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The Role of Integrative Leadership in the Transformation Process of Public Services Delivery: From the Perspective of IS Strategy Triangle Theory

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Abstract: In the era of Government 2.0, the government should transform into a citizen-centric and service-oriented government. In the terms of public services delivery, more innovative IT-based methods are pursued. However, on the perspective of organizational management, leadership plays a major role in using IT to make public services delivery efficient. Therefore, this paper presents a conceptual framework for understanding how integrative leadership influence the transformation of IT-based public services delivery. From the perspective of IS strategy triangle theory, we define integrative leadership as bringing diverse leaderships—strategy leadership, organization leadership and IT leadership—in an organization together with a close-coupled association to accomplish the complex and public issue and archive the united strategic goal. The framework is illustrated with a case of a local government, Pingfang District of Harbin in China, a pilot unit of Smart City providing more convenient and effective public services under the guidance of the District Mayor, the Organization Department Minister and the Informatization Office Director that are responsible for the coordination of strategy formulation, organization restructuring and information construction respectively. The framework is, to our best knowledge, the first of their kind in the new research field of key component elements of intra-organizational integrative leadership and provides significant insights for future exploration.

Keywords: integrative leadership, public services delivery, strategy triangle, citizen-centric, information construction

1. INTRODUCTION

Along with the wave of globalization and information technology, innovation 2.0 has brought new challenges and opportunities for the country's political behavior and public services^[1]. Tim O'Reilly proposed that Government 2.0 would be the next generation of e-government trends^[2]. William D. Eggers argued the concept of Government 2.0 that the government should be citizen-centric, providing personalized services based on the various demands of the public^[3].

On the citizen-centric public services delivery, the production-oriented^{[4][5]} government need to transform into the service-oriented government^{[6][7]} along with the transformation of devolution^{[8][9]}, which can provide public services through multiple contact channels^[10], or provide personalized public services^[11], proactive public services and so on. In the era of information, these practices are inseparable from IT support^{[12][13]}. For example, Chawla and Davis took a Big Data driven approach towards personalized healthcare, and demonstrated its applicability to patient-centered outcomes, meaningful use, and reducing re-admission rates^[14]. In addition, public services delivery depends on governmental organizations and their staff^{[15][16][17]}. Therefore, enhancing the capacity of public services delivery needs to innovate its organizational structure, while organization changes and IT are complementary^[18].

For an enterprise, business strategy, IS strategy and organizational strategy constitute its information systems strategy triangle^[19]. According to this theory, the government's public services idea can be considered as business strategy, public services informatization can be considered as IS strategy, and the government's organization structure can be considered as organizational strategy. To achieve coordination and stability in the triadic relation is a common and complex problem, integrating the tripartite main leadership is bound to be the

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most fundamental way to solve the problem ^[20].

The purpose of this study is to explore how can integrative leadership coordinates the government's business strategy, IS strategy and organizational strategy in public services delivery along with the transformation of devolution. Exploratory studies on the integrative leadership can be traced back to 1992, Bryson and Crosby pointed out that to solve the public and complex problem effectively needs the cooperation of multiple sectors, including government organizations, non-profit organizations, businesses and community organizations, and this multi-sectoral collaboration involved the integration of different organizational leadership ^[21]. In the context of public services delivery transformation, we believe that the government need to solve a public problem, coordinating strategy, IT and organization, we derive our research question: how integrative leadership influence the transformation process of public services delivery from the perspective of IS strategy triangle theory.

To answer the question, a case study was conducted in Pingfang District of Harbin, a pilot unit of Smart City with both perfect IT infrastructure and innovative public services concept. In order to provide better public services, People's livelihood Service Hall and Community Service Center were established in 2011 and 2013 respectively along with 61 public services sinking into community under the support and guidance of the District Mayor, the Organization Department Minister and the Informatization Office Director of Pingfang. Drawing on its experience, we build a conceptual framework of integrative leadership. The integrative leadership is composed of strategy leadership, organization leadership and IT leadership, which plays a key role in the transformation process of public services delivery.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Integrative leadership

Since the study of integrative leadership still in early stages, relevant literature is not systematic. Due to the different angles of the various scholars, the definitions of integrated leadership are not the same. Morse believed that integrative public leadership is a process of developing partnerships across organizational, sectoral and/or jurisdictional boundaries that create public value ^[22]. Bryson and Crosby defined integrative leadership as bringing diverse groups and organizations together in semi-permanent ways — and typically across sector boundaries — to remedy complex public problems and achieve the common interests ^[23]. These diverse groups are business, government, non-profit organization, the media and community ^[24]. For example, as collaborative governance goes, civic engagement creates special demands for integrative leadership composed of stakeholders from different communities working together to design and deliver policies and programs ^[25].

Inter-organizational public issues need cooperation and coordination from leaders or stakeholders, forming integrative leadership, from multiple diverse organizations or sectors. However, intra-organizational public issues also need integrative leadership. Therefore, few researchers pay attention to intra-organizational integrative leadership. Youn et al. applied integrative leadership, including three senior leaderships – Chief Executive Officer (CEO), Chief Information Officer (CIO) and Supply Chain Officer (SCO), on effective supply chain implementation. They regarded integrated leadership as a key mechanism for making information sharing both on the strategic level and operational level among different departments to obtain the effectiveness of the organization ^[20].

2.2 Public services delivery

In the era of Innovation 2.0 and Government 2.0, William D. Eggers emphasized to deliver citizen-centric public services, matching demanders with providers. Along with the popularity of PPP (Public-Private

Partnership) schema ^[26] ^[27], public services go privately ^[28]. More and more private organizations become providers of public services, in form of government purchase of services ^[28]. But not all public services delivery can be participated in by private sectors, such as civil administrative examination and approval matters which happen between citizens and government. Therefore, the government should fully consider citizens' opinions of the public services delivery. Taher et al. proposed a new reference model and an associated governance methodology where citizens' opinions directly impact the service delivery decision-making process ^[30].

But how to make public services delivery effective from the perspective of government? Reddick and Turner suggested that the government need to provide multiple contact channels for citizens, such as traditional phone most commonly used to solve problems and modern government websites most commonly used for information purposes, depending upon their task at hand, while ensuring consistency of information and service response across channels ^[10]. In order to improve innovation in the public sector, perennial pressures for efficiency and improved performance, however, are now underpinned by a deeper challenge—to develop universal personalized public services ^[11]. Hence personalized public services are wished on the government.

3. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK: INTEGRATIVE LEADERSHIP FOR PUBLIC SERVICES DELIVERY TRANSFORMATION

The traditional government is production-oriented, the staff work in the office to provide passive services for citizens, while citizens walk back and forth among multiple departments for one thing. Government 2.0 puts forward new requirements, providing citizen-centric public services ^[3] that could be more convenient services, proactive services or personalized services, and creating a public services delivery system. These changes must be based on a higher level of public services informatization which can hardly do without the support of organizations.

In the transformation process of public services delivery, such changes of the public services idea, the organization structure and the IT innovation are happening. These changes correspond respectively to three elements of the strategy triangle—business strategy, organizational strategy and IS strategy. Since formation and implementation of the strategy depends on the leadership, effective public services delivery rely on the strategy leadership, organization leadership and IT leadership. Three leaderships would have respectively positive effect on the outcomes of strategy, organization, and IT. The increasing effectiveness of public services delivery is not equal to the accumulation of three outcomes, but the coordination with each other under the united transformative goal.

Therefore, the conceptual framework of integrative leadership for public services delivery transformation is established (see Figure 1). Three leaders form integrative leadership under a united strategic goal, sharing ideas and plans, and eventually propose a coordinated solution composed of organization restructuring and the IT innovation. Under the guidance of the solution, each leader performs its own functions. Eventually, new strategy, new IT and new organization are realized.

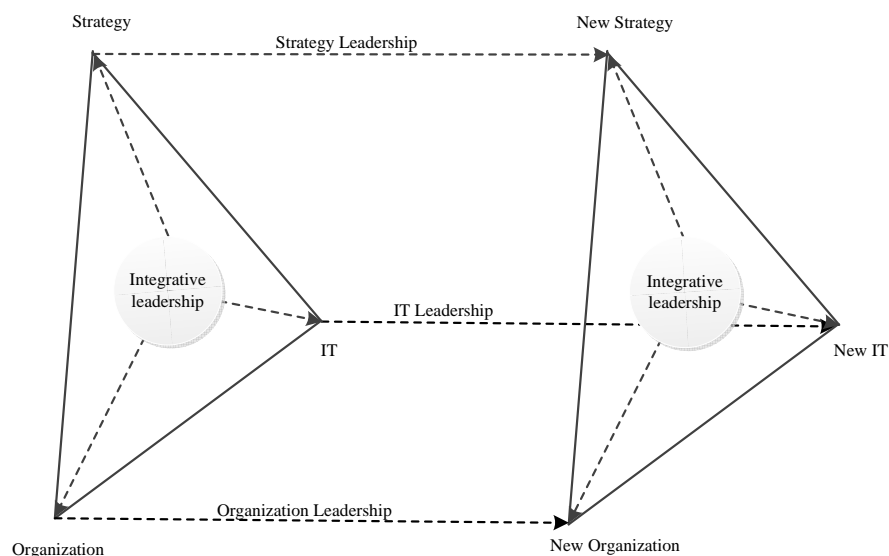


Figure 1. The Conceptual Framework of Integrative Leadership for Public Services Delivery Transformation

4. CASE DESCRIPTION AND ANALYSIS

Though Pingfang is the smallest district of Harbin with the minimum population and land area, it's the pilot unit of Smart City. It has not only the frontier and innovative social management idea and sound government organization but also perfect IT infrastructure. In order to solve civil difficulties of obtaining public services, the District Mayor, the Organization Department Minister and the Informatization Office Director have explored and practiced in the last few years under the support and cooperation with each other. In 2011, People's livelihood Service Hall which is the first in the whole province was established, with 13 settled sectors, 20 windows and more than 20 workers, providing 101 one-stop services. Following the idea of Smart Community, part of the public services sink into Community Service Center of six pilot communities in November 2013. Since People's livelihood Service Hall and Community Service Center are established, citizen satisfaction with all kinds of public services has remained at 100%. It means that the ability of public services delivery has improved significantly.

4.1 Integrative Leadership: Coordination

In the process of delivering public services based on IT in Pingfang, the integrative leadership composed of the District Mayor, the Organization Department Minister and the Informatization Office Director plays a very significant positive role (see Figure 2). In order to promote information construction, informatization supervision group is formed specially. The District Mayor, as the group leader who owns strategy leadership, is the first person responsible and responsible for major strategic formulation and macro-control. The Organization Department Minister, as executive vice group leader who owns organization leadership, is mainly responsible for adjusting staff to meet the demands of organization restructuring and handling daily affairs for information construction. Under supervision and guidance of the informatization supervision group, the Informatization Office accomplish specific information construction. The Informatization Office Director who owns IT leadership is responsible for top design and implementation information construction.

From People's livelihood Service Hall to Community Service Center, better services delivery to citizens is the united strategic goal of the District Mayor, the Organization Department Minister and the Informatization Office Director. The District Mayor once said how to make things extremely convenient for the masses, handling affairs once they walk out the door, is the goal we have always been pursuing. To archive the goal, first is devolution of power. The District Mayor decides to sink 61 public services delivered in the People's livelihood Service Hall to

community, exercising the maximum authority and function of community level. In the terms of organization restructuring, Community Service Center is established in the six pilot communities as the substation of People's livelihood Service Hall and the original community staff duties are readjusted under the proposal of the Organization Department Minister and the approval of the District Mayor. In the terms of information construction, the office platform of Community Service Center is designed and developed under the direction of the Informatization Office Director, connected to People's livelihood Service Hall, integrating the business network interface of each relevant department, delivering 61 public services by two or three employees from the original community staff.

4.2 Strategy Leadership: Devolution

The original purpose or strategic goal of the construction of People's livelihood Service Hall is providing citizens with a one-stop and convenient service in a centralized manner. The strategic goal of the construction of Community Service Center is providing citizens with a zero-distance, one-window, one-license and proactive service in a distributed manner. The change is due to the devolution from the decision of strategy leadership (see Figure 2). Grass-roots staff investigate and summary 101 public services in People's livelihood Service Hall. According to the authority and the frequency, the District Mayor selects 61 public services closely associated with citizen's production and living, such as small guaranteed loan, medical insurance query, housing application, to sink into Community Service Center in the six pilot communities that are Heping, Xinyou, Baili, Jianqiao, Xinxing and Huahui with a higher authority. Consequently, devolution is realized with a shift from a centralized government to a distributed government in public services delivery.

4.3 Organization Leadership: Restructuration

Public services sinking bring organization restructuring. 13 departments enter People's livelihood Service Hall and respectively assign one or two employees which only need to complete the work of his department. Flat organization structure is formed. The Organization Department Minister proposes to establish Community Service Center and adjust the organization structure of the pilot communities (see Figure 2). There are "Eight Members" in original community, respectively responsible for delivering the services of minimum living standard, social insurance, medical insurance, petition, disabled federation, security, comprehensive treatment and assist the public security. Now, two or three employees are selected to deliver 62 sinking public services from multiple departments in one-window and other employees are assigned to community grid, collecting and inputting the house information, domicile information and population information to the population database. Matrix organization structure is formed.

4.4 IT Leadership: Innovation

Two-level city-district office platform is used in People's livelihood Service Hall. Each department deliver public services through its own business network. Three-level city-district-community office platform is used in Community Service Center. Community public services platform is established to integrate interfaces of all department. There are a plenty of innovative ideas for effectively delivering services the Informatization Office Director have thought and put into practice (see Figure 2). The population database storing 200 thousand citizens' detail personal information, such as ID number, phone number, address, unit's name and address, is established, connected to the community public services platform. Therefore, this platform could provide one-license service that you can apply a lot of services as long as you take your ID card, personalized service that you can reserve the service through community public services website or APP they developed according to your own free time, and proactive service that community workers would proactively make older card and disabled card for the elderly and disabled that automatically recognized from population database.

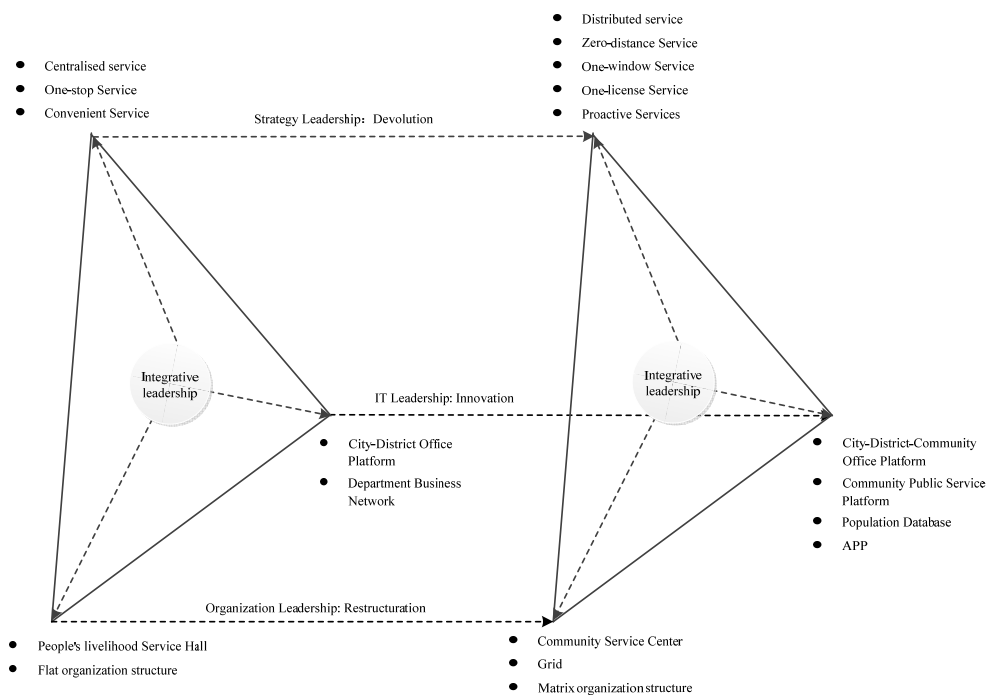


Figure 2. The Framework for understanding Integrative Leadership for Public Services Delivery Transformation in Pingfang District

5. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

The framework of integrative leadership is synthesized from above analyses to address the research question on how can integrative leadership coordinates the government's business strategy, IS strategy and organizational strategy in the transformation of public services delivery. Integrative leadership framework provides a coordinate guideline (see Figure 1). Firstly, integrative leadership is formed under the united strategic goal according to the theory of IS strategy triangle. The elements of integrative leadership change with the strategic goal [25] and diverse perspectives of analysis. Since the government want to improve the ability of delivering public services through information construction, the coordination of strategy formulation, organization restructuring and information construction must be the most relevant factors. Secondly, the three leaders responsible for strategy, organization and IT respectively coordinate with each other based on sharing ideas and plans. Though their original ideas may be different, consistent solution considering the interests and abilities of various stakeholders will be agreed after sufficient communication and coordination. Third, they carry out their duties and exercise their special authority respectively in order to accomplish the solution. Actually, communication and coordination still exist among the leaders during the implementation of the solution. It means that integrative leadership plays a key role all the time.

IT is integral to not only the functional-level strategies but also the business-level strategies in a firm pursuing profits, and both enhances the firm's current (ordinary) capabilities and enables new (dynamic) capabilities along with complementary organizational changes [16]. Therefore, from the perspective of elements of the integrative leadership, strategy leadership, organization leadership and IT leadership are complementary and essential to the stability and development whether in the private sector or public sector in the information era, according with the view of IS strategy triangle theory. In the relationship among three leaderships, strategy leadership plays a crucial role in major policy decisions because of more or less administrative power, especially in the public sector [31], while organization leadership and IT leadership play a bigger role in innovation and implementation [32].

This paper has several important theoretical and practical contributions. Firstly, the definition of integrative

leadership theory is extended, which is innovatively applied to solve the intra-organizational complex and common issues related to multiple stakeholders from diverse departments. Secondly, the effective framework of integrative leadership is proposed to archive organizational based-on IT strategy objectives. Drawing on the classical theory of IS strategy triangle^[19], integrative leadership triangle composed of strategy leadership, organization leadership and IT leadership is constructed. Although rooted in the context of public services delivery based on information construction, the framework of integrative leadership is not irrelevant to other strategic goals archived through IT^[33]. Thirdly, IS strategy triangle theory is innovatively applied in public sectors, not limited to private sectors only, providing significant insights for future exploration. Finally, this study also carries significant insights for practitioners. The framework derived can effectively assist top management and IT managers to incorporate strategic objectives into information construction and organization restructure both in public sectors and private sectors^[34].

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