Collaborative Management in Local Public Administration: Integrative Consolidation

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Abstract

Collaborative public management has emerged in few decades in public sector and public administration is moving from responsiveness to collaboration. The data is collected from local public administrators working in local public administration services organizations (n = 150), a survey of local public managers in Pakistan is conducted to determine the frequency of collaborative management regarding the practice services. The study results suggest a favorable view of collaborative management from local administrators' point of views and are coupled with a series of cautionary assertions with from existing research. The article concludes with a discussion of the implications of findings practitioners and for future research on collaborative management.

Keywords: collaborative management, services consolidation, resources sharing, management competency.

Introduction

As a result of new public management reforms (NPM), public organizations have serious pressure for cutbacks and more concentration is to become responsive to citizens and efficient in services. However, recently public organizations operate in collaborative settings to function well and have also been urged to advance beyond responsiveness in collaborative management with internal and external sectors (Meier & O'Toole, 2005; Moynihan & Pandey, 2010). In the arena of NPM, collaborative management is emerging trend in contemporary public administration and integrated consolidation is done among departments, personnel and resources (McGrath, 2008). Effective collaboration can be managed in local public administration through strategic management, technical and resources matters (O'Leary, Gerard & Choi, 2012). To give better understanding to public managers in local offices, it is important to know the public officials attentions towards collaborative management (McGuire, 2002).

O'Leary, Gerard and Bingham (2006) define collaboration as "process of facilitating and operating in multiorganizational arrangements to solve problems that cannot be solved or easily solved by a single organization". In line to collaboration, collaborative management is a concept that describes the process to remedy problems that cannot be solved — or solved easily (McGuire, 2006). In 21st century, the term collaboration is used widely in all public, private or nonprofit organizations (O' Leary & Bingham, 2009). The need of collaborative management in local public administration indicates several reasons. The first reason is that public services are larger than organizations capacity which requires new approaches to be addressed in public issues (O'Leary, Gerard & Choi, 2012). The major challenges in services organizations are to address education, health and other basic facilities for public and these demands for collaboration across organizational boundaries (Friedman, 2005). Collaboration certainly relies on management strategies but managers are responsible for their collaborative outcomes (McGuire, 2006).

In the public organizations, there are several problems that appear to be solved through such as additional knowledge, advanced tools, and more refined services and collaborative management offers the promise of sharing resources, skills and technical tools (Huxham & Vangen, 2005). In some critiques collaborative management is just a utopian idea that has very less impact on the administrative process (Vigoda, 2004). Mostly the individuals in organizations are the ones who collaborate and the managers with the role of collaboration as

collaborative managers (Getha-Taylor, 2006; Emison, 2006) and as an integrative leader (Crosby & Bryson, 2010; Morse, 2010). The alliance in skills, technical tools and sharing of services in crisis management is integrative consolidation between units of local public administration providing services to public (McGrath, 2008).

This paper looks into views of public officials in local public administration for possible collaborative management in services, skills and in capacity building. The practical collaborative model in public administration is amalgamation of bureaucracy-driven, citizen-driven or private-sector-driven and is beneficial relying on the intensive participation with integrative consolidation. The rest of this article proceeds as follows. In the next section, we review and synthesize theoretical perspectives and derive six hypotheses on the views of public managers on collaborative management integration. We then in next section summarize our data and methods and describe the empirical context of our analysis. In last section we discuss findings and practical conclusion.

The Literature

Prior literature on responsiveness and collaboration has concentrated mostly on professional effectiveness (Vigoda, 2000). In line with this, responsiveness oriented thinking is converted it into collaboration in the public sector (Vigoda, 2002). New public management reforms revise old conventional views of public administration by collaborative management to share ideas, knowledge and resources (Vigoda, 2004). Major types of reforms in public administration are citizen driven and bureaucracy driven model and integrative consolidation has multidimensional model of collaboration (Thompson & Perry, 2003). Collaboration is practiced in various perspectives in global, regional and national levels but collaborative management is more applicable at local governance level (Vigoda, 2004).

The job of public administrators is changed and requires different form of public management at local government level (Goldsmith & Eggers, 2004). Collaborative public management is new and is becoming a kind of management that is having dynamic networks (Stoker, 2006). In determinants of collaborative management, societal change is emerged in information age to raise preamble structures as in agricultural and industrial age has given rise to hierarchical organization and bureaucracy respectively (McGuire, 2006). In diversified world, skills and powers need to be shared to bring social change (Agranoff & McGuire, 2003). Traditional bureaucracies cannot find solution of 21st century problems in local government. Collaborative management and structure needs to provide services to citizens administered through less traditional government (Goldsmith & Eggers, 2004).

Collaborative public management involves upward, downward and outward networking environment (O'Toole, Meier & Nicholson, 2005). Public manager needs to coordinate in informal, emergent and short term level (Drabek & McEntire, 2002). In context of collaboration 'intermittent' coordination occurs within two or more organizations, 'temporary task force' is a kind of collaboration which is done only for temporary basis and 'permanent or regular' coordination occurs in formal arrangements (Mandell & Steelman, 2003). In networking collaboration, informational network provides information, developmental networks provide abilities of members of organizations, outreach networks provide administrative capacity of members of organizations and action network engage collective actions (Agranoff, 2003).

Hypotheses Development

Collaboration is mixed of various disciplines and fields of knowledge on theoretical basis with the nature of public administration (Vigoda, 2004). There are two major types of models of reform in public administration such as bureaucracy-driven models and citizen-driven or grass roots-driven models.

Resources sharing and collaborative management

Organizational capacity is important in local public administration and it shows the resources of organizations. Local government offers sustainable competitive advantage and enhanced profitability (Arthur & Strickland, 2001). Organizational is a broader concept identifies resources and adequate service levels (Frederickson & Smith, 2003; Donald, 2003). In large services organizations, resources sharing can be lower in collaborative management. Thus first hypothesis is:

H1: Resources sharing is negatively related to collaborative management.

In services delivery departments, collaborative management will rise with resources sharing. Collaborative management in resources sharing is a formal activity and consensus oriented (Walter & Petr, 2000; Connick & Innes, 2003). In public sector, resources sharing decisions are made on patterns of managerialism (Futrell, 2003). On the basis of positivity of resources sharing, second (opposite) hypothesis is:

H2: Resources sharing is positively related to collaborative management.

The both above mentioned negative and positive effects of resources sharing create a third opportunity of argument. First, resources sharing leads to lower collaboration management because of control and monitoring problems (Fung & Wright, 2001) and such imbalances produce a stage where impact of resources sharing on collaborative management will at some stage turn positive.

H3: The relationship between resources sharing and collaborative management is u = shaped.

Management competencies and Collaborative Management

Management competencies include the management skills of communication, facilitation and negotiations (Emerson & Smutco, 2011). In public sector, management competencies demonstrate shared problems and close relationships (Getha-Taylor, 2008). Thus

H4; Management competency is positively related to collaborative management.

Resources sharing and management competency are considered separately in context to collaborative management. The interaction between resources sharing and management competency are more effective (Morse, 2008). Resources sharing may lack the management competency and impact of management competency will be weaker in resources sharing.

H5: The positive impact of management competency on collaborative management is mitigated by resources sharing.

Technical knowledge and collaborative management

The level of technical knowledge that is necessary for distribution of resources and administration set up (Emerson & Smutco, 2011). All individuals' technical knowledge is linked for collaboration at the level of participation (Huxham & Vangen, 2005).

H6: The level of technical knowledge is positively related to collaborative management.

Study Context

Pakistan is a South Asian developing country that became an independent state in 1947 after liberation from British in the Sub-continent. Since its independence, Pakistan cycled through a number of politicians who mostly were tarnished by inefficiency and public administration is also suffering in lack of governance and the ranges of irresponsible behaviors are the challenges to reform public employees. A large proportion of the population is not satisfied with services provided by local governments and there is need to maintain the moral standards and human values in the conduct of public affairs in democratic setup of public administration. Water and sewer systems and basic services have been entirely abandoned owing to lack of maintenance and insufficient resources are allocated for operations and maintenance in Pakistan (Abass, et al. 2011). Effective service delivery is linked with the quality and resources in public sector organizations available to the services departments. The present context of the study requires delivery of public services with networking and collaborative management within local organizations.

Research Methodology

Data

The participants for this study include local public administrators of six urban cities from two provinces. All major local public organizations subunits (municipal services, health, fire, police, revenues, education and so forth) participated in the study. A survey questionnaire is used to get empirical data from local public administrators and total 200 questionnaires were distributed to local managers. Questions were based on seven-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 "strongly disagree" to 7 "strongly agree". Out of 200 questionnaires, 150 useable responses were received in paper and pencil survey for a response rate of 75%.

Measures

The survey was consisted of demographic information, resources sharing, management competency and technical knowledge variables and perception of local public administrators was collected to know the collaborative management possibility in services departments. Management competency is in its very nature a dynamic concept and requires perception of managers dealing with strategic management. In collaborative management, managers need skills and collaborative mind-set (Linden, 2002; Morse, 2008). Three items were used to measure management competency.

In addition, the possibility of technical knowledge and collaborative management is also important and three items are used to measure technical knowledge. Here technical knowledge means substantial knowledge of the subject area (Milward & Provan, 2006). Resources sharing are the main impact on collaborative management and this variable is measured with three items. Resources sharing include distribution of services and goods with in the organizations (McWilliams, 2007).

Collaborative management is a standard component of public management in general and collaboration in public management is as common (McGuire, 2006). This construct is measured using three items taking ideas of O'Toole, Meier & Nicholson-Crotty (2005).

Dependent Variables

Local public administrators are divided into two groups-municipalities of first province and municipalities of second province. In this study, three different measures of collaborative management are examined the determinants of collaborative management in both provinces.

Resources Sharing

A resource sharing is a key concept in collaborative management and resources sharing can be measured in different services programs. In this study, resources sharing are measured in basic services using three items (Kent & Sowards, 2005).

Management Competency

Management competency includes communication, strategic management and conflict management.   All measures of management competency are correlated with each other as shown in table 1.

TABLE 1
Descriptive Statistics

Variable	M	SD
Communication competency	.116	.188
Strategic management competency	.397	.390
Conflict management competency	.081	.184
Resources sharing	6.93	1.49
Collaborative management	4.67	1.71
Province first	1.87	1.44
Province second	38.17	18.44
Technical knowledge	7.24	2.73
Control Variables		
Political control	28.32	26.77
Budget constraints	48.01	19.27
Regional differences	14.17	4.39

Technical Knowledge

Technical knowledge is the central concept in collaborative management and the ideas about subject matter links with organizational skills and time management (Rosemary, Yujin & Catherine, 2012). The level of technical knowledge is in mean (M = 7.24).

Control Variables

The control variables in this study are political control, budget constraint and regional differences and the means and standard deviations of all control variables used in the analysis are shown in Table 1.

Results

In table 2, regression analysis is shown in results for collaborative management; in both provinces. In table 3, the results for collaborative management in province first and in table 4 the results of province first share in both provinces. This provides a satisfactory explanation of variance in collaborative management (R^2 = .34 to .44).

TABLE 2
Determinants of Collaborative Management

Dependent Variable = % collaborative management		
Independent Variable	*Slope*	t *Score*
Management Competency	.89	7.45
Resources Sharing	-.51	35.8
Management competency ✕ Resources sharing	-.11	5.43
Technical knowledge	.09	15.4
Political control	-.001	1.0
Budget constraints	-.002	2.0
Regional differences	.009	2.5
SE	1.40	
F	26.6	
R^2	.34	
N of respondents	150	

Resources Sharing Effects

In this study H1 and H2 are tested with inclusion of resources sharing in the analysis. In all analysis, the results show that the impact of resources sharing is negative rather than positive for collaborative management, which supports H1 and contradicts with H2. This also gives evidence that eventually the resources sharing impact turn positive as indicated in H3. In analysis negative coefficient for the linear term and positive coefficient for the squared term will suggest a U-shaped relationship.

Table 5 estimates the nonlinear relationship between resources sharing and collaborative management. There is strong evidence of nonlinear relationship between resources sharing and collaborative management. H3 is supported.

TABLE 3
Determinants of Collaborative Management (province first)

Dependent Variable = % collaborative management (province first)		
Independent Variable	*Slope*	t *Score*
Management Competency	1.58	17.0
Resources Sharing	-.44	40.6
Management competency ✕ Resources sharing	-.22	13.8
Technical knowledge	.08	17.1
Political control	.002	2.9
Budget constraints	-.002	2.7
Regional differences	.001	0.1
SE	1.08	
F	411.5	
R^2	.44	
N of respondents	85	

TABLE 4
Determinants of Collaborative Management (province second)

Dependent Variable = % collaborative management (province second)		
Independent Variable	*Slope*	t *Score*
Management Competency	11.4	8.75
Resources Sharing	-6.4	42.12
Management competency ✕ Resources sharing	-1.5	6.85
Technical knowledge	.17	6.85
Political control	.028	2.6
Budget constraints	.013	0.9
Regional differences	-.153	3.9
SE	14.8	
F	288.2	
R^2	.36	
N of respondents	65	

TABLE 5
Nonlinear Relationship of Resources sharing and Collaborative Management

Dependent Variable =			
Independent Variable	*Slope*	*Province first Slope*	*Province second Slope*
Management Competency	.33 (2.5)	.64 (6.6)	.19 (0.9)
Resources Sharing	-1.4 (17.6)	-2.02 (32.6)	-25.7 (29.5)
Management competency ✕ Resources sharing	-.03 (1.4)	-.08 (5.3)	.07 (0.35)
Resources sharing squared	.06 (11.6)	.10 (25.8)	1.25 (22.5)
SE	1.39	1.05	14.53
F	259.8	448.9	312.17
R^2	.34	.48	.39
N of respondents	150	85	65

Management Competency Effects

In results, it is evident that H4 has gotten support and management competency has a positive effect on collaborative management (Tables 2-4). The evident supports this that more management competency is required for collaborative management. In H5, it is suggested that resources sharing mitigates the effects of management competency because organizations lack in resources that can make less effect of management competency. This hypothesis is tested and the predicted slopes in table 5, it is evident that resources sharing have negative impact on collaborative management with certain level of management competency. So there is strong support for H5 that management competency makes a difference to collaborative management.

Technical Knowledge Effects

The final hypothesis, H6 suggested that technical knowledge has positive effects on collaborative management. Technical knowledge gives strength to collaborative management as it is evident in Tables 2-4 and this hypothesis is supported. However it is unclear from this result whether technical

knowledge leads to more collaborative management, or whether the relationship between these technical knowledge and collaborative management is consistent.

The same respondents' data was analyzed on causality basis to know different options for technical knowledge importance in collaborative management. So in this way, it is determined if technical knowledge cause collaborative management possibilities. In table 6, the evidence shows that the causal relationship between technical knowledge and collaborative management is reciprocal. Some null hypotheses are supposed in analysis to know the causality of technical knowledge in collaborative management.

TABLE 6
Causality Results between Technical Knowledge and Collaborative Management

Hypotheses	F *test*	Probability
Technical knowledge does not make collaborative management successful.	57.02	<.0001
Collaborative management does not make technical knowledge successful.	18.91	<.0001
Technical knowledge does not make collaborative management in province first.	32.72	<.0001
Collaborative management in province first does not make successful technical knowledge.	17.30	<.0001
Technical knowledge does not make collaborative management successful in province second.	25.84	<.0001
Collaborative management in province second does not make successful technical knowledge	33.22	<.0001

Within the present research context, one organization alone cannot produce all expertise and services. Vast majority of literature is focused on networking in collaboration management rather than on determinants of collaboration, this research is a way forward specially to developing countries to make collaborative management successful in local public administration.

Discussion and Conclusion
Collaborative management research is progressing rapidly to manage challenges in local services organizations. This aspect of collaborative management is newly developed but research is significantly increasing. In public sector, collaborative management is important component. In this research, the findings reveal that it is common enough to begin resources sharing to begin developing collaborative culture in organizations. The other findings of results focus in identifying a certain level of management competency that is necessary in collaborative settings. Finally, there is determining effect of technical knowledge on collaboration.

These findings have several implications with context to developing countries and especially to Pakistan. First the negative impact of resources sharing which shows the problems of resources allocation in local public sector organizations. Second evidence on the impact of management competency supports the need of time management and communication in services organizations to set up collaborative management. Third the relationship between technical knowledge and collaborative setup is consistent with collaboration. It is important to emphasize that our results say nothing about the impact of more regional constraints on organizational efficiency and effectiveness.

Finally evidence has practical implications for policies related to collaborative management. First some uncontrollable determinants are beyond the authority of collaborators; these include political pressure and level of budget constraints. Second the actions of higher authorities have contradictions in decisions while allocating resources. Thus, results suggest that efforts to coordinate collaborative management should be encouraged in public managers.

Overall, there is still more areas to learn about collaborative management in local public administration. In critical situation of power and budget constraints, managers should ensure accountability in collaborative settings. The development of collaborative management takes time and is a process of years to bring outcomes.

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