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Title of paper: ‘Testing the Relationship between the Public Service Ethos and New Public Management’: A Quantitative Study’.

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Abstract

Testing the Relationship between the Public Service Ethos and New Public Management: A Quantitative Study.

The public service ethos is said to characterise the values in public service organisations and to provide a motivation for professionals working in those organisations. Its features include acting in the public interest, accountability, integrity, impartiality and loyalty. However, the existence of a public service ethos and commitment to a public interest is often assumed rather than demonstrated.

More recently, the impact of New Public Management (NPM) reforms, including the delivery of public services by private sector organisations, blurs the distinction between public and private interests. At the same time, the impact of such reforms, it is argued, has been to undermine a public service ethos (Hebson, Grimshaw and Marchington, 2003).

This paper reports on a section of findings from an empirical study into the commitment, beliefs and values of a sample of public sector professionals in England (Rayner, 2007). A new measure of the public service ethos, comprising three subscales; Public Service Motivation, Public Interest and Public Service Behaviour, is used. Development of the scale drew on the views of experts (N=34) and items generated subsequently were tested and re-tested with a mixture of public and private sector professionals (N= 205 and N=135). This instrument was then used with a group of public sector professionals (N=433) to test a range of hypotheses. These included predictions about the relationship between aspects of this ethos and NPM and the influence of an individual's primary role (i.e. manager or mainstream professional) on strength of alignment to NPM ideology.

Specifically, it is hypothesised that:

H1. There is a negative relationship between NPM ideology and the public service ethos

H2. Managers identify more strongly with NPM ideology than do mainstream professionals.

This paper presents results concerning; first, the nature of the relationship between NPM ideology and components of a public service ethos; second, a measurement of attitudes held by public sector professionals towards NPM providing evidence that managers and professionals differ in strength of support towards aspects of NPM.

Introduction

Agreed-upon definitions of many concepts in public policy and political science have proven elusive; the public service ethos, public interest and New Public Management (NPM) fall into that category. The notion that being a public servant requires a distinctive ethos has been influential since Plato (Plant, 2003:561). The origin and characterisation of a modern public service ethos, at least in the UK context, derive from the reforms to the civil service introduced in the 19th Century by Northcote and Trevelyan. Traditionally it has been taken for granted that there is a public service ethos and the root of that ethos could be described as public officials serving the public interest. It is claimed to consist of honesty, integrity, impartiality, probity, accountability and recruitment on merit (Lawton, 1998).

The concept of the 'public interest' has been used in different ways, and takes different forms, from, at least, the times of Thucydides onwards. The concept has been used to describe actions taken by public officials; to pass judgement on, or seek approval for, a policy decision; to distinguish a class of actions from those undertaken for private interests; or to account for the motivation of those working in the public sector. It is often described as part of a public service ethos (Pratchett and Wingfield, 1996).

NPM has, similarly, a chequered career; as a critique of traditional public administration; as an umbrella term for all manner of public sector reforms; as a set of doctrines that indicate how public services should be delivered; as a set of beliefs and values that constitute an ideology. Such wide usage and conceptual ambiguity is further complicated by the relationship between the public service ethos and NPM. Supporters of NPM argue that, in reducing public sector waste and inefficiency, NPM works in the public interest. Critics of NPM argue that it encourages competition and enhances the role of the customer at the expense of the citizen thereby substituting private interest for public interests, undermining the public service ethos (Du Gay, 2000).

Whatever labels we might use, however, it is quite clear that the public sector in many countries has undergone profound change in recent years. What is less clear is the impact of reforms on distinct services within the sector. Is local government more enterprising than central government? Within local government, has education been subject to more competition than social services? How have public service professionals in different professions responded to reforms? Indeed, is it still possible to talk of a generic public service ethos (Pratchett and Wingfield, 1996)? Although a range of assertions have been made, and questions raised, these may best be answered through empirical research. The first part of this paper seeks to clarify the public service ethos and NPM constructs and the relationships between them; the second part attempts to measure attitudes, beliefs and values concerning their components.

Recent evidence of the strength or even existence of a public service ethos is not apparent and the substantiation of change is fragmentary and often relies on secondary data sources (Ackroyd, Kirkpatrick and Walker, 2007). Further, it is claimed that NPM erodes the public service ethos (Hebson *et al.*, 2003) and also that these two constructs are negatively related (see Doig and Wilson, 1998). Verification of these claims, to date, are lacking in the literature. One reason for this may be that an

appropriate instrument to measure an NPM construct was not available. Therefore, items to capture the beliefs and values of NPM ideology were generated and contextualised to relate to the particular occupational sector and exploratory factor analysis was employed to assess the underlying structure of NPM and develop the instrument.

The study was conducted with learning professionals employed in colleges delivering further and higher education programmes in England (N=433). This sector has, since 1993, been subject to competition, to private sector models of management, to the employment of professional managers, to strict financial guidelines, to changes in working conditions and to performance regimes. Therefore, it provides an ideal site to investigate the relationship between public service ethos and NPM where it is hypothesised that:

H1. There is a negative relationship between NPM ideology and the public service ethos

To summarise, this paper is concerned with two areas of investigation. The first relates to the development of a measure to capture NPM ideology, the second to test inter-relationships between NPM and two components of public service ethos (Rayner and Lawton, 2008).

The final part of the paper discusses the findings and concludes with direction for future research.

The public service ethos and the public interest

There is a widely held belief (at least in western democracies) that a public service ethos exists and that it is a 'good thing'. This ethos guides the behaviour of all those involved in public life providing continuity and consensus across a wide range of professions and organisations (Pratchett and Wingfield, 1996; Rayner and Lawton, 2008). The House of Commons Public Administration Select Committee (PASC) (2002:1) define an ethos as:

...a principled framework for action, something that describes the general character of an organisation, but which, and more importantly, should also motivate those who belong to it.

The ethos both describes an existing state of affairs and acts as an inspiration to those who work in public service organisations. The PASC identified common threads to that ethos and these included impartiality, accountability, trust, equity, probity and service. They also argued that those working in the private sector could also exhibit that ethos and provide the example of social care in which private providers can demonstrate a public service ethos.

And yet, as we know, the public sector is just as likely to have been characterised by 'jobs for the boys', misguided loyalties, 'red tape', 'empire-building', secrecy or privileging the interests of professionals at the expense of their patients or clients (Lawton, 1998).

Pratchett and Wingfield (1994:14) conclude that:

The public service ethos is a confused and ambiguous concept which is only given meaning by its organisational and functional situation, and may be subject to very different interpretations over both time and location.

Additionally, the concept of the public interest is multi-faceted, embracing a notion of citizenship, a concern with a common good, a distinction between public and private interests and a theory of human nature and motivation. The concept is used to describe, justify and gain support for decisions that are taken by public officials. Decisions taken 'in the public interest' are said to be 'better decisions', in some sense, than those taken in support of private or group interests. The public interest is at the heart of our understanding of democracy and provides the rationale for much public service delivery. It is linked to conceptions of justice, fairness and equity and requires empathy, compassion, altruism and benevolence. Yet, there is a fundamental tension between commitment to individuals and commitment to groups. There is also a distinction to be made between the overall public interest of the state to support and protect and a public interest as perceived by multitudes of public officials (O'Toole, 2000).

It is, for example, too simplistic to argue that managers look after the interests of all and professionals look to the interests of their patients and clients without consideration of the greater good. Officials have a general duty of beneficence to do what they can to help others (Moore, 1981). Yet this may be in conflict with the more general requirement to consider the consequences of policies they advocate or implement. They must balance the duty of beneficence to individuals with their duty to serve the public interest. We might expect our public officials to act out of a duty of care towards patients and clients, not customers or consumers.

Of course the distinction between citizens, customers and users has become more critical in recent years, with the language of the customer dominating our public discourse, making the concept of the public interest even more problematic. (see Du Gay and Salaman, 1992; Office of Public Services Reform, 2002)

Public officials perform a range of functions and roles and will have different perceptions on what the duties of a public official are. Within the local government context we find a broad variety of professionals imbued with their own ethos (see Pratchett and Wingfield, 1996); we also find middle managers and front-line staff working in a range of core and non-core service areas, carrying out both statutory and non-statutory duties. However, how do appointed public officials themselves perceive their role? What motivates them? For example, Le Grand (2003) distinguishes between public officials as Knaves, who act in their self-interest, and Knights, who help others for no private reward and, indeed, sometimes to their own disadvantage. Knightly activities do not necessarily lead to the public good: the doctor who looks after patients may not have the same agenda as the policy-maker. Thus particular obligations come into conflict with more universal ones. Also, the status of the Knight can change if the Knave-like behaviour seems to be rewarded.

The role and definition of the public interest as defined by those working within and for the public services, are not clear. The public interest balances different values and

interests (Lewis, 2004). Recent evidence seems to indicate that the search for agreement in a set of common values is problematic. The Audit Commission (2002; para 35:17) finds that public and private sector managers working in partnership are motivated by different goals and that the most important factor in joining the public service is “to make a difference.”

“But for a few making a difference is not the same as ‘working for the common good’ which can only happen in not-for-profit sectors. For this group, working for society as a whole rather than those who can afford to pay for treatment or services, or for the benefit of shareholders, is a crucial motivation. And for some respondents, although service the public had not been their main reason for joining the public sector, it was something they came to appreciate and value.

Further, the concept of professional judgement and autonomy, at the heart of decision-making to further the public interest, is seen by Pollitt (1993) to be in tension with NPM. The process underlying change in the public sector has implications for professional-managerial relations where individual judgement has been reduced and controlled by the institutionalisation of good practice (Freidson, 1994). Despite claims that NPM promotes the ‘common good’ in terms of cheaper and better services it has also been accused of being self-serving, promoting career interests for top managers labelled ‘new managerialists’ (Pollitt, 1993).

The picture however, is complex as often public sector professionals possess dual professional and managerial responsibilities (Fitzgerald and Ferlie, 2000). This has required them to adopt different values such as competitiveness, entrepreneurialism, and strategic thinking and develop different skills and new competencies such as the ability to produce business plans, marketing, tendering, and writing output specifications (Clarke and Newman, 1993). Some public sector managers have been converted to these new ways of managing; others felt they could be marginalised if they did not converse in this ‘new language’ of business (Hebson *et al.*, 2003). The second hypothesis is concerned with measuring the strength of alignment to NPM.

H2. Managers identify more strongly with NPM ideology than do mainstream professionals.

New Public Management

Although the term ‘New Public Management’ (NPM) is of a more recent vintage than public service ethos it is similarly problematic and a recent critique argued for its abandonment altogether (Hughes, 2008). NPM has been characterised in different ways and few are identical (see Hood, 1991; Ferlie, Pettigrew, Ashburner and Fitzgerald, 1996; Lane, 2000; Pollitt and Bouckaert, 2000). However, the fact that it is difficult to pin down should not detract from its normative value. The adoption of NPM is not just the adoption of a neutral set of tools to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of public service organisations. It can also be seen as a commitment to a preferred way of doing business; to a belief that delivering public services through a decentralised system, that embraces the private and voluntary sectors and finds a role for the market is, in some sense, ‘better’; it is an ideology. Such a normative position attracts both supporters and opponents. Supporters of NPM argue that public service

organisations are too rule-bound and need to be more enterprising, innovative and responsive to the customer and that business-like practices should be adopted. The enterprising agenda (Du Gay and Salaman, 1992) has been with us for some time, perhaps best depicted by Osborne and Gaebler (1992). This agenda has been endorsed by successive UK governments and elsewhere. Critics argue that, in promoting such an entrepreneurial agenda, the public service ethos is undermined and close collaboration with the private sector will lead to an increase in corrupt behaviour where private interest is put before the public good (Du Gay, 2000).

One of the effects of public sector reform has been that it is difficult, increasingly, to define what the public sector and a public service is, and there is empirical evidence of convergence with the private sector (Poole, Mansfield and Gould-Williams, 2006). Pressures from working in partnership with other types of organisation in, for example Public-Private Partnerships, is also said to weaken the public service ethos (Hebson *et al.*, 2003). The concept of acting in the public interest becomes problematic as private sector organisations involved in the delivery of public services are still concerned to act in the interests of their shareholders, first and foremost.

At the same time citizens have become customers and consumers and the extent to which this has changed the relationship between the individual and the state (Alford, 2002) not least in terms of the relationships between public service professionals and their patients, clients or students, needs to be investigated.

As mentioned earlier, professional judgement, it is argued, is challenged by this aspect of NPM. One feature of such reforms has been to question the knowledge, autonomy and self-regulation of such professionals (Foster and Wilding, 2000). Additionally, critics argue that NPM has adverse consequences on the traditional values that characterise the delivery of public services (Doig and Wilson, 1998; Frederickson, 2005). Others argue that reforms can be accommodated within a traditional public service ethos (Needham, 2006; Brereton and Temple, 1999)

Notwithstanding such claims, attempts to measure the relationships between the concepts discussed above are few and far between. This may be explained by the fact that a review of the literature revealed that suitable scales to measure the NPM construct were not available. This made it necessary to develop an instrument to facilitate such measurement and test the hypotheses formulated.

Development of Scales

The strength of public service motivation has been measured previously. For example, by using Perry's (1996) scale consisting of 24-items and four dimensions (attraction to policy making, commitment to public interest, compassion and self-sacrifice). This scale is considered to be too long for "...inclusion in a typical public administration survey questionnaire" (Coursey and Padney, 2007: 548). Also, items in the scale do not appear to target the generic public official (e.g. *Politics is a dirty word.*) even though the scale was tested using a mixed set of respondents, and there may be difficulties in applying items in a different setting (e.g. *To me, patriotism includes seeing to the welfare of others.*). Vandenabeele (2008) adds an extra dimension of 'Democratic Governance' to Perry's scale. Rayner (2007) developed a 9-item scale comprising three components to measure the public service ethos. These sub-scales

were labelled; Public Service Motivation; Public Interest and Public Service Behaviour. When used in a test and re-test study each sub-scale achieved good temporal stability and reliability with Pearson correlation coefficients reported from .76 to .81 and Cronbach alphas ranging from .66 to .72 (see appendix A for sub-scale items and alphas).

NPM more generally presents a set of beliefs involving competition and market forces **and** the introduction of audit and inspection controls and performance regimes. A key question is the extent to which individual public sector professionals identify with these developments. For example, a high level of agreement with a set of beliefs and values would suggest that individuals have internalised these and think of them as their own (Kelman, 1958). This paper explains the development of a measure to allow relationships between NPM and a public service ethos to be tested. It is intended that this scale captures the fundamental values that characterise NPM. Empirical research of this kind requires clear explanations of how variables are measured and the process operationalizing them involves reducing them to observable characteristic behaviour (Kline, 2000a). This can be problematic as stated earlier, there are various definitions of NPM. A starting-off point for many scholars is Hood's (1991:4-5) original identification of seven doctrines:

1. A focus on hands-on professional management.
2. Explicit standards and measures of performance.
3. Greater emphasis on output controls.
4. The importance of the disaggregation and decentralization of public services.
5. A shift to promotion of competition in the provision of public services.
6. A stress on private sector styles of management.
7. The promotion of discipline and parsimony in resource allocation..

In practice, not all of the doctrines identified by Hood have been adopted throughout the public sector universally and where they have been adopted it may only be in part (Pollitt, 2000). The extent to which these have been used to capture all reforms in public services is a moot point (Hughes, 2008).

Although the literature presents NPM as doctrines, the focus in the development of the measure in the present study is on the two underpinning components, **beliefs** in competition as well as **controls** via information systems, targets, and inspections. Therefore, items were generated around Hood's doctrines 1,2,3,5 and 6 as they were perceived to have greater relevance to learning professionals within the further education sector. It was necessary to contextualize some items using terms like 'student and college' although it is intended that these descriptors are adapted for use in other public sector organisations. Table 1 shows the pool of items generated to measure NPM ideology. These were operationalized using 5-point Likert scales (Strongly Disagree = 1 and Strongly Agree = 5) a technique widely regarded as ideal for measurement of attitudes (e.g. Nunnally, 1978). Attention was given to simplicity of wording, optimum item length, and the avoidance of, for example, leading questions, double negatives and double-barrelled questions (see Oppenheim, 1992; DeVellis, 2003). The instrument contains items that require reverse keying (see DeVellis, 2003) and high scores indicate the strength of the participant's identification with the construct.

Table 1
Pool Items to Assess New Public Management Ideology

<i>NPM Ideology (Emphasis on Beliefs such as Competition, Market Forces, and Right to Manage using Targets and Controls)</i>
1. League tables are a valuable measure of how public sector organisations perform.
2. League tables allow the general public to have an informed choice.
3. Market forces in public sector services such as education, undermine professional values. (R)
4. Competition and rivalry is the key to better professional standards.
5. Learning professionals should focus on achieving excellence in teaching rather than satisfying the demands of students, parents and employers. (R)
6. I think it is good to view students as customers.
7. I am happy to let managers have control over how I do my work.
8. I do not resent intervention from managers in the way I perform my professional duties.
9. Freedom to decide the best way to perform my professional duties should not be compromised by commercial considerations. (R).
10. External inspections are the best way to raise standards in colleges.
11. The external inspection process makes me feel that learning professionals are not trusted. (R)
12. Competing for students should be an important part of my role.
13. It is important to support management information demands fully.
14. Colleges should only offer courses that include some type of formal assessment such as a test.
15. Time spent providing management information detracts from what I believe are more important aspects of my role. (R)
16. I often feel compromised by the targets I am set in this occupation. (R)
17. Ideally, I would prefer to work in the private rather than the public sector. (R)
(R) = Reverse Key

Survey Administration

As stated earlier, the data used to develop a measure of NPM ideology were collected from a survey of professional staff in colleges. Although equally, research into different public sector contexts (e.g. the health service, police, social services, or the higher education sector) would be feasible populations in which to conduct this research as they have been subject to NPM reform (Exworthy and Halford, 1999). The generic term, ‘learning professionals’ is used to include both lecturers and those whose role it is to manage lecturers (see Guile and Lucas, 1999).

The survey was self-administered and N=433 completed questionnaires were returned from participants representing 14 colleges spread geographically in England. The response rate varied between 0% and 36% for individual colleges and with an overall average of 18%. This suggests that in some colleges the survey may not have been widely distributed. The average response rate however, was 18%.

Participants’ job titles range from ‘Learning Support’ to ‘Chief Executive’. Eighty-three per cent of respondents are mainstream lecturers and 13 per cent managers, generically referred to as learning professionals. The remaining four per cent of participants are categorised as ‘Functional or Technical Support’. The sample includes a full range of curricula with the largest group of participants represented from Science, Mathematics and Computing (47), and Business, Management and Professional Studies (46) curriculum areas. There is relatively equal representation of male (47.6%) and female (52.2%) and that 90.5 per cent of participants were permanent staff, 80.4 per cent were full-time, and 7.6 per cent employed on fixed-

term contracts. Further, 49.2 per cent possessed a first degree and an additional 18.7 per cent were qualified at a Masters level. Others were professionally qualified in vocational areas outside of teaching (e.g. RGN Nurse).

Commonly, factor analysis is used when developing measures to identify the underlying structure of data as it allows a large set of scale items to be condensed to a number of dimensions or factors (Cattell, 1978; Child, 1990; Kline, 1994; Pallant, 2005). As the criterion for a study is to obtain an empirical summary of the data set the Principal Components Analysis (PCA) method is claimed by Tabachnick and Fidell, (2001) to be a better choice. It is also reasonable to assume a relationship between the components of NPM, therefore data underwent the oblique method of rotation using Direct Oblimin to identify the underlying structure (Field, 2005). PCA of the 17 items designed for use in the survey indicated that five components with eigenvalues > 1, explained 56 per cent of the variance.

The rotated solution revealed a number of items loaded > .5 whereas items that cross-loaded above .4 were removed. As recommended by Henson and Roberts (2006) parallel analysis was performed on the remaining items (Watkins 2000) resulting in the retention of a 6-item two-component structure with eigenvalues > 1 and explaining 66 per cent of the variance (see table 2). The item numbers presented in the table refers to an item's order of placement generated to tap the NPM construct.

Table 2
Exploratory Factor Analysis Pattern and Structure Coefficients Derived from Direct Oblimin Rotation for 6 Items in the New Public Management Scale

Item	Factor 1		Factor 2	
	NPMB		NPMC	
	P	S	P	S
2. League tables allow the general public to have an informed choice.	.94	.90	-.13	.19
1. League tables are a valuable measure of how well colleges perform.	.90	.89	-.01	.29
10. External inspections are the best way to raise standards in colleges.	.60	.66	.18	.38
15. Time spent providing management information detracts from other, more important aspects of my role. (R)	-.09	.20	.86	.83
16. I often feel compromised by the targets I am set. (R)	-.02	.25	.82	.81
11. The external inspection process makes me feel that learning professionals are not trusted. (R)	.31	.49	.54	.65
Per cent variance explained	44.9		20.6	
Cronbach Alpha	.76		.66	

Note: NPMB= New Public Management Beliefs; NPMC New Public Management Controls; P = pattern coefficients; S = structure coefficients; Pattern coefficients > .40 are boldfaced.

Factor 1 in table 2 is representative of NPM Beliefs. The second component captures the elements that are part of the controls fundamental to NPM. The alpha reliabilities of these two NPM components are, .76, .66 with an overall alpha for the six items achieving .72. The correlation between these two sub-scales is $r = .34$ indicating they

can be used as one scale (Watson, Clark and Telligen, 1988). Traditionally, measures are considered reliable if they achieve a coefficient alpha of .7 or above (Cronbach, 1951; Kline, 2000a; 2000b). In this study the sub-scales adopted demonstrated good reliability although some alphas reported are lower than .7. Although not ideal, above .6 can be considered satisfactory (DeVellis, 2003).

Results and Findings

Table 3 reports reliability estimates for each of the constructs included in the analysis, as well as zero-order correlations between them (See Appendix B). Cronbach alphas ranged from .63 to .76. Relationships between the sub-scales are mainly analysed using correlation and regression techniques. As it is possible that personal characteristics such as age, gender, education, tenure, role can also explain variance in outcomes linked public service ethos and NPM (Pratchett and Wingfield, 1996; Gleeson and Shain, 1999) the effects of these were controlled by entering them in Step 1 of the hierarchical regression analyses that follow.

Depending on the model tested, results from R^2 show that in the present study, these controls, explain in total, between three and 11 per cent of variance. The findings from hierarchical regression are shown in summary tables. The first column lists the dependent variable in each case and the second column provides the R^2 from the seven controls that comprise Step 1. The column headed ‘Step 2’ ΔR^2 indicates the extra or unique amount of variance explained by the predictor variable followed by column showing the unstandardised beta (B), the standard error (SE B) and the standardised betas (β) relating to the predictor variables from Step 2. An alpha level of .05 was used for the determination of statistical significance of all results (Field, 2005).

To test relationships between those variables discussed earlier and satisfy hypotheses, dimensions of the NPM constructs are regressed in relation to the public service ethos dimensions. Hypotheses 1 and 2 are expanded to H1a, H2b, *etc.*, to include these dimensions and these are expressed in full at the end of the section. However, as the Public Service Behaviour sub-scale did not suggest satisfactory reliability in the present study ($\alpha = .57$) it was not used to test relationships. Therefore, tables 4 and 5 show the strength and direction of relationships between two of the sub-scales measuring the public service ethos and NPM Beliefs and NPM Controls.

Table 4
Summary of Hierarchical Regression Analyses for NPM Beliefs

Dependent Variable	Step 1 Controls R^2	Step 2 ΔR^2	B	SE B	β
NPM Controls	.11	.16	.40	.05	.41***
Public Service Motivation	.03	.01	-.07	.05	-.08
Public Interest	.04	.02	-.13	.05	-.16**

Significance * $p < 0.05$ ** $p < 0.01$ *** $p < 0.001$ n = 320 to 330

Table 5
Summary of Hierarchical Regression Analyses for NPM Controls

Dependent Variable	Step 1 Controls R ²	Step 2 ΔR^2	B	SE B	β
NPM Beliefs	.06	.16	.43	.05	.43***
Public Service Motivation	.03	.01	-.07	.05	-.08
Public Interest	.04	.04	-.16	.05	-.25***

Significance *p<0.05 ** p<0.01 *** p<0.001 n = 320 to 330

It is evident from these results that NPM Beliefs positively explains unique variance in NPM Controls ($\Delta R^2 = 0.16$, $p < 0.001$) and is negatively associated with Public Interest ($\beta = -0.16$, $p < 0.01$). Notably, NPM Controls is also negatively related to Public Interest, ($\beta = -0.25$, $p < 0.001$). The relationship between NPM Beliefs and NPM Controls towards Public Service Motivation although negative, do not reach significance ($\beta = -0.08$ ns). Table 6 presents the hypotheses and reports the decision whether or not they are supported.

Table 6
Hypotheses Examining Relationships Between NPM and Public Service Ethos

Hypothesis	Relationship	Decision
H1a	There is a negative relationship between NPM Beliefs and Public Service Motivation.	Unsupported
H1b	There is a negative relationship between NPM Beliefs and Public Interest.	Accept
H1c	There is a negative relationship between NPM Controls and Public Service Motivation.	Unsupported
H1d	There is a negative relationship between NPM Controls and Public Interest.	Accept

Primary role and strength of identification with NPM

The six items used as measures of NPM ideology were subject to t-tests and demonstrate where mean scores for these two categories of learning professionals differ significantly. Table 7 provides the means, standard deviations, F and t-test statistics of the differences between the mean scores and the mid-point (based on a 5-point scale). Scores reported by lecturers (as opposed to managers) are significantly lower on item numbers 11, 15, and 16 representing NPM Controls.

Table 7
Means, Standard Deviations and t test Difference Between Mean Scores for Lecturers and Managers on 6 Items in the New Public Management Scale

Item	Mean		Standard Deviation		F Statistic	t-test difference
	Lecturer	Manager	Lecturer	Manager		
2. League tables allow the general public to have an informed choice.	2.45	2.62	.99	1.06	1.52	-.170
1. League tables are a valuable measure of how well colleges perform.	2.60	2.40	1.01	1.14	2.65	.199
10. External inspections are the best way to raise standards in colleges.	2.79	2.87	1.12	1.06	.94	-.08
15. Time spent providing management information detracts from other, more important aspects of my role. (R)	2.09	2.85	.94	1.26	16.49	-.76***
16. I often feel compromised by the targets I am set. (R)	2.89	3.45	1.12	1.14	.10	-.56***
11. The external inspection process makes me feel that learning professionals are not trusted. (R)	2.36	2.83	.10	1.22	5.71	-.47**
*p<0.05 ** p<0.01 *** p<0.001 Lecturers n = 355 to 359 Managers n = 52 to 53						

Table 8 shows H2a is unsupported whereas H2b is supported

Table 8

Hypotheses Examining Strength of identification with NPM		
H2a	The identification with NPM Beliefs is significantly stronger for Managers than for mainstream professionals	Unsupported
H2b	The identification with NPM Controls is significantly stronger for Managers than for mainstream professionals	Accept

The significant direct effects evident in this paper show mixed results although lend support in part to the hypothesised relationships of interest in the literature.

Discussion

As stated previously, a main area of debate is the negative impact of NPM on public service ethos, particularly with reference to the public interest (Hebson *et al.*, 2003; Du Gay and Salaman, 1992). For example, the Audit Commission (2002:58) states that, “The traditional view of the public service ethos emphasises service, duty and obligation, rather than financial viability, profit or shareholder value”. The study shows, as predicted, there are negative relationships between the NPM Beliefs and Controls sub-scales towards the Public Interest sub-scale. This finding supports claims that the values surrounding the ‘public interest’ and ‘new public management’ are ‘antithetical’ as suggested by Doig and Wilson (1998).

The negative relationship hypothesised between the NPM Beliefs and Public Service Motivation sub-scales however, did not reach significance suggesting the picture is not clear cut as the claim that public service ethos is negatively related to NPM is only partially supported. This indicates that the situation is more complicated than the literature suggests as some elements of NPM and public service ethos are not incompatible. This finding begs the question of whether it is indeed possible to identify a generic public service ethos that can apply to all those organisations and individuals involved in the delivery of public services. As we have suggested neither the concept of the public service ethos nor NPM is straightforward and examination of taken-for-granted assumptions reveals their complexity.

For example, it is evident that many professionals are in favour of league tables and inspections and find them valuable. In which case, it is helpful to consider dimensions of these constructs individually, rather than, generically. Moreover, this study adds strength to this argument that public sector professionals see the value of both a public service ethos and parts of NPM Ideology. This would support the view of Denhardt and Denhardt, (2000; 2007) that the future could be represented by some form of hybrid manager. For example, Dawson and Dargie (2002) observed that the professional managers in the health service exhibit interesting mixtures of entrepreneurial and professional values and label them “hybrids”.

Interestingly, results were also mixed for H2 as although levels of agreement towards NPM ideology are generally higher for managers than lecturers’ they were only significantly so for the NPM Controls sub-scale and not NPM Beliefs. This makes theoretical and practical sense as employees who are more actively engaged in decision making throughout an organisation (i.e. managers) are expected to report higher levels of agreement with NPM suggesting this is contingent on primary role. As explained previously, NPM ideology has empowered managers as the accountability of mainstream professionals (and in this case lecturers) to managers has increased. For example, in the occupational sector of the present study Faculty Heads (amongst others) are now budget holders and have greater financial management responsibilities in terms of generating income and this acts as a form of professional control. As such, they require professionals to complete tasks according to agreed criteria of performance and produce evidence of this through, for example, information systems.

Additionally, managers will see their role as supporting NPM Controls as part of their duties will be focused on management information systems, competing with other colleges and meeting the requirements of audits and inspections whereas lecturers may not. Their focus may be more on delivering and assessing curricula. Nevertheless, it is fair to treat this research with some caution until further replication and validation is conducted. Only future research will show if issues of variance between public sector contexts towards dimensions of NPM Ideology and these dimensions of public service ethos are evident.

Conclusion

The development of a psychometrically sound instrument to measure NPM and the public service ethos has enabled current norms, values, and ethos possessed by this occupational group to be tested showing relationships between these sub-scales. Therefore, this research more accurately facilitates the testing of claims and assumptions made within the literature, generates a greater understanding of the relationships between these particular constructs, and provides a different perspective from the majority of research in this field.

The adoption of a quantitative approach to the issues of interest in this paper has contributed to the field in four specific areas. The first contribution is in the development of a scale to measure NPM Beliefs and Controls. Second, the net effect is that these findings add to the body of knowledge regarding NPM and public service ethos constructs.

Third, these measures have provided a benchmark to make comparisons against other organisations within or outside the public sector. Such data can be useful in any longitudinal or future research to indicate if values are changing; for example, to substantiate or refute claims as to whether or not NPM dilutes public service ethos.

Fourth, the issues raised represent a substantial research agenda for future empirical studies. Initially, an obvious avenue of investigation would be to conduct similar studies using these newly developed measures in other public sector contexts (e.g., health service, police, social services). Such use would test for robustness and establish if these results are generalizable or whether they are unique to professionals in the further and higher education sector.

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APPENDIX A: Survey Measures

Public Service Ethos Scale

The scale used to measure public service ethos was newly developed in a survey of 205 public and private sector professionals and a re-test data of N=135 (Rayner and Lawton, 2008). It comprises three sub-scales measuring Public Service Behaviour, Public Interest and Public Service Motivation. However, the scale reliability estimates reported for the Public Service Behaviour sub-scale did not achieve satisfactory reliability when used with this sample of learning professionals. These sub-scales contain a total of 9-items and reported reliabilities are from three different studies, including the current survey.

Public Service Motivation

1. Making a difference to society means more to me than personal achievements.
2. It is important to me that the work I do is considered to be motivated by altruism rather than personal gain.
3. I am motivated more by financial reward rather than making a positive contribution to the lives of individuals. (R)

Test, re-test and current survey respectively achieved $\alpha = .65, .68, .66$

Public Interest

4. I believe the public sector should not be concerned with profit.
5. In general, public services should be provided on the basis of need rather than ability to pay
6. I believe the culture of a further education college should, primarily, be concerned with helping students.

Test, re-test and current survey respectively achieved $\alpha = .68, .72, .66$

Public Service Behaviour

7. There is too much waste in public sector organisations.(R)
8. Private sector organisations deliver services to the public more efficiently and effectively than public sector organisations. (R)
9. Adopting private sector management styles is a good way of running public sector organisations. (R)

Test, re-test and current survey respectively achieved $\alpha = .65, .71, .57$.

Appendix B

Table 3
Correlation Matrix: Means, Standard Deviations, and Inter-correlations for all Continuous and Dichotomous Variables

Variables	M	SD	1	2	3	4	8	9	10	11	12	13
1. Age	45.95	9.46										
2. Further Education Tenure	11.77	8.35	.56**	NA								
3. College Tenure	9.00	7.48	.44**	.76*	NA							
4. Role Tenure	5.61	5.54	.29**	.45*	.52**	NA						
5. Public Service Motivation	3.75	.69	.12*	.07	.07	.00	(.67)					
6. Public Interest	4.18	.67	.13*	.19*	.17**	.17**	.32*	(.63)				
7. NPM Beliefs	2.62	.86	.02	-.04	-.05	-.16*	-.03	-.21*	(.66)			
8. NPM Controls	2.54	.82	-.16**	-.23*	-.22**	-.11*	-.10*	-.22*	.41**	(.76)		
9. Lecturer or Manager	1.13	.34	.07	.20*	.15**	-.13**	.08	-.03	.25**	.00	NA	
10. Gender	1.52	.50	-.17**	-.18*	-.17**	-.11*	.03	-.02	.09	.09	-.05	NA
11. Education	1.26	.44	.18**	.18*	.11*	-.05	-.05	-.07	.11*	-.06	.24*	.02

Note. *p< 0.05 ** p< 0.01 (Two Tailed) Cronbach Alpha in parenthesis n = 387 to n = 401