

The interrelationship between strategy as practice and public service innovation and delivery: Academic history and evidence from Kuwait

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ABSTRACT

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Despite the rare use of the term ‘strategy’ in public and voluntary sector organizations, recent research has seen the use of both the strategy and strategy-as-practice concepts in regulating the innovation perspective within the public sector. The available literature on innovation, strategy, and service delivery within the public sector offers positive insights into forming a new concept of innovation within the public organization sphere. Using a systematic review, we aim to understand the integration of the strategy-as-practice perspective into the public service ethos to drive the innovation perspective forward. The review was performed in two stages, 855 documents were retrieved in the first stage that covered a five-year time span, while 8,620,000 documents were retrieved in the second stage that covered a twenty-three-year time span. We further supported our argument through a quantitative questionnaire with 93 respondents from Kuwait. The findings of the research indicate that public sector policymakers need to pay attention to the social complexity of their context in order to innovate delivered public services. Furthermore, policymakers need to adopt new innovative schemes including innovative strategy practices, digital governance, reform ethos, and mutual constitution in their strategies in order to ensure the innovative public services that are required by their communities.

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1. Introduction

The paper reviews the emerging literature on “public services” from a strategy as practice lens and provides details of relevant innovative development in this field. The social interaction between public sector employees represents the practices they observe in their daily work, which consequently feeds their overall organizational strategy. From this perspective, public service employees are considered partners in assuring innovative public service delivery due to the fact that they acquire the necessary competences and work-related values (Parrado et al., 2013). In the same vein, Røiseland and Vabo (2020) found that public sector administrative officers are generally active drivers of innovative services. These public services are not stable in terms of their type; rather, public service officials continue to provide a variety of innovative services to the community in order to satisfy the wide range of public demands. Indeed, the formation of public service ideas, means of delivery, types of relevant beneficiaries, financial categories, and other relevant issues represent officials’ micro-practices, are considered part of the major strategy-as-practice concept and process. It is also a fact that strategy and strategy practices are more common in the private sector, though the same concept has recently been extensively employed within public sector domain. Although strategic management as a discipline has been integrated into many public sector organizations, little is known of its applications in relation to relevant practices and in terms of potential consequences (Johnsen, 2016; Höglund et al., 2018). In order to implement such practices to allow for better service design and delivery, public sector organizations need to engage with deep-seated reform and innovation in the appropriate public policies and relevant procedures, as well as from the service perspective (Cox et al., 2015). Thus, through a systematic review of the available literature, the aim of this study is to under-

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stand the integration of the strategy-as-practice perspective with public service ethos to drive the innovation perspective forward within the public sector context. In order to support our study, a quantitative questionnaire was distributed to 93 respondents in Kuwait. The questionnaire was distributed in Arabic as this is the sample's first language in the chosen context. Section A in the survey includes the respondents' demographics such as gender, age, and current employment position. Meanwhile, section B in the survey includes questions designed to measure the overall satisfaction of the respondents to public services. A five-point scale (strongly disagree, disagree, natural, agree, and strongly agree) was adopted to provide a value for the respondents' answers. Figure 1 represents the personal characteristics of the participants.

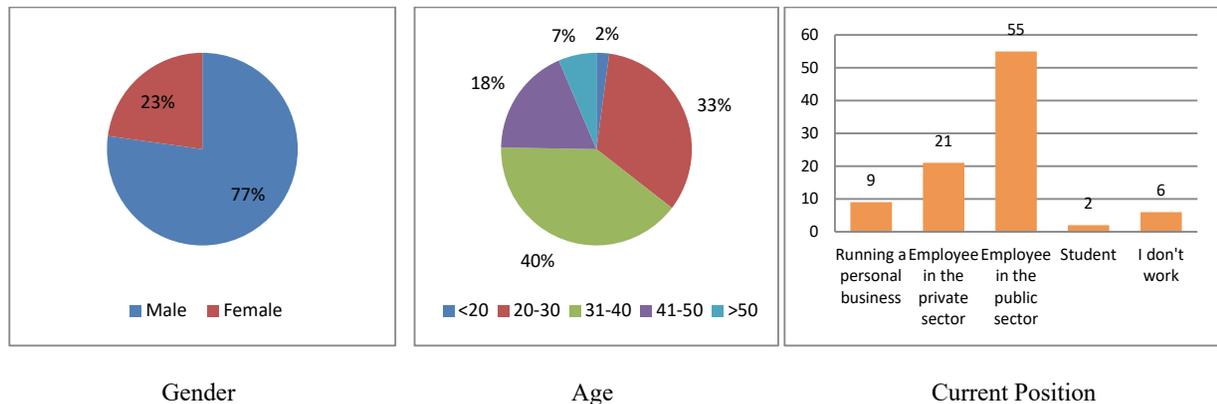


Fig. 1. Personal characteristics of the survey participants

The survey was distributed to participants to whom the purpose of this study was explained; they were also informed that their participation was completely voluntary and that they could withdraw at any time without consequence. Out of 110 surveys distributed to participants, only 93 surveys were suitable and valid for analysis, giving a response rate of 84.5%. As shown in Fig. 1, the majority of participants were male (77%), while 73% of the sample size belonged to the 20-30 and 31-40 age groups. Moreover, more than half of the participants were public sector employees, and this fact in itself emphasises the importance of improving public services and provides critical feedback to policymakers in order to take better decisions at their organizations. The figure also shows that there were only two full-time students in the entire sample.

2. Innovation within the Public Sector

Although it is argued that the majority of innovation currently takes place in public sector organizations, there are also calls for extensive practical as well as research efforts to advance innovative public services to meet various societal expectations (Eggers & Singh, 2009; Bloch & Bugge, 2013). The growing interest in public sector innovation has also been linked to various movements including e-government (Bekkers & Homburg, 2005); the conversion from government towards governance (Rhodes, 1996); and also, the calls to reduce the large budget associated with public sector expenditure (de Vries et al., 2016). What has recently begun to emerge is the call for strategy as practice in organizations (Jarzabkowski & Spee, 2009). This recent trend is also influencing digital governance and how policymakers within the public sector are reforming the public service ethos (Sayeed, 2016.; Just et al., 2017). Even with these movements toward an innovative public sector, the exact definition of the innovation concept within the public sector is still fragmented, as can be seen from the nature of various public organizations. The concept of innovation seems to be highly influenced by the nature of the context, and the context always matters (Demircioglu & Audretsch, 2017). One of the views of the concept of innovation within public sector organizations suggests that governmental organizations may respond to the relative organizational conditions and practices that are bounded by the public sector context (Sahni et al., 2013). The concept of innovation within public sector domain was viewed by Bloch (2011) as a significant change to services and goods, processes, methods, or communication with beneficiaries. This particular definition departs somewhat from the standard and old concept of public services to the new public services reforms, and indeed is closer to the perspective adopted by private sector organizations. For instance, some of the key criteria for innovation identified within the private sector, including location, size, and investing in human capital (Roper et al., 2017), are also applicable to the public sector context (Demircioglu & Audretsch, 2017). Since these definitions entail the measurements of bringing new ideas and innovation to address the public good and improve public services, it is vital, therefore, to understand the notion of public service delivery, as will be discussed in the following section.

3. Public Service Delivery

The complexity of social life, along with the increasing world population, has raised people's expectations in terms of access to sustainable public services, as well as fulfilling their ongoing needs. This, in turn, has put considerable pressure on public policymakers to reform public management to accommodate such needs and expectations. However, such public management reform requires effective strategy management practices and investment in innovative public services. A consideration of the available literature seems to indicate a gap in knowledge regarding our understanding of what and how managerial practices can promote innovative public service delivery. In this context, Goldfinch et al. (2012) argued that the public administration literature, by and large, lacks solid evidence of the clear link between public services and public innovative outcomes. It is noteworthy that the concept of public services is also linked to what motivates public service employees to provide such

innovative services, and which forms the concept of ‘public service motivation’. Until recently, there were some serious doubts among researchers in the field regarding the validity of the concept itself (Bozeman & Su, 2015). Public service reforms have rapidly changed over the last few decades. In general, the services used to follow the one-way orientation in which public sector organizations offered their services to people. Thus, the innovation perspective in terms of public services within the public sector context was barely apparent until quite recently. However, this model of public services is no longer stable, as the dramatic advancement in the technology now generally available has entirely changed the rules of the game. For instance, public services have been more innovative and can be delivered through smartphone applications that allow for mutual communication (Anthopoulos et al., 2007; Eom & Kim, 2014; Bertot et al., 2016; Reddick et al., 2017). On the other hand, the government is also utilizing big data structure to help policymakers offer more innovative public service delivery (Kim et al., 2014). In today’s dynamic environment, the role of technology in advancing public services to the community cannot be neglected by either organizations or beneficiaries alike. Furthermore, technology is now viewed as a pool of required knowledge through which to design, create, modify, and implement a production process or service to be realized in practice (Al-Fahhad & Al-Mansour, 2019). The rapid reform currently underway in public sector organizations requires effective, sustainable, as well as innovative strategy practices to be followed by internal social actors. Tables 1 and 2 provide extensive information regarding the literature on the public service delivery concept. Therefore, Table 1 shows the most recent individual pieces of work on the concept of public service delivery published during the last five years (specifically, between 2014 and 2019 inclusive) and according to the citation index. Table 2 identifies the most frequently cited articles to have dealt with the concept of public service delivery over the last twenty-three years (specifically, between 1996 and 2019) and according to the citation index.

Table 1

Most recent individual work on the concept of public service delivery over the last five years (between 2014 to 2019) and according to the citation index

No.	Author(s)	Title of the Article	Journal	Citation
1	Ashraf et al. (2014)	No margin, no mission? A field experiment on incentives for public service delivery	Journal of Public Economics	307
2	Tummers et al. (2015)	Coping during public service delivery: A conceptualization and systematic review of the literature	Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory	226
3	Rasul and Rogger (2018)	Management of bureaucrats and public service delivery: Evidence from the Nigerian civil service	The Economic Journal	216
4	Cordella and Tempini (2015)	E-government and organizational change: Reappraising the role of ICT and bureaucracy in public service delivery	Government Information Quarterly	135
5	Chowns (2015)	Is community management an efficient and effective model of public service delivery? Lessons from the rural water supply sector in Malawi	Public Administration and Development	54
6	Clayton et al. (2015)	Emotions of austerity: Care and commitment in public service delivery in the North East of England	Emotion, Space and Society	49
7	Fledderus et al. (2015)	User co-production of public service delivery: An uncertainty approach	Public Policy and Administration	48
8	Shareef et al. (2016)	Reformation of public service to meet citizens’ needs as customers: Evaluating SMS as an alternative service delivery channel	Computers in Human Behavior	34
9	Bel et al. (2014)	Editorial overview: Symposium on mixed and hybrid models of public service delivery	International Public Management Journal	34
10	Ashraf (2015)	Do-gooders and go-getters: career incentives, selection, and performance in public service delivery	Harvard Business School	33

Table 2

Most frequently cited articles on the concept of public service delivery over the last twenty-three years (between 1996 to 2019) and according to the citation index.

No.	Author(s)	Title of the Article	Journal	Citation
1	Joshi and Moore (2004)	Institutionalized co-production: unorthodox public service delivery in challenging environments	Journal of Development Studies	450
2	Davis (2004)	Corruption in public service delivery: experience from South Asia’s water and sanitation sector	World development	364
3	Entwistle and Martin (2005)	From competition to collaboration in public service delivery: A new agenda for research	Public administration	325
4	Ashraf et al. (2014)	No margin, no mission? A field experiment on incentives for public service delivery	Journal of Public Economics	306
5	Tummers et al. (2015)	Coping during public service delivery: A conceptualization and systematic review of the literature	Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory	226
6	Rasul and Rogger (2018)	Management of bureaucrats and public service delivery: Evidence from the Nigerian civil service	The Economic Journal	216
7	Reddick and Turner (2012)	Channel choice and public service delivery in Canada: Comparing e-government to traditional service delivery	Government information quarterly	185
8	Deininger and Mpuga (2005)	Does greater accountability improve the quality of public service delivery? Evidence from Uganda	World development	182
9	Girth et al. (2012)	Outsourcing public service delivery: Management responses in non-competitive markets	Public Administration Review	179
10	Kampen et al. (2006)	Assessing the relation between satisfaction with public service delivery and trust in Government. The impact of the predisposition of citizens toward Government on evaluations of its performance	Public Performance & Management Review	157

4. Strategy as Practice and Innovation

Although strategies are formulated according to measurable outcomes, a large number of organizations fail to both improve or innovate their practices in terms of strategy formulation, which consequently results in the failure to accomplish these strategies at the point of implementation. To resolve this issue, it can be argued that the gap between the academic production in terms of theorizing concepts and the actual work on the industry side of business has resulted in the concept of ‘practice’ seeing widespread use in both the academic literature and organizational behaviour. Thus, the ‘strategy-as-practice’ concept itself saw widespread use in strategy and the relevant literature in other fields. Equally, the practice perspective has now been extensively adopted in real organizational contexts. The term ‘strategy-as-practice’ refers variously to performing strategy, who is involved in performing it, what they do, how they do it, and consequently what exactly they use and what consequences this has for the strategy so formed (Jarzabkowski & Spee, 2009). Due to its importance, the strategy-as-practice concept has expanded in the associated body of knowledge, and is thus no longer limited to strategy discipline alone, but has rather expanded to include other diverse disciplines. For instance, the integration of the strategy-as-practice concept into strategic management accounting (Cuganesan et al., 2012), human resource management (Garavan et al., 2016), marketing (Vaara & Whittington, 2012), information systems (Arvidsson et al., 2014), management control systems (Ahrens & Chapman, 2005), operations (de Lima et al., 2009), and collaborative innovation (Torfing, 2019). The practice perspective has emerged in the literature due to the limitations of various theories in terms of explaining human interactions in terms of strategy; for instance, the limitations of the resource-based view and dynamic capability theory (Jarzabkowski, 2005; Regnér, 2008). Thus, it became necessary to end the debate as to how people strategize their organizational strategies and how they operate within the strategy process to ensure better public innovation. In this regard, Chia and Mackay (2007) referred to the controversial issue and associated debate of whether the strategy-as-practice concept differs from the traditional strategy process research. Such debate has led to considerable effort on the part of strategy scholars to consider alternative theories to interpret human interactions in the various strategy processes, including formulation, implementation, and control. One such theory, which has actually proven to be somewhat reliable in providing a social interpretation of human behaviour within a given context, is the theory of social practice (Giddens, 1984; Bourdieu, 1990). In a direct link with public service ethos and innovation, as the title of the paper suggests the practice concept has been integrated into several articles (i.e., Brown, 2010; Cuganesan et al., 2012; Hansen & Jacobsen, 2016; Höglund et al., 2018). Furthermore, the engagement of public sector employees in both innovating and delivering various public services to the community represents a process of social practice. In real social practice, various elements can be used to enhance the engagement of social actors in such work. For instance, various rewards were found to have a positive influence on engagement (Saleh et al., 2020). Feldman and Orlikowski (2011) argued that the focus of the social practice perspective is on the dynamic activities of the above individuals in relation to the way in which they practice strategy. The theory of social practice is considered reliable with regard to the interpretation of human relations as it relies on three main principles, namely the principle of social interaction, the principle of the duality of relations, and the principle of the mutual constitution of these relations (Giddens, 1984; Bourdieu, 1990). Tables 3 and 4 provide information about historical articles that have considered the strategy-as-practice concept. Therefore, Table 3 shows the most recent individual work of the concept of strategy as practice for the last five years, that is, between 2014 and 2019, and according to the citation index. Table 4 reflects the most frequently cited articles dealing with the concept of strategy as practice over the last twenty-three years, that is, between 1996 to 2019, and according to the citation index.

Table 3

Most recent individual pieces of work on the concept of strategy-as-practice over the last five years (between 2014 and 2019) and according to the citation index.

No.	Author(s)	Title of the Article	Journal	Citation
1	Seidl and Whittington (2014)	Enlarging the strategy-as-practice research agenda: Towards taller and flatter ontologies	Organization Studies	225
2	Arvidsson et al. (2014)	Information systems use as strategy practice: A multi-dimensional view of strategic information system implementation and use	The Journal of Strategic Information Systems	207
3	Peppard et al. (2014)	Information systems strategy as practice	The Journal of Strategic Information Systems	150
4	Whittington (2014)	Information systems strategy and strategy-as-practice: a joint agenda	The Journal of Strategic Information Systems	127
5	Järventie-Thesleff et al. (2014)	The strategic challenge of continuous change in multi-platform media organizations—A strategy-as-practice perspective	International Journal on Media Management	53
6	Tavakoli et al. (2017)	Open strategy: Literature review, re-analysis of cases and conceptualization as a practice	The Journal of Strategic Information Systems	47
7	Dahl et al. (2016)	Conceptualizing cooperation strategy as practice: A multilevel interpretative framework	International Studies of Management & Organization	40
8	Egels-Zandén and Rosén (2015)	Sustainable strategy formation at a Swedish industrial company: bridging the strategy-as-practice and sustainability gap	Journal of Cleaner Production	40
9	Tsoukas (2018)	Strategy and virtue: Developing strategy-as-practice through virtue ethics	Strategic Organization	20
10	Govender and Pretorius (2015)	The strategy-as-practice perspective	Acta Commercii	16

Table 4

Most frequently cited articles on the concept of strategy-as-practice over the last twenty-three years (between 1996 and 2019) and according to the citation index.

No.	Author(s)	Title of the Article	Journal	Citation
1	Whittington (1996)	Strategy as practice	Long range planning	1422
2	Jarzabkowski (2004)	Strategy as practice: recursiveness, adaptation, and practices-in-use	Organization studies	1186
3	Jarzabkowski and Paul Spee (2009)	Strategy-as-practice: A review and future directions for the field	International journal of management reviews	985
4	Vaara and Whittington (2012)	Strategy-as-practice: Taking social practices seriously	The Academy of Management Annals	880
5	Chia and MacKay (2007)	Post-processual challenges for the emerging strategy-as-practice perspective: Discovering strategy in the logic of practice	Human relations	635
6	Whittington (2007)	Strategy practice and strategy process: family differences and the sociological eye	Organization studies	483
7	Fenton and Langley (2011)	Strategy as practice and the narrative turn	Organization studies	406
8	Carter et al. (2008)	So! apbox: editorial essays: Strategy as practice?	Strategic Organization	373
9	Chia (2004)	Strategy-as-practice: Reflections on the research agenda.	European management review	288
10	Regnér (2008)	Strategy-as-practice and dynamic capabilities: Steps towards a dynamic view of strategy	Human Relations	251

5. Integrative Studies of Strategy Practices in the Public Sector

Studies of strategy and strategy practices have been applied in public sector organizations since the very emergence of these concepts. However, recent research has been directed more towards strategy practices, particularly those in the various departments in public sector organizations. Furthermore, these studies have even focussed on the way public sector employees interact to innovate and deliver public services, and to ensure high organizational performance. The various studies on the interaction of employees in the public sector domain, regardless of their employment levels, consider, for instance, knowledge sharing between themselves (i.e., Al-Mansour & Al-Nesafi, 2019), motivation for public service delivery (Lapworth et al., 2018), collaboration in public service delivery (Kekez et al., 2018), organizational citizenship behaviour (Shim & Faerman, 2017), social performance (Silvestre, 2016), and the fate of innovations (Glor, 2019). It is noteworthy that this evolution of strategy practices in the public sector domain was a natural result of the advancement of the field as well as the integration of other disciplines into public sector innovation studies. This dramatic change might remind one of the early conclusions noted by the pioneers of public sector strategy, Nutt and Backoff (1995), namely that true strategic behaviour, in which managers in public sector organizations need to direct all their resources and plans towards desired objectives, was possible in this domain, but was rare. However, the rapid movements in societies, the advancement of available technologies, international standards, the practices of other countries, and the continuous pressure from politicians and community members alike have all politicized and regulated strategy practices in both public and voluntary sector organizations. Therefore, a rapid increase in the number of publications on strategy practices in public sector organizations that focus more on innovation perspective has been recognized.

6. Research Method

As this research represents time horizon data, and as the aim of this study is to understand the integration of the strategy-as-practice perspective with the public service ethos to drive the innovation perspective forward within the public sector context, we therefore adopted a systematic literature review (SLR) for our data collection and analysis, and supported our data via a quantitative survey with a sample size of 93 respondents. The archival data technique has been used in many studies, for instance, that of Al-Mansour and Al-Ajmi (2020). Equally, the questionnaire instrument has also been adopted in many scientific papers, for instance, Ahmad et al. (2020). The rationale behind this choice was the number of advantages that systematic literature review offers to researchers. For instance, the method helps to identify and critically appraise research in order to accurately answer the research questions formulated therein (Dewey and Drahota, 2016). Furthermore, it is a reliable scientific procedure that can effectively reduce large quantities of information into palatable pieces for digestion (Mulrow, 1994). Moreover, the method separates insignificant or uninformative literature from studies that are worthy of reflection (Morgan, 1986). It is also noteworthy that the systematic literature review method relies on seven key principles, namely transparency, clarity, integration, focus, equality, accessibility, and coverage (Pittway, 2008). Further, the adoption of the quantitative survey has added value to previous study results that support the argument made in this paper.

The systematic literature review process was undertaken in two different phases. In the first phase, the data were retrieved from Google Scholar on 6 March 2020. Google scholar is known for its extensive benefits to researchers as it is commonly used as a search engine to find scholarly literature across various disciplines and sources. The data retrieval used the advance search criterion of the exact phrase in the titles of the articles. Thus, the data retrieved from Google Scholar search engine for the term ‘public service delivery’ returns 683 documents, a summary of which is given in Table 1. Similarly, the data retrieved for the term ‘strategy as practice’ accounts for 172 documents, a summary of which is given in Table 3. Therefore, the combined number of potential documents identified for both terms was 855. During the search process, it was necessary to refine the search engine options and use the advanced search tools in order to obtain a “clean” and robust outcome to our research.

As argued by Wang et al. (2014), in the world of big data options, ensuring quality and timely answers to various queries has become difficult due to the challenges of refining large and dirty datasets. The timespan for the search was based on a five-year timescale covering the period 2014 to 2019. It is noteworthy that among the large documents that were retrieved, the majority were articles, conference proceedings papers, books, chapters, theses, and newspapers. However, only published articles that were selected for all the tables' content appeared in this research.

As for the second phase of the systematic literature review process, the Google Scholar search engine was used to search for the term 'public service delivery', returning 3,680,000 documents, a summary of which is given in Table 2. Equally, the data retrieved for the term 'strategy as practice' returned 4,940,000 documents, a summary of which is illustrated in Table 4. Therefore, the combined number of documents identified for both terms was 8,620,000. The data for the second phase were also retrieved on 6 March 2020. The timespan for the search in this stage was based on the last twenty-three years, that is, the period between 1996 and 2019. The retrieval of these data was free of restrictions and therefore the terms 'public service delivery' and 'strategy as practice' were both searched for freely without requiring the use of the advanced search option. Thus, any document with at least one of the words of both concepts were retrieved in this phase, which explains the dramatic increase in the number of documents for both phases. Similar to the first phase of the systematic literature review, the documents retrieved in the second phase contained different types of secondary resources; however, only published articles were reported in this research. Fig. 2 shows a summary of the systematic literature review process.

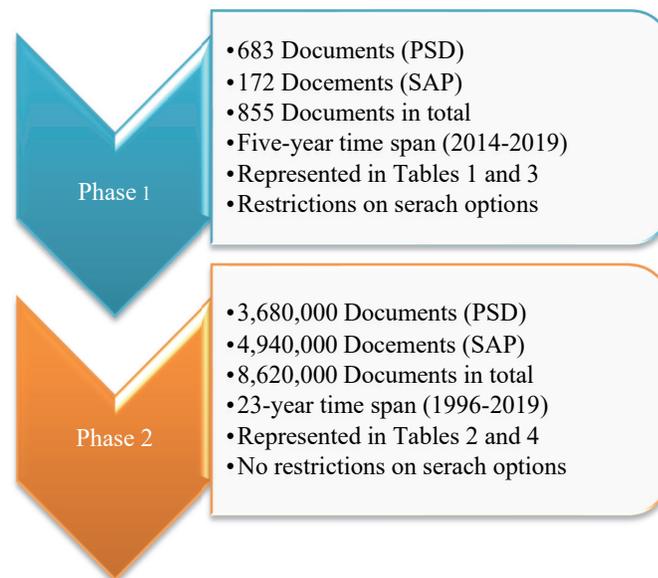


Fig. 2. A summary of the systematic literature review process

After concluding the two stages of the systematic literature review process (SLR), we distributed a survey to a sample of 110 potential respondents; however, we received back only 93 surveys that were suitable and valid for analysis. At the beginning, we calculated a Cronbach alpha coefficient test to identify the reliability scale for the survey questions, including Question 1 (which represents the overall satisfaction with public sector services), Question 2 (which represents the clarity of requests to perform the service), Question 3 (which represents the behaviour of the public sector service provider), Question 4 (which represents the time taken to perform the service), Question 5 (which represents a logical reason to reject performing the service), Question 6 (which represents the acceptance of the public sector of the various ideas and suggestions), and Question 7 (which represents the efficiency and effectiveness of the public sector service provider). The items for reliability had a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.83, indicating good reliability. This was necessary to identify certain critical values including *M*, *SD*, *Mdn*, Skewness, and Kurtosis. Furthermore, a factor loadings test was performed for the survey questions, which showed that all the questions had fair to excellent loadings. For instance, Q1 registered an excellent loading, while a very good loading was identified for Q2, Q5, and Q7, and a good loading for Q4. Q3 and Q6 were both found to have fair loadings. Also, the survey can be assumed to have a normality scheme. Table 5 reports the results of the above reliability analysis, the summary statistics for the survey questions, and the factor loadings for the survey questions.

Table 5

The results of the reliability analysis

Reliability Table for Reliability

Scale	No. of Items	α	Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Reliability	7	0.83	0.78	0.89

Note. The lower and upper bounds for Cronbach's alpha were calculated using a 95% confidence interval.

Frequentist Individual Item Reliability Statistics

Item	If item dropped		Item-rest correlation	mean	SD
	α				
Q1	0.798		0.668	2.140	0.939
Q2	0.813		0.574	2.151	0.896
Q3	0.827		0.486	2.538	1.006
Q4	0.813		0.575	1.796	0.828
Q5	0.802		0.640	2.108	0.961
Q6	0.825		0.493	1.914	0.952
Q7	0.799		0.659	2.559	1.068

Summary Statistics Table for Interval and Ratio Variables

V	M	SD	n	Mdn	SEM	Min	Max	Ske.	Kurtosis
Q1	2.14	0.94	93	2.00	0.10	1.00	4.00	0.51	-0.58
Q2	2.15	0.90	93	2.00	0.09	1.00	4.00	0.43	-0.53
Q3	2.54	1.01	93	2.00	0.10	1.00	5.00	0.12	-0.83
Q4	1.80	0.83	93	2.00	0.09	1.00	4.00	0.97	0.55
Q5	2.11	0.96	93	2.00	0.10	1.00	5.00	0.75	0.02
Q6	1.91	0.95	93	2.00	0.10	1.00	4.00	0.78	-0.35
Q7	2.56	1.07	93	3.00	0.11	1.00	4.00	-0.07	-1.22

Note: '-' indicates the statistic is undefined due to constant data or an insufficient sample size.

Factor Loadings From Exploratory Factor Analysis

Variable	Factor loading	
	1	Communality
Q1	0.78	0.60
Q2	0.68	0.47
Q3	0.52	0.27
Q4	0.63	0.39
Q5	0.70	0.48
Q6	0.54	0.29
Q7	0.69	0.47

Note: Factor loadings < .32 are suppressed.

7. Discussion and Conclusion

The purpose of this article was to understand the integration of the strategy-as-practice perspective with public service ethos to drive the innovation perspective forward within the public sector context, as achieved through a systematic review of the available literature. The research evidence gathered from this review demonstrates that the strategy integration within public sector organizations has remained limited since the emergence of the concept. This was also one of the conclusions drawn by Nutt and Backoff (1995), who clearly stated that although the strategy-public sector organizations relationship was possible in this domain, it would only be rarely seen in practice. This can also be linked to the early evolutionary stages of the idea of work organization and how to manage employees to allow for better innovation, production or performance results in the Western world in the late 1800s and early 1900s (Motshegwa, 2017). The theories and ideologies of early theorists in this field, such as Max Webber (1921/1968) and Frederick Taylor (1911), and their ideas about how to manage employees represented a core concept of management during this period (Newman & Guy, 1998). Their early work supported the reformation of public management theories and innovative practices. The idea of management was further developed through the ideology espoused by Henri Fayol (1949), who contextualized five main elements – along with another fourteen principles of management – that include planning, organizing, commanding, coordinating, and control, amongst others (Waldo, 1955; Motshegwa, 2017). The common link between all the theorists and the progress in the field of public management over the decades proves that its practices have been integrated into the work conducted by public sector organizations despite the variation in the beliefs of respective policymakers. As the field developed, recent research shows an increasing trend towards adopting strategy-as-practices in the public reform policy to better innovate public service delivery. There is further evidence of such in the work of, for instance, Whittington (1996), Chia (2004), Anthopoulos et al. (2007), Jarzabkowski and Paul Spee (2009), Cuganesan et al. (2012) and Bertot et al. (2016). Policymakers in public and voluntary sector organizations need to understand the social complexity of their context and strategize their daily interactions accordingly. It is important to acknowledge that there is no single 'best approach' model or framework for the management of public sector employees in order to gain better public innovation; rather, there is a best fit scenario that assures satisfactory levels of public service delivery (Robinson, 2015). Policymakers in the public sector reform the various incentive schemes for public sector employees. This finding further echoes Ashraf et al. (2014), who concluded that extrinsic rewards can improve the performance of employees engaged in innovating public service delivery, and at the same time recognizes that non-financial rewards can be effective when the power of financial value is itself inadequate. Furthermore, such motivation could be achieved through other approaches, which can

all be part of the public sector organization's strategy to encourage its employees to strive for better public innovation outcomes. This is similar to the findings reported by Shim and Faerman (2017), who concluded that public service motivation, task interdependence, organizational identification, procedural justice, and subjective organizational citizenship behaviour can all be considered vital elements of government employees' overall organizational citizenship behaviour. Furthermore, investing in better public services has also been mentioned by various reputable scholars including, for instance, Bel et al. (2014), Clayton et al. (2015), Fledderus et al. (2015), and Shareef et al. (2016). Another remarkable finding in this research is that strategy practices within public sector organizations appear to show a dramatic shift in terms of innovating public service strategies that has been ongoing since the emergence of the concept. In this regard, Burns (1994) remarked that the evolutionary progress of the public service strategies can be determined by aligning the period with the relevant features of the public service strategies within those periods. For instance, the 1970s was characterized by unresponsive public service bureaucracies with rare innovation schemes, whereas the 1980s was more open to external markets and demonstrated the principles of new managerialism, extended policy, and innovating trends. Burns further extended this to argue that the 1990s showed empowerment of strategy, exit, self-improvement, and release of voice, while the 2000s showed a focus on various stakeholders including consumers, customers, and citizens. What was interesting to add in this research was the extension of the Burns' model in terms of the evolutionary innovative progress of public service strategies after the 2000s. It is noteworthy that the 2010s saw a dramatic increase in public innovation and strategy practice research in public sector organizations from various disciplines as well as perspectives, as mentioned earlier in the literature review section. For instance, the study of how public sector employees share information within one department (Al-Mansour and Al-Nesafi, 2019), the motivation for public service delivery (Lapworth et al., 2018), the collaboration in public service delivery (Reddick & Turner, 2012; Tummers et al., 2015; Rasul & Rogger, 2018, Kekez et al., 2018), the organizational citizenship behaviour of government employees (Shim and Faerman, 2017), the social performance in public service delivery (Silvestre, 2016), and the fate of innovations (Glor, 2019). Therefore, the focus of the period was on innovative strategy-as-practice perspectives, which included shedding light on practices, praxis, and practitioners (Jarzabkowski & Spee, 2009). As for the period between 2010 and 2019, public sector management saw a major shift in its domain and enacted new approaches to public reform that have mainly been driven by its public innovation ethos. This period also recognized the rise of the concept of public governance, along with the new innovative strategies relevant to the reform of the public service ethos for public service employees. Furthermore, the period after the 2010s also appears to have encouraged a certain mutual constitution between public service providers and public service recipients. Therefore, to ensure innovative public service delivery for the community, policymakers in public sector organizations need to adopt their strategies to better reflect recent worldwide trends, and subsequently reform their practices and motivate their employees accordingly. Equally, policymakers in public sector organizations need to take into consideration the fact the policies are changing to allow for better innovation practices. This may also require an increase in financial inclusion, as suggested by Ratnawati (2020). Therefore, regulating the public innovation concept within the public sector context requires a holistic and a visionary framework that can support the concept of innovation over time. Fig. 3 demonstrates the public service reform strategies for the various periods between the 1970s and 2019.

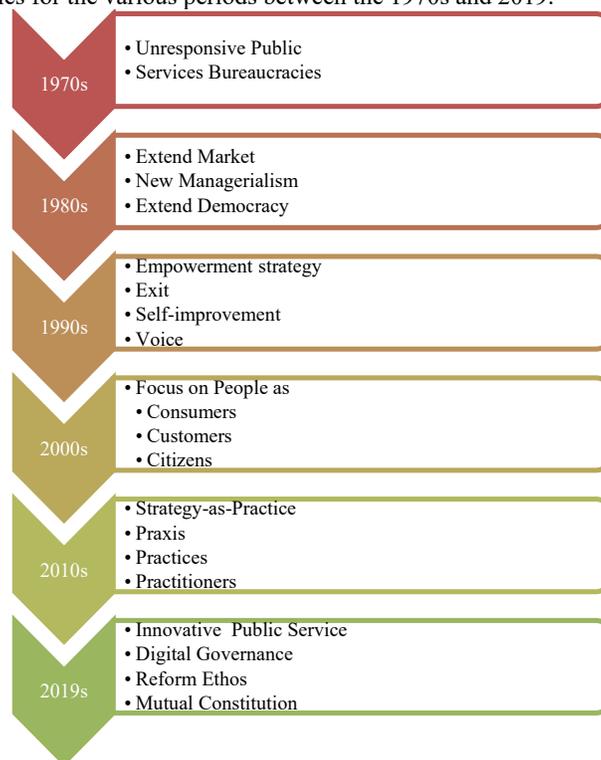


Fig. 3. Public service reform strategies

Source: Adapted from Burns (1994) until the 2000s, and developed further by the author of this article for up to 2019

As per the nature with any academic study, this research has its own particular limitations; indeed, Denscombe (2014) argued that there is no research that is without limitations. The first such issue is the use of the concept of public sector innovation. This study focusses mainly on the concepts of strategy as practice and public service delivery. Therefore, future studies are encouraged to explore the innovation concept within the public sector domain in additional detail. Another challenge, and which could also be considered a limitation in this study, is the dependency on one search engine for data retrieval, in this instance Google Scholar. However, Google Scholar might well be considered suitable to gain only a general impression and a quick search for academic papers, and thus other search engines could be used in this case, for instance, the Social Science Citation Index (SSCI) and the EBSCO databases.

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