Outcomes of Performance Information Use in the Public Sector – An Analysis of the Practitioners’ Perspectives

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Background & Scope

Current literature

- Characteristics of performance measurement system (Micheli & Neely; Behn; Hatry; Hedley; Likierman; Nair; Schachter; Hatry & Gerhart)
- Factors influencing the adoption and the use of performance information (de Lances Julnes & Holzer; Bourdeux & Chikoto; Moynihan & Wallace Ingraham; Ammons & Rivenbark; Moynihan & Pandey)
- Extent to performance use (Poister & Streib; Melkers & Willoughby; Berman & Wang)

Gap in the literature

- Ultimate objective of performance systems is to produce improvement in the decisions made
Research Question

What are the practical effects local government practitioners perceive when using and implementing performance management systems?
Methods & Methodology

- Mixed methods

- Targeted Population
  - Members of networks with focus on performance for governments (ex: National Center for Performance)
  - 4,175 individuals surveyed

- Online open-ended questions survey
Results and Findings
Active Use of Results-Based Performance Information

N = 247 Practitioners have responded to the survey
Practices Involved in the Use of Results-Based Performance

N=170 practitioners indicates using for some purposes performance information
Outcomes and Effects of Results-Based Performance Information Use

- 6 majors themes emerged
  - Results and Achievements
  - Citizen interaction
  - Communication
  - Budget process
  - Human resources management
  - Managerial practices
Results and Achievements

- Limited acknowledgement of measurable effects
- Concrete evidence of improvement
- Enhancement of the quality of the services provided
- Improvement of the organization’s overall performance

“on-time delivery”

“reduction in crime and crime rates”

“promote equity in response time across city neighborhoods”
Citizen Interaction

- Expansion of transparency
- Stimulation of accountability
- Enhancement of citizen participation
- Improvement of citizens’ perception and confidence in government action

“stronger transparency, accountability, and citizen confidence”

help “design of greater tool sets for citizen participation/input”

“better accountability to the public in two ways 1) clear reporting [...], 2) more engagement and collective decision making”
Communication

Enhancement of the communication with external stakeholders
- Better level of quality in the message
- More appropriate communication channel

Improvement of internal communication process
- Frequent communication among level of management and among departments
- Development of standardized processes

“our agency must report performance data to the Governor’s Office and dialogue monthly about progress. This has resulted in clarity about the role of our agency relative to others which has helped us get better support from peer agencies”
Budget Process

“obtaining new funding from state legislature, reduces losses due to previously broken process, shortened capital project construction timelines, changed funding priorities, established new programs”

“we have also used performance data to argue for resources where performance was below expectations and the program was considered effective but under-resourced”

- Augmentation of the operational efficiency of the public organization
- Diminution of the cost of operation
- Reduction of the waste and spending
- Improvement of the resources allocation process
- Shift from incremental or line-to-line to a proactive allocation process
- Enhancement of the link between program mission, outcomes, and resources allocation
Human Resource Management

- Enhancement of assessment of the organizations needs
- Improvement of the scope and the focus of training programs
- Amelioration of employees’ motivation and commitment to the organization’s goal

“knowing what your employees want and need, how to customize motivation techniques can also be learned through results-based performance information”

“move personnel in where and when is required”

“greater staff engagement”
Managerial Practices

- Development of strategic planning methods
- Implementation of best practices and benchmarking process
- Rationalization of the decision-making process
- Development of initiatives, abandon of certain programs, introduction of new technology
- Improvement of contracting process

“additional attention is paid to those areas in which underperformance is occurring”

“you drive improvement rather than re-act to catastrophe. You decide with facts/data, not perceptions and egos. You sustain improved performance [each year]”
Conclusion & Future Research
Conclusion

- Use of performance is a continuing growing phenomenon in public organizations.
- Areas in which performance information is used tend to grow in scope as well as in frequency.
- Citizen participation, employee motivation, effectiveness of decision made, and effective resources allocation are positively impacted by performance management systems.
- Improvement in effectiveness, efficiency, and quality of the services.
Future Research

Shifting the paradigm of performance management research from convincing individuals to use performance management to maximizing its effects
Thank you