

Pathway, Motivation and Control: Alienation and Correction in Civil Servant Assessment

-- Experience in Chinese Civil Service Management

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Abstract: As an important part of civil servants' daily management, the assessment is not only a regulation and restraint on civil servants' behavior and performance of their duties, but also an indispensable means to arouse civil servants' enthusiasm. However, in the practice of many public departments, the alienation behavior such as "alternating sitting" and "selective report" has appeared in an endless stream, and the existing research mainly starts from the optimization of the specific assessment elements and methods, and lacks the discussion on the mechanism of the formation behind the alienation phenomenon. By combing through the process of civil service appraisal system, this paper distinguishes four types of appraisal alienation: operation blitz, information distortion, distribution equalization and application formalization. Extracting three key variables of the appraisal path, motivation mechanism and control mechanism, the clear appraisal path continuously compresses the planning space of the civil servant appraisal, and sufficient motivation mechanism can directly enhance the participation of appraisal, and the exertion of the appraisal path and motivation function cannot be separated from the restraint adjustment of the control mechanism. Then from the clear path, strengthen the motivation mechanism, maintain the control mechanism, realize the appraisal alienation behavior correction and the integrity optimization of the civil servant appraisal mechanism.

Keywords: Chinese civil servant; Assessment alienation; Assessment path; Motivation; Control mechanisms.

1. Question Presents: Assessment Alienation and Research Status

Civil service assessment is based on the relevant legal provisions, the content of daily work of civil servants and the performance of their duties to make a certain degree of inspection and evaluation, with the aim of fully mobilizing the work enthusiasm of personnel through the assessment work, and to make a certain regulatory adjustment to the performance of the public sector to improve the overall performance of the public service to better provide quality. But in the actual civil service appraisal work, "egalitarianism [1]," selective report [2], "and" conspiracy to implement "the appraisal alienation phenomenon frequently appears, makes the appraisal function to play a big discount, the civil service appraisal work has a great risk of" formalism "fall.

Existing research includes "Assessment Game" [3], "Motivational Distortion" [4] and "Strategic Response" [5] to explore the relevant interpretations of assessment alienation. Specific research contents include the identification and division of alienation phenomenon in the appraisal process, some scholars note the alienation phenomenon in the performance management system and make theoretical analysis of its three kinds of performance [6]; There is also identification of alienation in the assessment based on whether there are significant differences in actual departmental performance and reported performance [7]. At the same time, the author also probes into the reasons for the alienation behavior. Through theoretical analysis, some scholars point out that conformity behavior, high performance target, lack of recognition of appraisal system, insufficient supervision, performance reward and punishment system are the factors that lead to alienation of appraisal.

With regard to civil service assessment, the relevant

research topics are mainly carried out from the perspective of individuals, elements, functions, organizations and responses (table1). Some scholars think that the lack of special appraisal body, the design and appraisal method of the appraisal index are unreasonable, the failure of motivation function and appraisal information do not bring great difficulties to the development of the appraisal, the singularity of the appraisal subject and appraisal means seriously affects the credibility of the appraisal result, in addition, the political nature of the appraisal, personal motivation and purpose are likely to influence the appraisal result. Some scholars put forward the perfection of civil service appraisal mechanism from the strategic, balance and synergy of appraisal [12]; There are also the principles of objectivity, democracy, openness, dynamic development, quality and classification [13] [14], the systematic and comprehensive construction of the civil service assessment system. In view of the many problems in civil servants' appraisal process, the academic community has focused on improving the appraisal system by setting up special appraisal institutions, starting from the dimensions, heights, standards and trustworthiness of the appraisal, perfecting the appraisal indexes and procedures, strengthening the application of the appraisal results, playing an encouraging role in the appraisal, and improving the quality of the appraisers [16], so as to realize the promotion of the appraisal system under correct value orientation and standardized appraisal.

The existing research on civil servant appraisal, whether from the specific process of appraisal, the analysis of related problems of appraisal, or the construction of appraisal index, has been expounded in detail. However, the current research still focuses on the phenomenon of alienation in response to appraisal, describing and enumerating the occasional phenomenon, and lacks the classification of alienation phenomenon in a specific framework. The research on the

forming mechanism behind alienation is scattered, lacking the grasp of key factors, and the homogenization of appraisal, lacking the study of differentiated civil servant appraisal in different departments. The stranglehold of the alienation of civil servants assessment benefits from the interaction of the

integral institutional elements and forms a systematic solution to the alienation puzzle. Therefore, a theoretical analysis framework is urgently needed to form a holistic approach to the alienation of civil servants through a comprehensive grasp of functions, phenomena and operations.

Table 1. Major Issues in the Assessment of Chinese Civil Servants in the Last 20 Years

A. Individual	B. Factor	C. Organization	D. Function	E. Response
A1. Subjective likes	B1. Index system	C1. Organizational culture	D1. Motivation function	E1. Equalitarianism
A2. Logical bias	B2. Methods of assessment	C2. Structure of the organization	D2. Command function	E2. Clemency
A3. Quality of personnel	B3. Appraisal bodies	C3. Informal communication	D3. Constraint function	E3. Raid operation
A4. Behavioral motivation	B4. Performance feedback	C4. information	D4. Mapping feature	E4. Efforts to replace
A5. Leadership impressions	B5. Assessment tools	C5. communication	D5. Oversight function	E5. Selective reporting
	B6. Performance cycle		D6. Improved functionality	E6. twist
	B7. Results Application			E7. flexible
				E8. The conspiracy

2. Theoretical Model: Alienation of Assessment under Multiple Factors

2.1. Theoretical elements

2.1.1. Assessment path

One of the leaders' tasks is to help subordinates achieve their goals through clear and unobstructed paths. The implementation of civil service appraisal requires not only the establishment of appraisal goals, but also the detailed implementation of appraisal, including appraisal subjects, appraisal goals and appraisal contents. The existing content of civil servants' examination and appraisal mainly focuses on virtue, ability, diligence, performance and integrity. These indexes are all too vague and abstract to a certain extent. It is necessary to further refine and demonstrate the appraisal indexes on this basis in the actual appraisal work, so that they can be measured or observed before the appraisal work can be carried out in a normal and orderly manner.

2.1.2. Motivation mechanisms

From the point of view of principal-agent theory, the motivation mechanism is based on the assumption of rational "economic man", so as to eliminate the opportunistic behavior of agents such as "adverse selection" and "moral hazard", and realize the unity of utility between principal and agent. Therefore, in the appraisal process, it is necessary to have a process motivation for the appraisal subject and the appraisal organization to strengthen the principal-agent relationship, so that the appraiser can perform the appraisal work impartially according to the specific performance appraisal work requirements. From the perspective of equity theory, the best motivation lies in distributional fairness [24]. Moreover, the special nature of the civil service's own profession dictates

that it should be understood as complex [25], so that motivations should focus not only on a combination of material and spiritual motivations, but also on the mutual transformation of motivations and health factors [27].

2.1.3. Control mechanisms

The control mechanism is reflected in supervision, feedback and adjustment in the process of civil service appraisal. Supervision is the supervision of the whole process, through the relevant supervision mechanism, to ensure the normative and scientific nature of the evaluation process. And according to the high frequency process and the result feedback, makes the timely adjustment transition to the question which appears in the appraisal, lets the entire appraisal process have the flexibility and the independent study ability, thus satisfies the appraisal dynamic and the system toughness request, restricts the civil servant appraisal behavior variation. In the role of control mechanism, not only the goal of performance management, the monitoring of goal implementation, the evaluation of performance, the feedback of evaluation results and the application of feedback results all involve the realization of control mechanism, but also the control mechanism can directly influence the differential gain effect of motivation mechanism on the professional happiness of civil servants. Some scholars [29] in the performance evaluation of township governments in the control and game study, the different degrees of control make township governments in response to performance evaluation in a variety of game.

2.2. Alienation mechanism

2.2.1. Path blurring creates plot space

First, the content of the evaluation index is fuzzy, which provides an opportunity for creative interpretation or

diversion. Second, because of the serious information gap between the appraising object and the appraising person, the appraising period is too long to meet the needs of the final appraising. Third, the main body of the assessment is unclear about the creation of a plan. Department heads often have significant information advantages in civil service appraisal work, which results in department heads competing with personnel departments for appraisal rights. Fourth, the main body interaction produces the stratagem, the department leader and the department civil servant in the daily work frequent interaction, in addition to being able to form the department civil servant work to know more fully, also very difficult to avoid it to produce other communication and the interest relation, then forms the interest community, in the civil servant appraisal work produces the conspiracy behavior.

2.2.2. Controlling weak expansion system constraints

There is no perfect system, only the most appropriate system [30], the civil service examination and appraisal system needs to be continuously perfected and adjusted in the course of operation. However, the inherent maladies of the system will be magnified in the operation of the actors. At this time, it is necessary to keep effective control mechanism including supervision, feedback and adjustment, so as to make timely adjustment to the operation of the whole system to ensure its reasonable and normal operation. However, in the process of evaluating departmental civil servants, the control mechanism is greatly weakened due to the limited communication of information between departments and the powerful role of informal communication within departments. The control mechanism becomes too weak to compensate and repair the defects of the old system effectively, and the system's restriction expands and eventually produces various behavior variations.

2.2.3. Motivation mechanism produces double alienation

The motivational effect is not only the value that the civil servant appraisal system seeks, but also the endogenous motive force that promotes the smooth operation of the civil servant appraisal system. Motivation mechanism is the most important influencing factor in the alienation behavior of civil servants, and its mode of action reflects two aspects of alienation. The first is the weakening of the motivational function of the civil servant examination system itself, that is, the appraisal fails to form an effective motivational effect for civil servants. The formalization of the application of the results or the equalization of the distribution of results is a great frustration for the motivation of civil servants. Second, due to its low input cost and lack of timely and effective control and containment, the improper examination behavior has been continuously intensified.

3. Behavioral verification: Multi-level alienation in civil service appraisal

As an important tool and means of human resources management in the public sector, civil service assessment also plays a vital role in the optimization of public sector functions and the construction of the civil service. However, the promotion of civil servants follows not only the logic of competence but also the logic of relations, which makes it very difficult to directly reflect the results of civil service appraisal in promotion, and the results of civil service appraisal are very limited in their practical motivational effect. The effective operation of civil service assessment relies on the two-way communication and coordination between the

subject and the subject, the departmental civil servants who are the subject of assessment actively cooperate with the exchange of information on relevant assessment indicators, the subject makes reasonable assessments based on objective data, and effectively applies the final assessment results.

Therefore, we divide the typical assessment alienation into four stages according to the strength and weakness of the three behavioral factors: assessment path, control mechanism and motivation mechanism (table 2). Phase 1: action blurring with weak and strong motivations, phase 2: information distortion with weak and strong motivations, phase 3: distribution equalization with weak and weak motivations, and phase 4: application formalization with weak and weak motivations.

Table 2. Classification of Alienation Forms in Civil Service Assessment

Path Blur (Strong Motivation)	Control intensity (Weak Motivation)
Phase 1: Operation blitz (Performance: Raiders, diversions)	Phase 3: Distribution equalization (Performance: Balance, take turns sitting)
Phase 2: Information distortion (Performance: Selective reporting, creative interpretation)	Phase 4: Application Formalization (Performance: Outcomes disconnected from application)

3.1. Phase 1: Operation blitz

"Operation blitz" mainly comes from the preparation stage of civil servants' assessment, that is, civil servants to complete the assessment index content of the hard work process. "Operation blitz" involves breaking everything down at a certain point in time to prepare for an upcoming review through a patchwork approach. Or before the end of an evaluation cycle, the amount of resources and information needed for the evaluation will be diverted elsewhere, so as to meet the requirements of civil service evaluation. "The decision on the Civil Service Assessment Rating is not in the personnel department but in the leadership, but the leadership can't have a full grasp of the job. I can put it off until the last step because I have the ability to do it all in the last month (SZW20220311b)." Under the outcomes-oriented civil servant appraisal mode, the blitz action may satisfy the requirement of the appraisal index content, and may even get a good evaluation result in the final appraisal result, but it deviates from the original intention of the civil servant appraisal and forms a kind of "examination-oriented" tendency, the appraisal cannot realize the promotion of the civil servants work, causing the paradox between instrumental rationality and value rationality.

3.2. Phase 2: Information distortion

"Information distortion" often occurs in the stage of information collection, which creates conditions for alienation due to the serious information asymmetry between the subject and the subject. Appraisers may improve their final performance in a variety of ways, such as "selective reporting," "creative interpretation," and "distraction." In the process of reporting performance information, by adding a large number of messy details, the scale of self-reported performance information can be expanded, thus distracting the subject from the evaluation. "Now the review is a monthly

input into the system based on job points, but when the quarterly review is filed by everyone, the review information is like a piece of cake. It's not an entry and then the leader doesn't see it and doesn't know it (SZW20220315c)." There may also be creative interpretations of certain elements of the filing information, i.e., misleading actual performance status by selectively providing information to impose interpretations of performance information that would not otherwise be part of the segment. Or moving different time or type of data in the declared performance information, to deliberately misclassify this information, so as to meet the requirements of the assessment objectives.

3.3. Phase 3: equalization of distribution

The "equalization of distribution" arises from the output process of the evaluation result, and the actual embodiment is a "balanced" egalitarian evaluation tendency. A study of social services organisations found that due to the limited size of the departments and frequent interpersonal interactions, organisations effectively became a "society of acquaintances' ". "There may actually be some balance in civil service appraisal. The leader feels that you have been judged excellent in the first two quarters, and this quarter you will be judged excellent by others. It is impossible to say that you work hard and then you end up being judged better than others (SZW20220315b)." The "equalization of distribution" weakens the actual utility of civil servants' assessment, the results of which naturally do not reflect the real situation within the department, and performance pay becomes the result of rotation and does not provide an effective motivation for civil servants [19]. At the same time, due to the loss of the motivational effect of the evaluation results, the motivation of the civil servants who had already performed well in their work was seriously discouraged.

3.4. Phase 4: Application formalization

"Application formalization" exists in the application stage of the assessment results, which is manifested in the disconnection between the assessment results and the actual application. There is no strong correlation between the achievement of performance targets and the annual performance appraisal results or promotion of civil servants [21], while the problems of overly broad and rigid appraisal index setting, excessive appraisal and layering of quantitative indicators make formalism a expedient measure in the case of junior civil servants who are afraid and unable to do so [22]. From the preparation stage, the information collection, the result distribution to the result application, the civil servant appraisal work needs to form a close connection loop. Even if the other links are run scientifically, the result is still out of touch with the application, which will lead to the formalization of the whole civil service appraisal process. "There is currently no specific application of the end-of-year results. Strict enforcement of the civil service promotion system will facilitate faster promotion, but there are trade-offs (SZW20220311c)." The failure of the application of the appraisal results seriously dampens the motivational effect of the appraisal of civil servants, destroys the motivational effect of the appraisal itself, and seriously restricts the practical effect of the appraisal of civil servants once the positive link between performance and promotion is severed.

4. Behavioral correction: absolute control of alienation elements

Through the analysis of the alienation phenomenon by path, motivation and control behavior factors, it can be found that when the control mechanism is missing it will affect the scientific character of the assessment, the lack of motivation mechanism will affect the participation of the assessment, and the clarity of the assessment path will affect the reliability and validity of the assessment. Therefore, the correction of the alienation behavior of civil servants will also focus on the control mechanism, motivation mechanism and assessment path to realize the overall improvement of the civil servants assessment mechanism.

4.1. Improvement of the clarity of the appraisal path

It is necessary not only to have clear appraisal index, appraisal subject and appraisal method, but also to pay attention to the scientificity of appraisal index, rationality of appraisal method and plurality of appraisal subject.

4.1.1. Scientific assessment indicators

The appraisal index is not only the cornerstone of the whole civil servant appraisal work, but also plays the role of "baton", the appraisal index clarity, not only needs to overcome the abstraction of the index, but also needs to ensure the pertinence and personalized design of the index. In the design of the appraisal index, we should distinguish the nature of the work of different posts, such as moral and incorruptible in leadership posts and diligence and performance in service posts, so that the actual performance of civil servants in different posts is reflected in the appraisal.

4.1.2. Reasonable assessment methods

Many departments for civil servants mainly rely on the end of the year assessment results, and not much attention to the normal assessment, and democratic assessment methods due to informal communication and interpersonal impact, the actual reflection of information authenticity greatly reduced. The application of reasonable assessment methods requires: increasing the proportion of ordinary assessment in civil service assessment, realizing the flexible use of democratic assessment and work list, paying attention to the importance of daily work list in civil service assessment, appropriately reducing the proportion of democratic assessment, increasing the proportion of work list, making the path of assessment clearer and the results more scientific.

4.1.3. Multivariate assessment subjects

Break down the closed appraisal mechanism of "judge and examiner", which is produced by higher organizations and personnel departments as a single subject of political performance appraisal. First of all, according to the daily work content of civil servants, the appraisal department adopts a method combining dynamic appraisal and static appraisal to reflect the actual performance of civil servants objectively, rationally and fairly. Secondly, as the direct object of the work of the public servants, the people have the most direct feelings about the daily work behavior of the public servants, and the evaluation of the people into the civil servant's assessment mechanism can eliminate the influence of personal relationship to the civil servant's assessment to the greatest extent. At last, the intermediary organization of third party is composed of experts and scholars, who make up the defects of informal communication and one-sidedness of

people's evaluation by virtue of their professional evaluation knowledge and independent status, so as to reach more objective and reasonable evaluation result.

4.2. The role of the motivation mechanisms

4.2.1. Promotion of endogenous dynamics

Endogenous motivation is the power source of initiative in human resource management, and also the core and key to enhancing the efficiency of the human body [32]. Compared with the rational "economic man" hypothesis, public servants are a coupling of the dual personalities of "economic man" and "political man" due to the complexity of their profession and personal political pursuits. The formation of internal motivation requires reconciling the "general law" and "maximum individual utility" of public servants [33]. Therefore, in order to cultivate the inner motivation of civil servants, we should make good use of political and moral motivation, adopt study, training, spiritual infection and so on, and gradually guide civil servants to form the inner moral character of loving and dedicated to their posts.

4.2.2. Performance Process Motivation

The motivation of the assessment process is mainly to guide the psychological expectations of civil servants in order to improve the motivation of civil servants in the work process [34]. Process motivation mainly includes participation motivation, target motivation, communication motivation, evaluation motivation, etc. Process motivation requires the promotion of the participation of civil servants in the evaluation process, strengthening communication between superiors and subordinates, adopting a kind of interviewing civil servants' assessment, and timely understanding of civil servants' needs, so as to achieve two-way communication.

4.2.3. Performance Motivation

The motivation of the evaluation results is mainly to strengthen and guide the behavior of civil servants by reacting to their current performance, and to control the behavior of civil servants after the fact through positive motivations such as salary, promotion and spiritual motivations or negative motivations such as punishment and demotion. In order to ensure the performance of the motivational effect, attention should also be paid to the rational use of material and spiritual motivation, positive motivation and negative motivation. At the same time, strengthen the guidance of the behavior of civil servants, through the objective reflection of the evaluation results, so that the appraised civil servants have a clear understanding of their own work performance, and then contrast to improve their own working methods, to improve individual performance.

4.3. Strengthening of the control mechanisms

4.3.1. Robust oversight mechanisms

The improvement of civil service appraisal supervision mechanism should be carried out from two aspects: internal supervision and external supervision. On the one hand, the establishment of internal supervision mechanism should be based on the standard of the system. On the other hand, we should establish a perfect external supervision mechanism with citizen participation as its core. The public is the ultimate source of social value, and the content of the daily work of the public sector is closely related to the vital interests of the public.

4.3.2. Effective feedback mechanisms

Feedback is the servo of the political process [36]. As the most important part of civil service management, civil service assessment involves complex relationships and job responsibilities. Effective feedback mechanism requires real-time process feedback, in the assessment of the inclusion of indicators, assessment method determination, assessment of information collection and so on the progress of specific work, difficulties in real-time feedback, in this process can be introduced by means of information technology, open channels of feedback. Results feedback is one of the most important contents of the feedback mechanism. Through the feedback of the evaluation results, civil servants can understand their own performance and evaluation results, and make timely adjustments to their own ways of working according to the evaluation results.

4.3.3. Reasonable adjustment mechanisms

The adjustment mechanism of civil servant appraisal is the process of making partial changes to the content and form of civil servant appraisal based on the information obtained by the supervision mechanism and feedback mechanism. In view of the possible problems of unreasonable indicators, difficult information collection and uncoordinated proportions in the appraisal, after the supervision mechanism and feedback mechanism have found out the problems and given timely feedback, the adjustment mechanism should synthesize all the information, and make appropriate adjustments to the whole appraisal mechanism of civil servants to ensure the fairness and scientificity of the appraisal.

5. Wrap-up

This research mainly provides a systematic analysis thought for the civil servant appraisal or the same kind of performance appraisal work optimization promotion, emphasizes in the appraisal process must pay attention to each kind of mechanism system synthesis application, can raise the appraisal work synthesis qualitative effect fundamentally. However, it is an idealized model to divide the alienation phenomenon in civil servants' appraisal strictly according to the three variables of appraisal path, motivation mechanism and control mechanism. In the actual civil servant appraisal process, the various alienation phenomena cross nested, individual difference and the environment change, may also cause each kind of appraisal alienation behavior to transform each other. At the same time, some factors such as interpersonal relationship, personal factors and so on the impact of civil service assessment also need our attention.

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