to fulfill organizational aims along with the energy needed to perform duties.
- Communication ability: Written and verbal communication skills, using body language, and empathy for themselves and others.
- Intelligence: This subcomponent includes the leader's cognitive and rational ability to process information and solve problems in the real world. Additionally, this trait includes appropriate awareness and emotional intelligence as a basis for the action/reaction of leaders towards the organization's personnel.

(3) Subcomponents of leadership behaviors are listed as follows.

- Employee mobilization and participation: Leaders must motivate and harness employees' potential, involve them in decision-making and management processes, and build efficient and effective teams to undertake organizational duties.
- Strengthening ethics and legality: In addition to the leader's status as a role model of administrative ethics, honor, job commitment, and legality in the workplace, leaders must build an environment established on ethics, honesty, professionalism, and commitment to the law.
- Collaboration and conflict management: Organizational leaders must refrain from workplace conflicts but respond appropriately and quickly to those that may

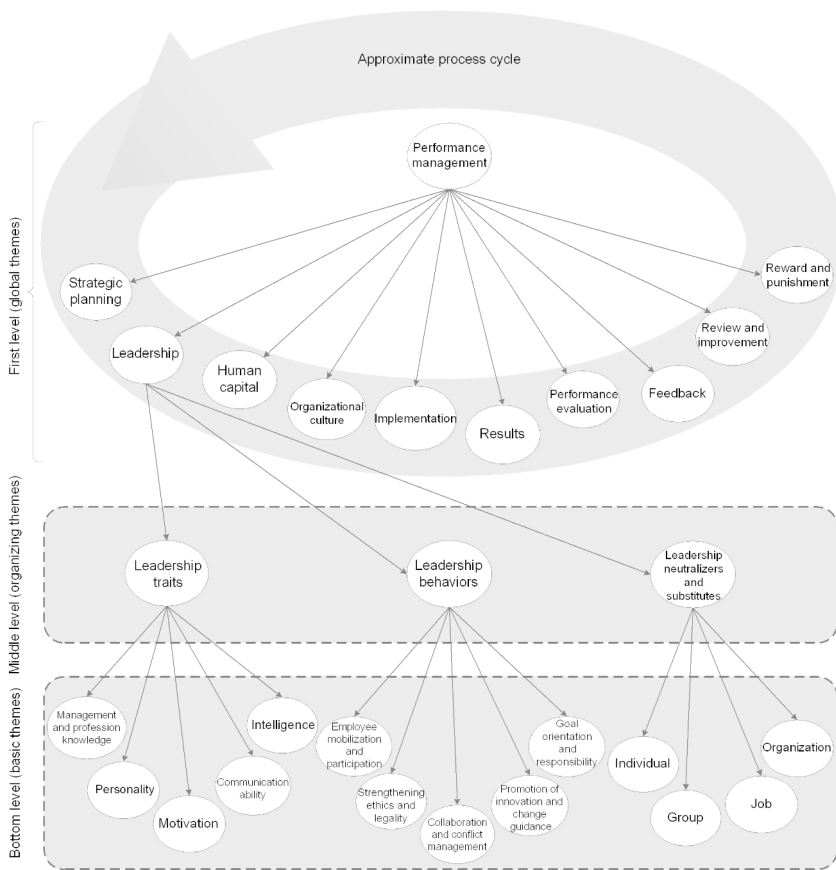


Fig. 1 Performance management model for public sector organizations with a focus on leadership driver

arise. Leaders must build an atmosphere conducive to fair and equitable cooperation and competition and display the flexibility to build consensus and improve outcomes.

- **Promotion of innovation and change guidance:** Leaders must build an environment that encourages thinking, creativity, experimentation, smart risk-taking, and initiative. Similarly, leaders must manage individual innovations and translate them into positive organizational progress and change.
- **Goal orientation and responsibility:** Leaders must engage all capacities, capabilities, and resources of the organization to fulfill aims. In this way, leaders must display reliability, responsibility, and liability in case of failure in reaching organizational goals.

- (4) Subcomponents of leadership substitutes are as follows. It is worth mentioning that these components will act as neutralizers of leadership in the event an unfavorable situation prevails within:
- Individual: Individual's professional status in terms of work, motivation to fulfill job duties, experience and education, the importance of rewards for the individual.
 - Job: Level of structure/automation in the job, job control, intrinsic job satisfaction, job feedback.
 - Group: Group norms and values, details, and extent of group integrity.
 - Organization: Clarity and transparency in the organization's aims, the flexibility of the organization's practices and regulations, and strength of the organizational reward system.
- (5) The components of the first and bottom levels were extracted based on the thematic analysis of theoretical foundations and semi-structured interviews. In the middle level, they are based on the classification of several authoritative OBM references, including (Brooks, 2009; Griffin & Moorhead, 2013; Noori & Mohamadhossein, 2021; Nelson, 2018; Robbins & Judge, 2017, 2018).

Discussion

There is currently a knowledge gap between PM and organizational behavior management, especially regarding leadership. This study seeks to fill this gap. There is a common denominator between several types of classifications made by experts in organizational behavior in the context of leadership, that is, the consideration of three dimensions: leadership traits, leadership behaviors, and leadership neutralizers and substitutes. However, these dimensions are somewhat ignored in PM models: (1) Many PM models do not propound the leadership component (as an example of Comprehensive Framework for Performance Management System). (2) Some models do not specify any dimensions or subcomponents for leadership (e.g., Public Sector Organizational Excellence Model). (3) Some other models do not consider leadership dimensions in terms of organizational behavior (for example, Improving Public Sector Performance). (4) In some PM models, leadership subcomponents are focused solely on a specific family dimension (e.g., The Baldrige Criteria for Performance Excellence).

The designed model focuses on both leadership driver and covers the aspects of management processes and OBM. Accordingly, the model has a good balance: (1) behaviorally, in addition to the middle and bottom levels, in which leadership driver and their elements are specifically addressed. At the first level of the model, human capital, organizational culture, organizational improvement, and reward and punishment are among the core OBM topics related to organizational leadership. (2) Per the principles of inclusiveness and exclusivity, process components are defined so that they prevent the intricacy and complexity of the model, and at the same time, well cover the process aspect. For example, the concepts of output, outcome, and

impact are considered under the inclusive and exclusive theme of “results.” The same procedure has been applied to concepts such as processes, organizational structure, technology, resource allocation by defining the theme “implementation” and placing these concepts below it.

Another feature of the designed model is its multidimensionality, i.e., the model simultaneously covers both the content (components) of the model (including performance drivers and results) and the process (i.e., the four stages of performance management). In other words, the model is configured so that the sequence of operations is somewhat clear in terms of its components.

With its inclusive and exclusive components, this model applies to all organizations (especially the public sector organizations). The flexibility of the model stems from the ability to assume different characteristics, dimensions, and nature for the “performance” of each organization, especially in the planning component, by considering the specific conditions of each organization and customizing the model accordingly. Assessment of internal and external factors is considered as one of the components of strategic planning, so the above model is dynamic and will respond to conditions and environmental opportunities and threats in each period.

Conclusions, Limitations, and Future Research

Part of the gap in organizational PM models is related to ignoring the specialized aspect of the leadership component. In other words, the leadership component is not considered independently in these models, or its concept and nature are not consistent with the scientific foundations of organizational behavior management. Just by being a manager, leaders do not act in the same and accurate way, have their own individual traits and behaviors, and lead in a different context. Although minor, these differences may lead to deep performance gaps and different organizational results if they persist. If this component is neglected in PM models, leadership will remain a black box of organizational performance.

Therefore, using design science methodology in this study, researchers have sought to fill this gap and design an appropriate PM model focusing on public sector organizations. Based on this, at the first and bottom levels of the model, elements were extracted after thematic analysis of theoretical foundations (of performance management including 23 PM models and leadership including 23 sources) and semi-structured interviews with experts. Furthermore, leadership dimensions were designed at the middle level of the model using five reliable organizational behavior sources. In summary, the dimensions and components of leadership in the designed model include the following elements:

- (1) *Leadership traits*: Management and profession knowledge, personality, motivation, communication ability, and intelligence.
- (2) *Leadership behaviors*: Employee mobilization and participation, strengthening ethics and legality, collaboration and conflict management, promotion of innovation and change guidance, goal orientation and responsibility.

- (3) *Context in the form of leadership neutralizers and substitutes*: Individual, group, job, and organization.

Findings of this study confirm and complement the results of some earlier studies in terms of Leadership traits and Leadership behaviors. These findings are consistent with results of “Competencies of Effective Leaders” (McShane et al., 2016), “Executive Core Qualifications (ECQs) of Managers in the United States” (Van Wart et al., 2015), and “The Key Leadership Competency Profile” (Government of Canada, 2016) with slight modifications. In terms of leadership neutralizers and substitutes, results confirm the classification of Griffin and Moorhead (2013) and its strength and comprehensiveness.

Remarkably, the designed model has a fair balance between the management processes and behavioral aspects, simultaneously and intertwined. In view of the above, the application of this model and its elements and approach in combination with and as a complement to other existing models renders performance management more effective in public organizations.

The limitations of the present research and relevant suggestions are as follows: (1) The design science was selected to use an appropriate methodology to achieve research objectives. However, the innovative methodology of design science in management has rendered limited access to scientific resources and the experiences of fellow researchers in the field of methodology. Accordingly, to fill the current gap, further research is required using this methodology. (2) The model was not tested in practice due to legal and administrative constraints. Therefore, other researchers can examine and experimentally test the model. (3) As a human aspect of management, leadership has its own requirements in each country. Therefore, it is suggested to consider the bottom level of the model and conduct additional research to personalize that level for each country. (4) In addition, due to the extensive scope of performance management, in-depth and specialized coverage of all components of this topic within a scientific paper is infeasible. Thus, it is worth doing detailed research on other essential components in this field.

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Ethical Approval We strongly advise author/s NOT to: •Willing fully and knowingly submit false data; •Submit data from a source without the authors’ own permission; •Submit previously published material (with the exception of abstracts) without correct and proper quotation; •Omit reference to the works of other previous researchers; •Falsely certify that the submitted work is original; •Use material previously published elsewhere without written prior approval of the copyright holder.

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