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**Full Length Research**

# The effects of socio-cultural factors on public service motivation: Insights from the Lebanese public service

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The infusion of market and business management principles into the public sector has impeded the behaviour of public service motivated employees who are motivated by intrinsic motives. Besides, the infusion of such principles caused great threats to basic values of the civil service, like equity, fairness, justice, accountability, impartiality, public welfare and other values related to the public sector. From here, public service motivation (PSM) emanates as a reaction against these principles/techniques in the civil service. Public management scholars have studied PSM from different angles and perspectives; however, no one has studied the effects of socio-cultural factors on PSM. This study will fill this gap in PSM literature by studying how socio-cultural factors impede/block the development of this construct with lessons learnt from the Lebanese civil service.

**Keywords:** Public service motivation, society, culture, sectarianism, corruption, nepotism, favouritism, favours, family.

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## INTRODUCTION

The political rulers of Western democracies, the public and the media in these countries were dissatisfied with the way public sector institutions deliver goods and services. This dissatisfaction was at its zenith during the 1980s and 1990s. That period witnessed the rise of a new pro-market and business management approach, namely new public management (NPM). The supporters of NPM called for downsizing the public sector, adopting business management principles and techniques in the public sector and privatizing public services out of the belief that there is little difference between public and private sectors (Pollitt & Bouckaert, 2004), and that business management techniques are superior (Labaky, 2015).

The widespread adoption of business management and market principles in the public sector caused real threats to the identity and existence of public sector values and norms (Shamsul Haque, 1996), like equity, accountability, and probity. Although the supporters of NPM were able to explain the poor performance of some public servants, they were unable to explain the altruistic and pro-social attitudes of others (Dilulio, 1994). Accordingly, research on public service motivation (PSM), during the last two decades, has gained increasing attention as a reaction against the failures of NPM principles in reforming the civil service, and as a reaction to the negative effects that NPM has on public service ethics (Myers, 2008).

Although many public management scholars studied

PSM from different angles and perspectives, no one has studied the effects of the socio-cultural factors (as part of the external environment) on PSM. Hence, this paper will fill this gap in PSM literature by studying the effects of socio-cultural factors on PSM with lessons learnt from the Lebanese civil service.

## **PUBLIC SERVICE MOTIVATION**

Early studies conceptualized public service motivation as a public service ethos that only exists in the public sector, or as pro-social and altruistic orientations that motivate individuals to help others, to benefit the society, and to serve the public. Much of this initial work concentrated on establishing the existence of PSM by showing that public sector employees, unlike their counterparts in the private sector, are mainly motivated by intrinsic rewards, not extrinsic ones. Early scholars used indirect measures of PSM and incomplete theories of how this concept occurs (Bright, 2007).

Perry & Wise (1990, as cited in Wright, 2008) were the first scholars who offered a complete theoretical framework of PSM along with incorporating it in motivation theory (Wright, 2008). The aforementioned scholars defined PSM as an individual's predispositions to respond to motives that are only included in the public sector. Perry & Wise (1990, as cited in Wright 2008) suggest that PSM falls into three general categories: instrumental, normative, and affective motives. Instrumental motives are based on rational and self-maximization motives; norm-based motives cover the desire to serve the public; however, affective motives cover the willingness to help others. Six years later, Perry (1996) used these three motives to identify four important dimensions that measure PSM, namely: (a) attraction to public policy, (b) loyalty to public interest, (c) compassion, and (4) self-sacrifice. Fifteen years later, Kim et.al (2013) redefined Perry's scale of PSM, where they formulated an international theoretical framework of PSM that can be applied globally.

Ever since, scholars have studied PSM from different angles and perspectives. For instance, Perry and Wise (1990) found that employees with high levels of PSM perform better than their counterparts with low PSM levels. Naff and Crum (1999), using a big sample of American federal government employees, found that public service motivated employees have higher satisfaction levels and lower intentions to leave their jobs than their counterparts with lower PSM. These findings were also supported by Scott and Pandey (2005). Other studies showed that employees with high levels of PSM are more likely to report wrongdoing, to engage in whistle-blowing in order to protect the public interest (Brewer & Selden, 1998). Bright (2005), in turn, asserts that public service motivated employees are less

motivated by extrinsic motives like financial remunerations. Finally, Moynihan and Pandey (2007) found that there is a negative relationship between PSM and job tenure.

## **LEBANON: COUNTRY PROFILE**

Lebanon's geographic area comprises 4035 square miles. Its geographical location – overlooking the Mediterranean Sea and bordered by Syria and Israel- is an important feature that has contributed to its rich history. It has attracted many invaders like the Egyptians, Persians, Romans, Arabs, Ottomans and others. These invasions have influenced the demographic composition of Lebanon, as it has citizens who are descendants of these different invaders (Iskandar, 1997). Lebanon became known as a refuge for oppressed minorities and religious groups, for example: the Chaldeans from Iraq, Copts from Egypt and Sudan and Kurds from Turkey (Nelson, 2013). Those refugees formed additional ethnic and religious groups impacting the socio-cultural and political environment (Grassmuck & Salibi, 1955).

Recent figures show an estimated population of four million individuals (Nelson, 2013), in addition to two million Palestinian refugees and displaced Syrians and Iraqis. The majority of citizens are Arabs, whereas the minority is Armenians and Kurds. In a country, which includes 18 sects, namely, Alawites, Armenian Catholics, Armenian Orthodox, Assyrian Church of the East, Chaldean Catholics, Copts, Druze, Greek Catholic, Greek Orthodox, Isma'ili, Jews, Latin Catholics, Maronites, Protestants, Sunnis, Shiites, Syriac Catholics and Syriac Orthodox, religion is "essentially the ethnic identifier" (Nelson, 2013, p.340). A 2010 study revealed that the Muslims (Sunni, Shiite and Druze) constitute around 59% of the whole population, whereas the Christians form around 31 % of Lebanese citizens. Moreover, around 10% of Lebanese citizens are from small groups, including: Jews, Baha'is, Buddhists, Hindus, and Mormons. Generally, Sunni Muslims live in the big cities; Shiite Muslims live in rural areas, while Maronite Christians and Druze Muslims occupy Mount Lebanon (Nelson, 2013).

Lebanon is rated as the most democratic Arab state; a democracy subjected to the interpretation by the powerful ruling elite (Choucair, 2006). This country has had some sort of a parliamentary rule since independence in 1943. The press enjoys freedom because it is controlled and owned by different parties with different ideologies. Lebanon has the most complex political system in the world and in particular the Middle East. Political life is maintained through a balance between different religions and sects. This "confessional democracy which "has spared Lebanon the authoritarianism experienced by many Arab regimes in the twentieth century,

paradoxically [...] has also prevented the transition to a truly democratic state" (Choucair, 2006, p.3).

As mentioned above, the majority of Lebanese citizens live in urban areas like Beirut (the capital city), Sidon, Tripoli and Zahleh. The total population growth rate is increasing for the urban areas while decreasing for the rural ones. Likewise, the urbanization level attained 89.7% in 2000, and it is expected to reach 93.5 % by 2025 (Ministry of Agriculture, 2003).

With regard to the educational level, all students, starting from the pre-elementary cycle, must learn a foreign language, in addition to the national language Arabic. 55.45 % of high schools teach French as the first foreign language, while 21.8% teach English as the first foreign language, and the rest (22.75%) teach both languages (Lebanese Association for Educational Studies, 2007-2008). The educational level of Lebanese citizens has improved since the 1970s. For instance, the percentage of citizens with high school degrees has increased from 8 % to 27.2%. Likewise, the percentage of literate citizens has increased by 55.6 % since the seventies. The differences in the level of education between males and females have also decreased, where the number of university graduates from each sex is almost the same (Lebanese Association for Educational Studies, 2006). Unfortunately, the quality of education remains below average in certain cases, and some educational programmes need reform.

## THE LEBANESE CIVIL SERVICE

The French adjusted and changed different administrative procedures and units; however, these changes did not eliminate all of the local government structures that were introduced during the Ottoman rule (Grassmuck & Salibi, 1955). During the mandate, the Lebanese civil service was able to develop and grow in size. For instance, in 1921, the first decision was made to organize entrance examinations to the civil service. Four years later, another law was issued with the aim of punishing, firing, promoting civil servants or adjusting their salaries (Al Shami, 1995).

With regard to public finance, the French stopped some Ottoman tax practices, such as tax-farming, while retaining and adjusting other parts. For instance, the system of direct taxation, which was adopted during the Ottoman rule, was retained; the Ministry of Finance was re-organized, and customs administration was reformed (Iskandar, 1997). During the French mandate, the French Governor had the power to appoint Lebanese civil servants, based upon the approval of the French high commissioner, and were guided by French trainers who set plans and controlled the central administration. Several public agencies were also established during that period. The French took important steps to reform the

Lebanese civil service, specifically in financial, personnel and judicial matters. They issued important decrees that organized the personnel administration, especially staffing, promotion and termination of employment (Crow & Iskandar, 1961). The administrative system, which was inherited in a large part from France, remained the same after Lebanon gained independence (Iskandar, 1997).

The French Mandate also imposed a staffing system similar to the one adopted in France. Unlike the American system, which emphasizes specialized training when engaging new civil servants, the French model relied heavily on traditional educational background? Accordingly, the French appreciation to hire lawyers is still present or reflected in the Lebanese civil service, where many public servants – those hired by government to work in public service organisations - have law degrees and where such a degree has become a must for most of the junior and senior positions (Iskandar, 1997).

French administrative traditions highly impacted the Lebanese administration. Centralization was a main characteristic of the French administration in Lebanon. Big, simple and routine administrative decisions were referred to the top administrative positions, namely, French senior consultants or the French High Commissioner. This centralization of authority was introduced partly because the French wanted to have full control over the administration and partly because Lebanese civil servants could not run their affairs independently because they were unskilled and unqualified (Grassmuck & Salibi, 1955; Bashir, 1965). A similar structure and process was replicated at local level, where the local government prefect has little freedom of action; rather, he/she is highly dependent on the central government, namely, the Ministry of Interior (Iskandar, 1964).

The ministries and public agencies are the main elements of the central government. They execute the traditional functions of the government. The central government is made up of: (1) the office of the President of the Lebanese Republic; (2) the office of the prime minister to which is attached the Civil Service Commission (CSC), the Bureau of Accounts, the Central Inspection Commission (CIC), and (3) all the ministries (Bashir, 1965).

Government positions are divided into two categories: administrative and technical. While the former includes the majority of the positions in the Lebanese civil service, the latter covers a limited number of positions subject to different classifications (Iskandar, 1997). Within the same context, the ministries in Lebanon, which vary in size and role, are all organized and structured in a similar way. The minister is the highest authority in his/her ministry. The minister is in charge of running the administrative affairs of the ministry and applying the laws and regulations within the ministry. The minister is aided and

assisted by a director general who is a career civil servant. The director general has many powers including charge of directing, supervising and controlling the employees in the ministry, such as making decisions, monitoring the performance of civil servants in the ministry, supervising operations, preparing the budget, and advising the minister (Bashir, 1977). Even though the director general advises the minister regarding all the technical and administrative issues of the ministry, the latter is the person who has the last say, where he/she can overrule the director general. In general, ministers delegate authority to the director general, but the degree of this delegation varies from one minister to another depending on several factors such as the knowledge of administrative issues, the skills and expertise of the director general, and the relationship between the minister and the director general. Within the same context, the director general can also delegate authority to his/her subordinates; for example, the directors and chiefs of service and Bureau. These directors and chiefs of services, in their turn, can also empower their subordinates. Although the law provides delegation of authority from superiors to their subordinates, this situation is rarely applied (Bashir, 1977).

The main administrative subdivisions in every ministry are the directorates general, which are subdivided into services, directorates, or both. The directorates and services are subdivided into bureaus that, in turn, are further subdivided into sections (the lowest administrative units in every ministry). This organizational structure is the same in all ministries, with differences only in terms of the number of subdivisions (Iskandar, 1997).

The Lebanese civil service includes five grades:

- Grade I: for positions of director general. Employees of the first grade are either selected from the rank, specifically from the top three levels of the second category, or appointed from outside of the civil service. The law stipulates that the Council of Ministers can appoint one-third of the vacant positions in the first grade from outside the cadre (Bashir, 1965);
- Grade II for positions of director or chief of service. Employees for grade II positions are promoted from within due to seniority (Bashir, 1965). They are appointed from the highest levels in the third category, provided they complete all the training sessions in the National Institute of Public Administration and Development (NIAD) (Iskandar, 1964);
- Grade III: for positions of chief of bureau, chief of section, higher clerical and lower administrative positions. Grade III employees are middle managers, who are hired according to competitive examinations. This type of

employees must hold a law degree or any other university degree (Bashir, 1977), and must pass a competitive examination. The personnel law stipulates that any employee who has spent a minimum of 10 years at a certain grade can apply for a higher grade, irrespective of whether he/she holds an academic degree (Iskandar, 1964);

- Grade IV: for clerical and sub-clerical positions. Candidates for grade IV must pass a competitive examination and must possess a high school diploma (Bashir, 1965). Applicants for positions of postal clerks, telephone operators, and typists are exempted from holding a high school degree;
- Grade V: for positions of janitors, messengers and drivers. Applicants for positions in the fifth grade are not required to hold university degrees; they only have to participate in a qualifying exam organized by the Civil Service Council (Iskandar, 1964).

### QUESTIONNAIRE DISTRIBUTION

Three hundred forty seven Lebanese public servants ( $N=347$ ) took part in this study. These employees were randomly selected from the following ministries and public agencies: Ministry of Displaced Citizens, Ministry of Environment, Ministry of Information, Investment Development Authority of Lebanon (IDAL), Central Inspection Council and Civil Service Board. The survey was sent via e-mail to the respondents because it is quick and inexpensive. The participants were given two months to complete the survey. Three hundred forty seven (347) questionnaires were distributed. The number of returned questionnaires was 195 with a return rate of 56.10%. As expected, the respondents presented a diverse mix of public service occupations.

The distribution of the questionnaire started in December 2015 and ended in February 2016. As can be seen from Table 1, the employees at the Ministry of Information had the highest response rate (87%), whereas the employees at the Ministry of Displaced citizens had the lowest rate (13.33%).

### RELIABILITY

In this research, reliability was measured using Cronbach's alpha  $\alpha$ . The values of Cronbach's alpha range from zero to one. The table 2 shows that the values of Cronbach's alpha exceed 0.7 which means that they are good scores.

### VALIDITY

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) is an important test that is

**Table 1:** Questionnaire distribution

Name of ministry and public agency	Distributed questionnaires	Returned questionnaires	Response rate %
Civil Service Board	50	41	82
Ministry of Displaced Citizens	75	10	13.33
Ministry of Environment	47	21	44.68
Ministry of Information	100	87	87
Investment Development Authority of Lebanon (IDAL)	25	8	32
Central Inspection Council	50	28	56
Total	347	195	56.19

**Table 2:** Internal consistency of the survey instrument

Constructs	No. of items	Cronbach's Alpha
APS= Attraction to public service	4	0.810
CPV= Commitment to public values	4	0.726
COM= Compassion	4	0.722
SS= Self-sacrifice	4	0.878
Socio-cultural	15	0.975

**Table 3:** Results of KMO

Constructs	KMO Measure of Sampling Adequacy
APS = Attraction to public service	0.822
CPV = Commitment to public values	0.810
COM = Compassion	0.760
SS = Self-sacrifice	0.795
Socio-cultural	0.822

used to examine the factorability of data. The values of KMO (as shown in table 3) range between 0.7 and 0.8 which indicates that the factor analysis is good (appropriate) (Haf, 2015).

## DEMOGRAPHICAL VARIABLES

Table (4) shows the followings:

- 58% of the participants in this study are males,

while the rest are females (42.11%). This reflects the openness of the Lebanese society, when compared to other Arab societies, where the gap between both sexes in terms of public sector employment is too big. This study also confirms the results of other studies which show that the employment rate for women in the Lebanese public sector is less than that of men (Lebanese women still face discrimination, 2012);

- Around 40 % of respondents are aged between 36 years and 50 years, whilst, 30.15 % of them

**Table 4:** Demographic Information

		Frequency	Percent
<b>Gender</b>	Male	268	57.89%
	Female	214	42.11%
<b>Age</b>	Under 25	42	9.30%
	26-35	120	20.90%
	36-50	177	39.65%
	51-64	139	30.15%
<b>Education</b>	High school	167	35.89%
	BA degree	250	53.71%
	Masters	59	10.40%
<b>Grade</b>	II	67	14.83%
	III	257	54.62%
	IV	158	30.55%
<b>Monthly income</b>	Less than \$ 1000	185	39.79%
	\$ 1000-1499	168	31.98%
	\$ 1500-1999	35	8.33%
	\$ 2000-2499	36	7.90%
	\$ 2500-3000	52	12.00%

are between the ages of 51 to 64. More than 40% of the respondents has over 20 years' experience. This confirms Jabbra & Jabbra's (2005) study, which shows that Lebanese civil servants are not young;

- In terms of education, more than half of the respondents (54 %) have university degrees; around one-third of the employees (35%) have high school degrees, whereas the rest (10.4 %) have Master's degrees. The holders of college degrees are employees of the third grade (54.62%), the holders of master degrees are employees of the second grade (14.83 %); whereas, the holders of high school degrees are employees of the fourth grade (30.55%). This shows that education is an important characteristic in the Lebanese civil service.
- Around 41 % of civil servants in this study earn salaries less than 1,000 American dollars (USD) per month; 32.96% earn salaries between 1,000 and 1,499 USD; around 8 % earn salaries between 2,000 and 2,499, while the rest earn salaries between 2,500 and 3,000 USD. This shows that the salaries of the civil servants are very low when compared to the standard of living in Lebanon. Accordingly, this finding is in line with

Jabbra & Dwivedi's (1988) conclusions that the salaries in the Lebanese civil service are low when compared to the salaries in the private sector.

## **PUBLIC SERVICE MOTIVATION**

### **Attraction to Public Service**

As can be seen from the table (table 5), the majority of the respondents (84%) agreed or strongly agreed when asked if they admired people who initiate or are involved in activities to aid the community (mean=4.26; SD=0.62). There was a substantial shift to strongly agree on the three other sub-dimensions and, although the over percentages fell slightly, over 80% of participants responded positively. In particular, 39% of respondents strongly agreed and almost half of the respondents agreed (49%) that it is important to contribute to activities that tackle social problems (mean=4.34; SD=0.88).

Almost half of the participants (49%) agreed that meaningful public service is important to them (mean=4.34; SD=0.75). A further 40 % strongly agreed on this point. Overall, the results show that the majority of the respondents in the quantitative phase scored high on

**Table 5:** Attraction to Public Service (APS)

Q. #	Item	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	M	SD
7	I admire people who initiate or are involved in activities to aid my community	2.62%	1.10%	12.25%	49.83%	34.20 %	4.26	0.62
8	It is important to contribute to activities that tackle social problems	0.20%	4.17%	8.12%	49.03%	38.48%	4.34	0.88
9	Meaningful public service is very important to me	1.25%	4.91%	5.14%	48.66%	40.04%	4.34	0.75
10	It's important for me to contribute to the common good	2.27%	2.92%	13.70%	40.91%	40.20%	4.32	0.75

**Table 6 :** Commitment to Public Values

Question No.	Item	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	M	SD
11	I think equal opportunities for citizens are very important	3.28%	0.45%	3.50%	40.22%	52.55 %	4.51	0.76
12	It is important that citizens can rely on the continuous provision of public services	0.89%	4.5%	8.48%	61.10%	25.03%	4.18	0.70
13	It is fundamental that the interests of future generations are taken into account when developing public policies	0.74%	4.56%	2.89%	70.82%	20.99%	4.34	0.72
14	To act ethically is essential	0.28%	2.88%	7.48%	51.17%	38.19%	4.43	0.84

attraction to public service, the first dimension of public service motivation.

### Commitment to Public Values

The second dimension – commitment to public values,

has four sub-dimensions that link to pro-social and ethical behaviours, equality of opportunity, and public interest, as shown in the table 6.

As with attraction to public service, commitment to public values also shows high levels of agreement with the questions asked. Scores were over 80% for all



**Table 7:** Compassion

Question No.	Item	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	M	SD
15	I feel sympathetic to the plight of the underprivileged	3.25%	4.87%	12.81%	40.25%	38.82%	4.21	0.78
16	I empathize with other people who face difficulties	10.05%	1.81%	15.42%	49.62%	23.10%	4.19	0.76
17	I get very upset when I see other people being treated unfriendly	2.17%	4.93%	10.85%	41.76%	40.29%	4.38	0.69
18	Considering the welfare of others is very important	5.60%	4.65%	0.20%	48.63%	40.92%	4.43	0.79

dimensions, with questions 13 and 14, showing the most positive responses (agree/strongly agree) vary between 85% and 90% respectively. Around 92% of respondents indicated agreement with the contention that equal opportunities for citizens are very important (mean= 4.51; SD=0.76). Almost 38% of the participants strongly agreed, and 51% agreed that it is essential to act ethically (mean=4.43; SD=0.84). Linked to this latter point, it is important to note that 61% of respondents agreed and 25% of respondents strongly agreed that it is important that citizens can rely on the continuous provision of public services (mean= 4.18; SD= 0.70). Results also indicate that 70 % of the respondents agreed and 21% strongly agreed that it is important to take into account the needs of future generations when developing public policies (mean=4.34; SD= 0.72).

### Compassion

As can be seen from the table 7, the majority of the respondents (40%) agreed, and 39 % strongly agreed, that they feel sympathetic to the plight of the underprivileged (mean=4.21; SD=0.78). Besides, around half of participants agreed and 23 % strongly agreed that they empathize with other people who face difficulties (mean=4.19; SD=0.76). Finally, around 41% strongly agreed and almost half agreed that it is very important to consider the welfare of others (mean= 4.43; SD= 0.79).

### Self Sacrifice

Descriptive results (Table 8) showed that 46% of the participants agreed with making sacrifices for the good of

society, while only 7 % agreed (mean= 4.28; SD=0.79). Likewise, 32% of the respondents agreed to about putting civic duty before self (mean=4.39; SD=0.78). Almost 34% of the respondents strongly agreed, and 40% agreed with risking personal loss to help society (mean=4.48; SD=0.67). Finally, 39 % of the respondents agreed, and 42 % strongly agreed about making a good plan to make a better life for the poor.

Finally, it is important to note that all the dimensions of Kim et.al (2013) are present in the Lebanese civil service. Most of the respondents have high levels of PSM on all the dimensions.

### Socio-Cultural Factors (Table 9)

Almost half of the respondents (49.57%) strongly agreed that public services were not provided to all citizens equally. This showed that the Lebanese civil servants were biased when delivering services to the citizens. This bias and favouritism were highly present when almost half of the respondents (49.57%) agreed that public services were provided first to members of the same sect, to relatives, or to friends, then to other citizens.

Almost half of the participants (47.02%) agreed that they love jobs that provide them with power and authority. Autonomy and a sense of authority and control over one's work links to job satisfaction, which in turn could link to positive PSM. This could be the case if individuals feel a sense of remoteness from their jobs as they feel they are not enabled by their superiors to exercise power and authority. 61.49% of the respondents agree that top civil servants do not delegate authority for fear of losing power. This claim strengthened the importance of power

**Table 8 : Self-Sacrifice (SS)**

Question No.	Item	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	M	SD
19	I am prepared to make sacrifices for the good of society	11.82%	7.08%	2.40%	46.14%	32.56%	4.28	0.79
20	I believe in putting civic duty before self	3.81%	15.02%	10.73%	32.70%	37.74%	4.39	0.78
21	I am willing to risk personal loss to help society	12.88%	7.44%	5.63%	40.20%	33.85%	4.48	0.67
22	I would agree to a good plan to make a better life for the poor, even if it costs me	4.15%	8.17%	6.52%	39.02%	42.14%	4.40	0.78

**Table 9: Socio-Cultural Factors**

Q ue st	Item	Strongly disagree		Disagree		Neutral		Agree		Strongly agree		M	SD
		Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%		
35	Public services are not provided to all citizens equally	35	7.45%	14	2.98%	3	0.64%	185	39.36%	233	49.57%	4.21	1.12
36	The family is the primary unit of loyalty, identity and security	14	2.98%	30	6.38%	21	4.47%	237	50.43%	168	35.74%	4.10	0.96
37	Public services are provided first to citizens of the same sect, to relatives, or to friends first, then to other citizens	28	5.96%	12	2.55%	6	1.28%	233	49.57%	191	40.64%	4.16	1.02
38	I love jobs that provide me with power and authority	27	5.74%	26	5.53%	14	2.98%	221	47.02%	182	38.72%	4.07	1.07
39	My colleagues are responsive to their superiors first, and then to the public	26	5.53%	21	4.47%	11	2.34%	214	45.53%	198	42.13%	4.14	1.05
40	Top civil servants do not delegate authority, no matter what the situation is, for fear of losing power	32	6.81%	14	2.98%	9	1.91%	289	61.49%	126	26.81%	3.99	1.01
41	Sectarianism plays a vital role in the society and in the civil service	25	5.32%	18	3.83%	9	1.91%	298	63.40%	120	25.53%	4.00	0.95

**Table 9:** Continuation

42	<b>Sectarian balance in public service staffing runs counter to the merit principle</b>	25	5.32%	27	5.74%	9	1.91%	301	64.04%	108	22.98%	3.94	0.98
43	<b>Sectarian balance in the public service leads to the infiltration of low level civil servants</b>	29	6.17%	17	3.62%	35	7.45%	217	46.17%	172	36.60%	4.03	1.07
44	<b>Honest civil servants are viewed by the society as stupid</b>	28	5.96%	11	2.34%	21	4.47%	276	58.72%	134	28.51%	4.01	0.98
45	<b>A public service post is viewed by the society as an opportunity to make more money and profits even if the means is illegal</b>	25	5.32%	18	3.83%	26	5.53%	252	53.62%	149	31.70%	4.03	1.00
46	<b>It is normal to receive a gift as a return to a public service</b>	30	6.38%	4	0.85%	29	6.17%	216	45.96%	191	40.64%	4.14	1.03
47	<b>Lebanese society is a show-off society</b>	33	7.02%	9	1.91%	0	0.00%	252	53.62%	176	37.45%	4.13	1.03
48	<b>A number of Lebanese citizens resort to illegal means in order to live an ostentatious life</b>	28	5.96%	15	3.19%	20	4.26%	238	50.64%	169	35.96%	4.07	1.03
49	<b>The public does not trust civil servants</b>	28	5.96%	5	1.06%	1	0.21%	232	49.36%	204	43.40%	4.23	0.98

and authority among Lebanese civil servants. The majority of respondents (63.40%) believe that sectarianism plays an important role in the society and the civil service. A large number of civil servants (64.04%) agree that sectarian balance in public service staffing runs counter to the merit principle. This sectarian balance proves to be more important than the merit principle in a divided country like Lebanon. However, the importance given to sectarian balance over the

merit principle led to the infiltration of low-level civil servants at the expense of qualified candidates.

More than half of the civil servants (58.72%) agree that honest civil servants are viewed by the society as stupid and eccentric. Besides, 53.62 % of respondents agreed that the public view public service posts as an opportunity to make more money and profits. Likewise, almost half of the participants (45.96%) agree that it is normal to

receive a gift as a reward to public service. Within the same context, more than half of the respondents agree that many civil servants resort to illegal means in order to live an ostentatious life in a show-off society. Accordingly, more than half of the respondents agree with the often-held belief that the public does not trust civil servants (Table 9).

**Table 10: Model Summary**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.202	.041	.039	.33960

**Table 11: ANOVA**

Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1 Regression	2.297	1	2.297	19.919	.000
Residual	53.972	468	.115		
Total	56.269	469			

**Table 12: Coefficients**

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	4.172	.078		53.438	.000
	Socio	-.084	.019	-.202	-4.463	.000

Y: Dependent Variable: PSM

### The Regression of Public Service Motivation and Socio-Cultural Factors

H1: Socio-cultural factors negatively affect PSM

Table 10 (Model Summary) shows that the independent variable socio-cultural factors provides little explanation, as indicated by adjusted  $R^2$  of value 4 %, this means that the model explains 4 % of the variation in the dependent variable (public service motivation). A significant model emerged ( $F=19.919$ ,  $p<0.001$ ), and socio-cultural factors were negative and significant as (coefficient  $B= -0.202$ ,  $p<0.001$ ). There is a negative relationship between socio-cultural factors and PSM; hence the second hypothesis (H1) is accepted.

### DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Quantitative results revealed that socio-cultural factors weakened public service motivation. Descriptive statistics indicated that the family is the primary unit of loyalty, and that public services are not provided to all citizens equally; they are delivered first to members of one's family, sect, tribe, village, and then to other citizens. This result corroborates the finding of Jabbra (1972), who

admitted that in Arab societies, the family is the primary unit of loyalty, identity and security. The family gives support and protection to its members and it expects total loyalty and commitment in return. In this sense, Jabbra (1972) concluded that loyalty to the family precedes loyalty to the state.

Jabbra & Jabbra (2005), in turn, admitted that loyalty is not only restricted to one's family, but it also covers other areas. These loyalties are important aspects of Arab culture, including Lebanon. Hence, politicians and civil servants are socially obliged to help and to do favours for their relatives, friends and members of the same village or sect first at the expense of other citizens (Jabbra & Jabbra, 2005). Jabbra & Dwivedi (1988) concluded that nepotism blocks the growth of a culture of accountability and equality in the Lebanese civil service. Helping and benefiting relatives, friends or members of the same village become socially acceptable acts. Nepotism and favouritism are the main obstacles to the development of any civil service (Jabbra and Dwivedi, 1988). Even though developed countries have combatted nepotism and favouritism, such practices have still become part of the daily life of developing countries. The environment of unfair competition emanating from nepotism and favouritism weakens employees' motivation,

performance, morale, and organizational commitment, and hence triggers their intentions to leave the organization. For instance, employees lose interest in organization's growth because they see no career growth in the institution in which they work. Research also showed that both nepotism and favouritism increase job stress of employees (Butte, 2011).

Results also showed that Lebanese civil servants love jobs that provide them with power and authority. This result complies with the finding of Niskanen (1971, as cited in Boyne, 1998), who described civil servants as being mainly motivated by a number of personal/selfish interests like high status, social recognition and other extrinsic rewards. Niskanen (1971, as cited in Boyne, 1998) concluded that this situation led to ineffective and inefficient public service delivery. Likewise, Barakat (2005) admitted that top Lebanese civil servants tend to keep and preserve power and authority in their hands. They pretend to support decentralization and delegation of authority; however, they work contrary to this belief because they are afraid of losing some of their powers. They also do not delegate power and authority to lower civil servants because they think that these civil servants lack the skills and qualifications needed (Barakat, 2005).

The respondents of the survey indicated that the society looks at public service posts as an opportunity to make more money and personal profits and it views honest civil servants as 'stupid'. These findings are consonant with the results of Jabbara and Jabbara (2005, p.146), who asserted that citizens view civil servants who make use of their public offices for personal gains as smart, whereas they view honest civil servants as "stupid and eccentric". Likewise, Jreisat (2003) stated that Arab society looks at corruption as an acceptable route to financial success.

Finally, the respondents were of the opinion that the public does not trust civil servants. Popular distrust of government, according to Bashir (1965), is a cultural problem. This feeling is common among all developing nations. The Lebanese civil service, according to Bashir (1965, p.44), did not "ensure a sense of equity and justice in the society". Citizens believe that the civil servants are not objective; on the contrary, they are subjective, biased, and unjust when dealing with the public. Hence, citizens neither trust laws nor public inspection agencies as safeguards against misconduct (Bashir, 1965).

## CONCLUSION

PSM, as developed by Kim et al. (2013), was examined in the Lebanese civil service. Descriptive statistics showed that the Lebanese civil servants scored high on all the dimensions of PSM. In other words, they scored high on attraction to public service, commitment to public values, compassion, and self-sacrifice. Hence, PSM is an

international concept that is present in an Arab country like Lebanon.

Results showed that socio-cultural factors negatively influenced PSM. Lebanese civil servants love jobs that provide them with power and authority; they also look for prestige when working in the government. This runs counter to PSM since public service motivated employees are internally motivated to serve the public without taking into consideration extrinsic motives like power, authority and money.

Lebanese civil servants are socially obliged to treat their relatives, members of the same village and friends differently at the expense of other citizens. Loyalty goes first to one's family before the state. Some big feudal families dominate the civil service. Unequal treatment of the public contradicts one of the important principles of PSM, namely equal treatment (Vandenabeele, Scheepers, & Hondegheem; 2006).

Sectarianism is also one of the important characteristics of the Lebanese society and its administrative machinery. Civil service posts are allocated according to one's sect. Hence, it is not allowed for a Christian to get a job allocated to a Muslim. This division was created in order to have equilibrium in the civil service between Muslims and Christians. This runs counter to the merit principle, which is an important component of PSM (Vandenabeele et al., 2006). It leads to the infiltration of less qualified people at the expense of qualified ones.

Results showed that the Lebanese civil service is a corrupt one since a large number of civil servants want to live an ostentatious life. Besides, the society encourages civil servants to steal since honest civil servants are labelled as stupid and eccentric, whereas corrupt civil servants are labelled as smart. Finally, the public office is viewed by the society as an opportunity for making money. Corruption is the opposite of an ethical principle like PSM.

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