

A review on human resource efficiency in public administration of China

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ABSTRACT

This paper conceptually explains public administration and its development in China and explains how its human resource efficiency and effectiveness can be improved. Using secondary data, this paper will also discuss the growth level of public administration from the last 70 decades until now and the issues that plague its human resources. Through a comprehensive literature study, it was found that the socio-economic environment is a very important driving factor that drives progress in public administration on a large scale in China. This paper is an initial overview of the comprehensive study that will be conducted by the researcher and the outcome of this research will give a true picture of the effectiveness and efficiency of its human resource efficiency and effectiveness in the public administration in post-covid China after the large-scale opening of country borders, which will certainly provide a broader perspective and understanding to the public and the stakeholders.

Keywords : *Human resources efficiency, public administration, China, professional group, strategic policies*

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The conceptual origins of public administration in China may be traced back at least 1,000 years, despite that public administration as an academic field is a relatively new phenomenon in the country (Holzer & Zhang, 2002). Following the unification of China by Qin Shi Huang in 221 BC, subsequent dynasties developed the first unified Chinese governmental structure, which allowed the emperor of China to exercise such extensive authority over a vast region. The idea of this civil service system was to attract the "best and brightest" into the government based on their merits. This is also proven by their test results rather than their family connection, rather than their blood lineage. During the last 1,300 years, China's imperial examination system (old Chinese civil service system) has been in operation (Roberts, 1993).

In the late nineteenth century, Kang Youwei brought the idea and theories of public administration to China from Japan, where German experts were teaching public administration at the time (Harris, 2002). According to historical records, the first time public administration was taught political science in Guangdong province was in 1905. Since then, public administration has grown into a distinct academic discipline in China (Wang, 2006). Although Mao Zedong's administration believed public administration and other social science disciplines were irrelevant to the socialist model in the 1950s and 1960s, the administration

later changed its mind because it believed that the resolution of class struggles was the Communist Party's primary task in the 1960s and 1970s. As a result, public administration as an area of study in China and other disciplines almost vanished over the three decades between 1952 and 1982.

After decades of neglect, public administration as a formal academic field was re-established in China in the 1980s (Yu, Rubin, & Wu, 2012). A conference of the Chinese government was convened in 1985 to address the growth of public administration in the country. The establishment of the Chinese Public Administration Society was authorized by the State Council shortly after the conference ended. From the latter part of the 1980s until the present, China's public administration has seen remarkable growth (Zhang, 1993). It was estimated that over a thousand public administration books were published in the early 1990s, covering a wide range of topics. Academic publications and research groups started to grow due to this development. It is estimated that between 1984 and 1992, more than two million state cadres obtained training in public administration via various routes (Zhang, 1993). In 1994, the Chinese National School of Administration (CNSA) was created to train future administrators. The Chinese National Security Academy (CNSA) name was changed to the "Chinese Academy of Governance" in 2010. Following that, many state-owned public administration schools at the provincial and municipal levels were formed.

China's Ministry of Education authorized 228 universities to offer MPA programs by the Chinese government in 2015 (National MPA Education Steering Committee, 2015). In 2002, public and nonprofit employees were admitted to the first group of 24 MPA programs in the People's Republic of China (PRC). The Chinese government authorized the first group of 24 MPA programs in 2002. According to the National Association of Schools of Public Administration (NASPAA), there were 197 MPA-related programs accredited in the United States (US). An equal number of programs offered the MPA without NASPAA accreditation (but in colleges and universities accredited by regional higher education associations, which are accredited by virtually all higher education entities in the US).

2.0 GENERAL OVERVIEW PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION IN CHINA

Efficiency at all levels is one of the imperatives of public administration. Public organizations are tasked with providing vital public goods and services to people but without discrimination based on cost. Thus, the public administration requires that performance be measured not just in terms of cost-benefit analysis. But also in terms of giving value to residents. In an age where few resources have grown even scarcer, it is critical to revisit historical perspectives on public administration efficiency and forecast its future.

Only by regular evaluation and criticism may one progress in any field of study or expertise (Raadschelders and Lee, 2011). In the area of PA, several academics have engaged in these kinds of behaviors (Althaus, 1997; Bingham and Bowen, 1994; Dunsire, 1999; Forrester, 1996; Gulrajani and Moloney, 2012; Lan and Anders, 2000; Lee et al., 2012; Raadschelders, 2011a; Raadschelders, 2011b; Stallings and Ferris, 1988). In China, PA is the same. Scholars' self-reflection has never ended. After the turn of the new century, when Chinese PA had been developing for some time and had amassed a substantial body of theory and accomplishments, this movement began to gain traction. Resumption and development were not a mystery to the senior academics who were there for it all. In certain cases, they direct research or teaching institutes, either as a board member of a professional group or as a professor at a college or university. They examine the progress of Chinese PA in light of their professional expertise. Zhang (1993) examines the first stages of Chinese PA development and suggests that

indigenous PA theories are needed. According to Zhang and Holzer (2001), researchers' incapacity to employ complex techniques is to blame for the lack of development of Chinese PA theories, which calls for a greater focus on methodological training.

Scholars who use content analysis in their reviews and critiques of academic publications have a distinct approach. According to Lu and Chow (2008), theory-building and knowledge progress in Chinese PA are still concerns based on published publications' content analysis. Due to a lack of innovation, the area has been described as "mediocre in scholarship" (Lu and Chow, 2008). According to Cheng and Lu (2009), the lack of advanced research and indigenous ideas in the Chinese PA community would contribute to the dysfunction of Chinese PA practices. Jing (2008) offers a similarly gloomy assessment of the quality of Chinese PA dissertations written between 2002 and 2006, claiming that the outcomes are poor. This article, which contributes to the growing body of knowledge on Chinese PA, examines the discipline's history and progress. Just two things distinguish this study from the others. In the first place, we are looking for the driving reasons behind Chinese PA by tracing its historical trajectory and situating it within the broader context of China's change. We use an ecological method and analyze the data from a dynamic standpoint. It is also essential to look at the evolution of Chinese PA as a discipline and China's experience of social change to establish the link between the two. China's social and economic background and current knowledge are the essential driving factor in the development of Chinese PA. Accordingly, Chinese PA is presently facing a problem that necessitates a more significant localization and tighter integration with the worldwide academic community.

One of the most important questions to ask while examining the growth route of Chinese PA is what the key factors are. We are attempting to comprehend how Chinese public administration has been created and evolved through time and what elements will impact its future development. According to the findings from the literature study, which examines the decades of development since its resumption, there are two major forces shaping Chinese public administration (PA) and pushing its development. China's own practice of public administration is influenced by the socio-economic context of the country's transition and existing knowledge. It is not new to claim that the socio-economic background of a specific country has an impact on the practice and discipline of public administration. Comparative public administration scholars have defended this ecological approach and undertaken various studies to support their claims (Heady, 1979; Riggs, 1980, 1991, 1994).

There are two benefits to using an ecological approach instead of other techniques such as historical or structural approaches: The first is that the environmental system establishes a strong relationship between the evolution of PA and the changing social environment in which it occurs. PA was founded on the premise that it is an applied social science that devotes the most, if not the whole, of its attention to practice (Duncan, 1975). It addresses social concerns, resolves public difficulties, and reacts to social or public requirements. All of these events take place in a particular social environment. Therefore, the bureaucracy, which is precisely what PA is concerned with, is subsystems inside such an environment. The changing social environment has a significant impact on developing various social systems and activities within them (Peng, 2008). PA, as a discipline, is inextricably linked to PA, practice in many ways (Ostrom, 1989).

Every stage of PA's growth in China is guided by the shifting social environment, which is true both practically and intellectually. As in any other nation, public administration practice in China is characterised by an unending search for a viable balance between politics and

administration (Morgan, 1981), and it is unquestionably interwoven into China's wider political and administrative backdrop (Burns, 2001; Lan, 2000; Ma and Zhang, 2009; Ngok and Zhu, 2007). In PA research, such a practice issue is immediately reflected in the results. Zhu asserts that "any advance in the discipline (of Chinese PA) indicates a rise in the national level of development." Following the historical evolution of China's political institutions, Denigan (2001) believes that the definition of PA, which is the central idea of PA research, is evolving in tandem with the evolution of political institutions in the country. As a result, we contend that the socio-economic environment is the most important driving factor behind PA practice, while the latter forms the discipline of PA in Chinese society. To keep our argument as concise as possible, we will look at the shift in practical PA due to administrative changes.

3.0 THE CURRENT EMERGING ISSUES

China has been transitioning from a traditional agricultural civilization to an industrial society since the 1970s. In addition to affecting the economic circumstances of the Chinese people, it has the potential to redefine the boundaries of political and administrative administration in the country (Burell, 2001). Organizational changes have been implemented on a six-year cycle starting in 1982. These changes are significant milestones in China's reform history, and they have received a great deal of scholarly attention (Burns, 2001; Huque and Yep, 2003; Lan, 1999, 2000; Yang, 2004). They identify the issues that arise throughout the transition process, devise solutions to cope with them, and establish a baseline developmental pace for the next stage. Essentially, it is a tool that the state may use to adjust to the changing environment, strengthen its governance ability, and modify administrative practice in general. According to scholars, administrative reform may be divided into two categories: "reactive approach," in which the pressure of changing circumstances is responded to and reacted to, and "institutional approach," which clarifies and reorients the administrative system (Ngok and Zhu, 2007). As a result, administrative reform is a pivotal moment that displays both the characteristics of the socio-economic setting and the development and evolution of practical public administration. From a comparative viewpoint, discussions about Chinese public administration have sprung up in recent years (Gao, 2013; Mings & Jing, 2016; Walker, Brewer, & Choi, 2014; Wu, He, & Sun, 2013), and they are becoming more common.

According to Holzer and Zhang (2002), in the inaugural edition of the Chinese Public Administration Review, they underlined "...the importance for Chinese researchers to learn from foreign scholars in the area of public administration," among other things. Similar to this, researchers and practitioners in the United States may learn about the issues of effective public administration and the reform of public organizations by studying comparative studies between the United States and China, which are now being conducted. Although earlier studies have examined current trends in Chinese public administration research, no study has undertaken a comprehensive content analysis of terms in the studies' abstracts to offer a different and more objective impression of the substantive substance of the studies. Since Wilson (1887), the value of the comparative method has been recognized as a prerequisite of the scientific investigative process in the field of public administration research literature (Jreisat, 2005). Beginning with the belief that conceptualizing Chinese public administration studies through a content analysis of abstracts could assist practitioners in developing strategic policies to prepare effectively for the challenges of globalization and information-oriented society, this study proved that belief. That being the case, the purpose of this research is to demonstrate how academics and practitioners may avoid cultural biases while developing theories and putting policies in place by comprehending the limits and new opportunities given in the literature on Chinese public administration.

Mingus and Jing (2016) conduct a literature study of Chinese language literature to explore the applicability of Behn (1995)'s issues on micromanagement, motivation, and measurement in the Chinese setting, which they conclude is relevant. Their ideas for alternative phrasing for Behn's queries are intended to make them more appropriate in the Chinese cultural and institutional context; nonetheless, they do not advocate any changes to the fundamental Chinese political framework. For example, Walker et al. (2014) examine the English language literature on public administration between 1999 and 2009 in the context of East and Southeast Asia, based on information gleaned from the Web of Science database.

According to Gao (2013), an evaluation of the public administration research literature produced in Hong Kong and Macau between 1999 and 2009 has been completed. Gao investigates how public administration evolved in the two city-states after the transfer of sovereignty. This also explains on how those changes influenced the study of public administration in the two jurisdictions throughout this era. The data suggest that there are significant disparities between the two cities. In general, studies of Hong Kong include testing and developing hypotheses via rigorous procedures and the adoption of a comparative perspective, and they get far more financing than research performed in Macau. Compared to Hong Kong, the emphasis of studies in Macau is more practical since the public administration community in Macau attempted to develop tighter relationships between academics and practitioners.

It is appropriate when operating inside a system with quantified input and output measurements. However, efficiency takes on a new meaning when seen in the context of ordinarily quantifiable variables in a system primarily reliant on ideas, inspirations, and human perspectives. This inclusion of a "value" dimension provides a novel viewpoint on public administration efficiency, which is lacking (Manzoor, 2014). Based on the relevant literature, Mérida-Lopez et al (2020) said that self-efficacy, which is a sort of personal resource, may have the ability to function as a moderator. As a result, this research uses self-efficacy as a moderator since the internal variables of people will have both positive and negative effects. Hence, this study anticipates providing a new dimension of evidence to the argument by empowerment, organizational flexibility and service innovation as a common antecedent of employee performance. At the same time, the study also considers the moderating role of self-efficacy. This research solely looks at self-efficacy as a moderating factor. A recent study indicated that three personal resources (self-efficacy, organization-based self-esteem, and optimism) is evident. According to Guglielmi et al. (2012), self-efficacy is the most valuable unique resource since it influences individuals' tasks. Those with solid self-efficacy can handle a challenging job by accumulating resources (Hobfoll 2001). Salanova et al. (2005) claim that research on the link between self-efficacy and job engagement is lacking (Wibawa & Takahashi, 2021). The inclusion of self-efficacy in the study also associated with the antecedence of employee performance efficiency in the public administration context.

4.0 CONCLUSION

This conceptual paper contributes to the efficiency perspective for the public administration in the context of China. From the standpoint of value and innovation to the process, this study aims to enlighten the understanding by providing comprehensive literature empirically. The study examines the factors that lead to public administration efficiency, including service innovation, process digitalization, and organizational flexibility. The paper also added value to the literature of moderating effect of self-efficacy towards the public administration efficiency,

thus providing more understanding. The study also aims to enrich the literature for a better knowledge understanding by examining the moderator impact of self-efficacy.

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