

Abstract

Over the course of the past two decades, researchers have shown a growing interest in understanding the dynamics of Public Service Motivation (PSM). PSM is positively associated with employee performance and job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and job retention. Research on PSM has mostly focused on testing how PSM affects individual and organizational variables. However, very little is known about how contextual antecedents affect PSM. Focusing on the relationship between policy clients' characteristics and public servants' PSM, this study sheds new light on the contextual antecedents of PSM. An analysis of survey data from 349 teachers in Israeli public schools confirms that student characteristics correlate with teacher PSM. Specifically, class size and student diversity were positively associated with PSM, whereas lack of improvement in student achievements, low family support, and difficult student behavior were negatively associated with PSM.