

# THE IMPACT OF STRATEGIC DECISION MAKING APPROACH TO THE PUBLIC SERVICE PERFORMANCE WITH THE ROLE OF ORGANIZATIONAL AGILITY: A RESEARCH FRAMEWORK

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## **Abstract**

*The development of research on public organizations has shown that public organizations are faced with a new paradigm movement in their management system, starting from the public administration (PA), the New Public Management (NPM) and the last paradigm known as the New Public Governance (NPG) approach. The transformation paradigm above has driven the change in the management practice in public organizations. Strategic management practices in the private sector today are also widely implemented in the public organization including strategic decision making approach at managerial level. Besides the strategic decision making approach, the agility of public organizations also becomes an important capacity to respond the environment changes and strengthen to the strategic decision making approach. This paper aims to provide a research framework in recognizing the pattern of strategic decision making approaches in public organizations and how their impact to service performance (measured in terms of efficiency, effectiveness and equity) with the role of organizational agility.*

*Keywords: the strategic decision making approach, Organizational Agility Public Service Performance.*

## **1. Introduction**

Public sector organizations (PSOs) are confronted with demands to become more efficient and effective, especially given increasing financial cutbacks, the rising demand for services and the push towards performance-related management (Boyne et al., 2005; Mack et al., 2008; Radnor, 2010). This condition encourages the public sector management system to adjust its approach to a more strategic approach. Effective public agency managers can use a strategic approach to focus attention and effort on actual priorities, provide a consistent framework for decision making and action, and provide new goals or new meanings for the organization (Piening, 2013). In addition, some researchers suggest that public managers should emulate managerial practices and innovation in the private sector to improve organizational performance (Boyne, 2002; Damanpour & Schneider, 2009; Palmer & Dunford, 2001).

On development, researchers have shown a shift in management paradigm in public sector organizations from the paradigm and practice of Public Administration (PA) in the 1970s to NPM (New Public Management) and finally shifted to NPG (New Public Governance) (O'Flynn, 2007; Osborne, 2006; Pollitt, 2007). PA is broadly characterized by key elements of bureaucracy and regulation as central to running public services, with professionals having legal authority over service delivery. The NPM states that private sector management practices are superior to bureaucratic-driven practices, and for that public managers must have a license to decide how services will be delivered (Clark, Denham-Vaughan, & Chidiac, 2014). NPM is often known as the transition process from the Public Administration (PA) paradigm to the NPG. The NPG sees many interdependent actors contributing to the delivery of public services and policy making. As a consequence of this form of plurality, the focus is on the many relationships between organizations, process governance, and emphasizes the effectiveness of services and the achievement of outcomes / performance in the form of "Public Value" (Osborne, 2006). Experts argue that the new NPG approach

argue that "Public Value" emerging from inclusive dialogue and broad deliberations. The government has a special role to play as a guarantor of public values, but citizens, profit and non-profit organizations are also important as active contributors in public problems solving (O'Flynn, 2007). The transformation of this public management approach drives the changes in the practice of public sector organizations. To respond to these changes in an appropriate way, like the private sector, public organizations are also required to have organizational agility that is defined as the capability of the organization in responding to change (Nafei, 2016). As in the private sector, the concept of organizational agility is also relevant in improving performance in public organizations.

Implementing strategies approach through the strategic decision making is also interesting to be studied at the present of the role of organizational agility. Previous research has shown that there are five groups of approaches in implementing strategies using strategic decision making theory. The first approach is called the rational approach. A rational implementation style prioritizes getting people to follow precise procedures for the introduction of new policies and strategies, and the use of systems that can ensure that such organizational changes follow a pre-planned sequence of steps (Andrews, Beynon, & Genc, 2017). The second approach is an incremental implementation style, its emphasizes the fluid nature of change management, and the need to encourage and support the modification of strategies on the ground by the people responsible for making them work (Andrews et al., 2017). The third approach is called a political approach that prioritizes power lobbies in decision making (Lamb, Becker, & Nunes, 2017). The fourth approach is a cognitive approach where the fourth approach is taken based on experience, trust and intuitive decision makers (Das & Teng, 1999). The final approach is the approach called "Garbage Can" which is called the worst approach because it is without a clear orientation (Eisenhardt & Zbaracki, 1992). Each of these approaches has a different ownership, which can improve organizational performance. By systematizing the process how new strategies are introduced, a rational implementation style is considered appropriate to ensure that top management is able to closely monitor and control organizational change (Andrews et al., 2017). However, recognizing the importance of adaptation and learning, the adoption of an incremental implementation style is considered to response an organizational problems, ensuring the new strategies are working (Lamb et al., 2017). But the theory of strategic decision making has suggested that the key to maximizing the chances of success is to use a combination of three approaches simultaneously, rational, political and incremental. Meanwhile the "garbage can" and cognitive approaches are still considered biased relation to organizational performance. This paper aims to provide the research framework to review how the relationship of the strategic decision making style approach to public service performance and predict the role of organizational agility on its relationship.

## **2. THEORY AND HYPOTHESIS A. The Relationship Of The Strategic Decision Making Approach to the Public Service Performance**

Based on Herbert Simon's (1955) thought, and various thoughts from subsequent authors, evolution in the study of strategic decision making in the last fifty years has been expressed with a mature paradigm, but with an incomplete approach (Eisenhardt & Zbaracki, 1992). Several researchers have attempted to collaborate in the composition of integrated strategic decision models. By observing the evolution of studies on strategic decision making, it is possible to identify that some researchers present convergent proposals despite using different nomenclatures. So that strategic decision making can be grouped in five different types of approaches, namely: rational, political, logical incrementalism, "garbage can", and cognitive.

- **Rational Approach.**

This approach is characterized by the existence of a reliable and specific detailed quantitative analysis of alternatives to the decision taken, by relatively clear boundaries of the problem being analyzed. Solution identification is done by optimizing the development process and selecting alternatives. for decisions, taking into account efforts to minimize risk, environmental instability, uncertainty of other variables

deemed to influence, and "top to down" decision making mechanisms, based on hierarchical relationships that apply and are predetermined (Dean & Sharfman, 1993; Eisenhardt & Zbaracki 1992, Mintzberg 1978)

According to strategic planning theory, organizations that adopt a dominant rational decision-making style tend to benefit from greater control of the decisions taken (Andrews et al., 2017). From this perspective, strategic management is a deliberate policy by conscious thinking, with the development and implementation of strategies that occur in a chronological order. Consistent with the classic idea of rationality, the diagnosis is followed by an appropriate prescription and is terminated by the action according to the prescribed compilation. Analytic and evaluative techniques continue to be used critically to maintain commitment to strategic objectives while they are being implemented, and potential renewal plans in response to environmental changes (in theory) are built into the whole system (Dean & Sharfman, 1993). Based on the notions above, it can be hypothesised that:

*H1 : Rational approach on strategic decision making has a positive impact to public service performance and have the strongest impact than other approaches*

### • **Political Approach**

This approach is characterized by negotiation, mutualism in interests, the creation of coalitions for conflict resolution, using the privilege of personal goals when analyzing alternatives to be chosen, using them through power struggles, influence, and tactics which ultimately determine the prevalence of decisions (Andrews et al. , 2017; Eisenhardt & Zbaracki, 1992).

This is based on the finding that organizations are coalitions of people who compete for different interests. Under political bias, it is not organizations that have goals, but people who are part of organizations (Dean & Sharfman, 1993). The capacity to influence the outcome of organizational decisions can be considered as a source of strength. In this context, the decision making process can be understood by resolving conflicting demands from individual and group interests (Pettigrew, 1977). Specifically for public sector organizations known as highly complex organizations because of the many stakeholders involved, the approach will be able to improve organizational performance because they are able to harmonize complex interests in public organizations. However, this approach still cannot guarantee control over the implementation of the decision, because it has not relied on in-depth analysis such as a rational approach, based on this the hypothesis is set as follow:

*H2 : The political approach in strategic decision making has a positive impact on the performance of public organization services but is weaker than the rational approach*

### • **The Incremental Approach**

The Incremental approach to strategic decision making is characterized by an instinctive process for choosing alternatives, built on learning and experimentation; analysis is not entirely clear; produce several alternatives through clarification of shared goals; stable environment for knowledge exchange; decisions to be made within the organization's subsystem are made in stages; the application of solutions through a process of bargaining, compromise and building understanding, with all actors able to play a role in the intended process (Brian, 1978, 1986; Das & Teng, 1999).

Proponents of the incremental approach believe that senior managers only have more macro ideas about the future position of the organization and try to move towards this position gradually through gradual improvement rather than making radical changes (Brian, 1978, 1986). From this perspective, an incremental approach is considered effective because it recognizes that the organizational environment is too complex to be analyzed, predicted and systematically controlled. Specifically, the demands of various stakeholders need to be negotiated and operational problems resolved in the field depending on the needs of each separate situation (Vinokur-Kaplan, 2002). Therefore strategic decision making is unavoidable from the learning

process from time to time, which reduces the possibility of failure of implementation (Hambrick & Cannella, 2011) and increases responsiveness to environmental changes (Mintzberg, 1978). For all these reasons, incremental approaches tend to be associated with good organizational performance. However, the condition of public sector organizations which tend to be hierarchical and bureaucratic, still makes it difficult to accommodate this incremental approach quickly so that it is thought to have a large influence on organizational performance. Based on this, the hypotheses that are built are:

*H3: Incremental approach in strategic decision making has a positive impact on the performance of public organization services but is weaker than the rational approach and political approach*

- **Cognitive Approach**

The cognitive approach is characterized by an alternative selection process based on previous experience, beliefs, values, perceptions and decisionmaking knowledge. The dominant decision is taken by the influence of intuition, built on previous experience with alternative analysis and previous decision making processes. Strategic decisions really rely on a very full trust in the personal views of decision makers (Das & Teng, 1999; Schwenk, 1988, 1995)

The weakness of the cognitive approach is that it depends on highly varied and complex individuals. Schwenk (1988) points out several major heuristics and biases that can influence strategic decisions: (a) availability, where individuals tend to judge based on events they remember rather than those that are not easy to remember; (B) Selective perception, i.e. when individual expectations can produce bias on observing variables relevant to the strategy; (c) Illusion Correlation, which occurs when individuals tend to consider the most likely correlation between two specific events from a larger set of events involving this relationship; (D) Conservatism, in which individuals tend to not revise perceptions when receiving new information e) Wishful Thinking, namely the tendency of individuals to overestimate the probability of the desired results; and (f) Illusion of Control, where individuals tend to overestimate their personal level of control over the outcome. Based on this, it can be hypothesised that :

*H4: Cognitive approaches have a negative impact on the performance of public organization services*

- **GARBAGE CAN Approach**

This approach is characterized by a process of choosing alternatives that are confusing, unstructured and ambiguous, with a very superficial analysis of the problem, a good level of participation from each member of the organization, without a clear idea of direction and objectives, due to the complex and unstable nature of the organizational environment, so decisions are made without clear problem analysis criteria, without alternatives, lack of appreciation from parties involved with the decision making process where decisions are made only when problems are accumulated (Eisenhardt & Zbaracki, 1992)

Inkpen and Choudhury's (1995) concept of "absence of strategy" shows that it is possible for organizations not to have a clear strategic approach. In such organizations, there are no patterned or preferred routines for implementing strategies where a certain style trends emerging. No prominent approach was seen, nor was there a coherent attempt to combine this approach. The absence of a clear approach to strategy implementation can therefore be linked to poorer performance because those involved are not encouraged to participate in decision making in the field (Andrews et al., 2017). Research by Hickson et al. (2003) show that implementation decisions that are not based on "experience" or "readiness based" can be associated with poorer performance. Based on this, the hypotheses built on this approach are:

*H5: The "Garbage Can" approach in strategic decision making has a negative impact on the public Service Performance*

## • B. The Role of Organizational Agility on The Relationship Of The Strategic Decision Making Approach to the Public Service

The concept of agility theory requires management theory as its foundation. In the early 1990s, new solutions for managing dynamic and changing environments emerged progressively. In the private industry, the concept of agility of "manufacturing" emerges which is defined as the ability to survive and thrive in a competitive environment of sustainable and unpredictable changes through rapid and effective reactions to market changes, driven by products and services according to customer desires (Gunasekaran, 1999). The creator of the concept of "agility" at the Iacocca Institute, Lehigh University (USA) defines it as a manufacturing system with capabilities (hard and soft technology, human resources, educated management, information) to meet rapidly changing market needs (speed, flexibility, customers, competitors, suppliers, infrastructure, responsiveness). Agility is a successful concept of competitive conditions that refers to speed, flexibility, innovation, and quality through the integration of reconfigurable resources and best practices from a knowledge-rich environment to provide customer-driven products and services in a fast-changing environment. Agility emphasizes speed and flexibility as key attributes of agile organizations. Equally important attributes of agility are effective responses to change and uncertainty (Cegarra-Navarro, Soto-Acosta, & Wensley, 2016; Chen, Wang, & Chen, 2014; Teece, Peteraf, & Leih, 2016).

Some authors state that responding to changes in the right way through the exploration process and taking advantage of the changes that occur is a major factor of agility (Sharifi & Zhang, 1999; Teece et al., 2016). Agility refers to proactive responses to change (Chen et al., 2014). Agility also refers to the use of change as an opportunity (Sharifi & Zhang, 1999), the ability to survive and develop in a variable and unpredictable environment (Cegarra-Navarro et al., 2016). Organizational flexibility represents the capacity of organizations to adapt their internal structures and processes to environmental changes. Adaptability underlies the suitability of organizational operations with their environment while flexibility emphasizes the readiness of organizational resources and the ease of resource mobilization. The concept of "agility" includes flexibility and adaptability. Agility is the ability of organizations to react quickly and effectively to environments that can change radically (Gong & Janssen, 2010). The concept of agility means fast, agile, and active movements. Also, agility refers to the ability to move quickly and easily and think fast with wise methods. This agility has been accepted as a successful strategy by organizations that prepare them for good performance (Teece et al., 2016).

In this research, organizational agility becomes the mediator between the strategic decision making approach and the performance of public organization services. The role of organizational agility as a mediator in the relationship of organizational performance with other antecedents has also been used in previous research. In this research paper the influence of the agility of the organization as a mediator is also considered to be able to strengthen the impact on service performance. The mediator function is partial because the strategic decision making approach can also have a direct impact on organizational performance even without mediating through organizational agility. This is based on the assumption that strategic decision making also requires adaptability and flexibility to the changing organizational environment. Public sector organizations are organizations that are also faced with changes associated with stakeholder guidance that causes a shift in the paradigm of public sector management. Based on this we conclude with a hypothesis:

*H6 : Organizational agility strengthens the relationship between strategic decision making and public service performance as mediator variable with effect partial mediation*

## 3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research will be conducted as a cross-sectional study, with quantitative methods. Data for this research will be taken from an email survey to target respondents in the form of a group of leaders (Top Level Managers, Senior Managers and Middle Managers) at both central and regional government agencies,

BUMN, BUMD and other government institutions. Furthermore, respondent data for one work unit will be named as one unit of analysis. The study takes the unit of analysis, namely the work unit / organization. This study also specifically focuses on institutions at the provincial level that generally have a broad scope of strategic decision making.

- **Operationalization of Variables**

The Rational and Political Approach uses the questionnaire developed by Dean, J.W. Jr. & Sharfman, M.P (1993). Political approach with 4 (four) question items. While the Rational Approach with 5 (five) question items. Cognitive approach is measured by indicators of 18 (eighteen) question items using measurement tools developed by Cools & Van den Broeck (2007). Incremental approach is measured by 4 (four) question items according to the research used in Poister, TH & Pasha, OQ (2013). While the "Garbage Can" Approach, concluded from the measurement results of all approaches, where if there is a low score in all categories of approaches it is considered to have a "garbage can" approach.

Organizational performance in the public sector is very complex and multidimensional. Public organizations are usually asked to fulfill a variety of potentially conflicting organizational goals. The measurements presented here focus on three main dimensions of local public service performance: effectiveness; efficiency; and, equity (Andrews et al., 2017). All measurements were made using the 1-7 Likert scale.

- **Control Variable**

Considering that there are several individual variables that have a direct influence on how they choose to interpret their organizational environment, several variables are included in statistical modeling as control variables starting with gender, age, length of service, and manager's level of education. With regard to gender, dichotomous variables were built to be included in the statistical model by coding one female respondent and zero male respondent. The age of the respondents was measured in the survey using five categories (18–29, 30–39, 40–49, 50–59, and 60 or more). The length of service of respondents in their current work is measured using five categories (0-1 years, 2-5 years, 6-10 years, 11-20 years, and more than 20 years). In the survey, the level of education is displayed by questions asking respondents to indicate the highest level of qualification in relation to four general categories; high schoolundergraduate groups with code 0 and graduate and so on with code 1.

#### **4. Analysis Method**

Analysis is done using cluster analysis tools. Where the tools are expected to be seen the tendency of grouping public organizations based on the tendency of data collected. The type of Analysis Cluster used is the K-Mean Cluster analysis, because it is known the number of groupings that will be formed based on existing theory (Hair, Black, Babin, & Anderson, 2010).

Furthermore, the effect of each cluster approach to service performance is measured using the regression hierarchy analysis method, direct impact or impact by mediation by organizational agility.

#### **5. Conclusion**

In summary, the study can do a highlight the role that different styles of strategy decision making implementation style, whether it can play in shaping the performance of public service organizations or not. Instead of that the study will identify the present of organizational agility on the provine level public service organization and whether the organizational agility will impact to the strategic decision making style and public service performance . In doing so, we have identified implementation styles that are more

or less successful for large local governments and have highlighted that strategic management matters in the public sector. Finally, it can give a contribution to develop a group a leader, so the can run the strategic decision making that more effective based on the study result

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