

Factors Influencing Human Resource Professionals' Perceptions of the Effectiveness of Civil Service Reform in Six U.S. State Governments

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Abstract: Civil service reform has been carried out to achieve ideological, political, and technical changes in various countries. Most research about civil service reform has attempted to find factors that influence the extent and intensity of reform elements such as at-will employment, pay for performance, and broad-banding. No prior study has systematically examined factors that affect human resource professionals' perceptions of the effectiveness of civil service reforms. This study focused on that issue, using 2010 Civil Service Reform Assessment survey data from six U.S. state governments to examine the relationships between factors associated with human resources professionals' managerial competencies and demographic characteristics and their perceptions of the effectiveness of civil service reforms with regard to both goal achievement and process. Among its findings was that human resources professionals' competency in consultation on civil service reform with officials in other states was likely to be positively associated with their perceptions of the effectiveness of civil service reforms.

Keywords: civil service reform, human resources professionals, perceived effectiveness, managerial competency, demographic characteristics

INTRODUCTION

Civil service reform (CSR) has been carried out with the purpose of ideological, political, and technical innovation in various countries (Nigro & Kellough, 2006). Most research on CSR has attempted to find factors that have influenced its extent and intensity (e.g., Cogburn, 2001; Kellough & Selden, 2003). Studies have found that

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reform is driven by political, managerial, and socioeconomic conditions. For instance, Cogburn (2001) found that unionism and state party control were negatively related to personnel deregulation, and administrative professionalism was positively associated with it. Kellough and Selden (2003) also found that legislative professionalism and state employee unionization were key factors that drove CSR in U.S. state governments.

By conducting surveys, researchers have studied which factors have had an impact on employee perceptions of CSR practices. Kellough and Nigro (2006) found that classified and unclassified employees had different perspectives on Georgia's CSR; their 2002 study revealed that younger, newer, and unclassified state employees had more positive attitudes toward it. Battaglio and Condrey (2009) attempted to find relationships between public management reforms and perceived organizational and managerial trust by utilizing 2006 survey data that they collected from human resource (HR) professionals in the Georgia state government. They found that job security, whistle-blowing, procedural justice, spoils, HR professionals' age, and agency size were positively related to managerial or organizational trust. In their 2010 study, Cogburn et al. found that HR professionals' demographic characteristics, including tenure, educational background, and private sector experience, were associated with their commitment to at-will employment.

Studies have surveyed employees' perceptions of CSR elements such as at-will employment (e.g., Kellough & Nigro, 2006), and some have found factors influencing HR professionals' perceptions of CSR elements (e.g., Cogburn, 2006). However, no study has systematically examined HR professionals' assessment of CSR. As Cogburn (2006) argued, HR professionals, including HR directors, play important roles in making and implementing personnel policies in state governments. Additionally, they are on the frontlines of CSR implementation in the states, and they have enough knowledge and experience to judge the effectiveness of CSR.

West (1986) emphasized the need to survey HR professionals because they influence HR-related decision-making and implementation. This means that their perceptions of the effectiveness of CSR might be valuable to anticipating the future direction of CSR in state governments. However, there has been little effort to examine HR professionals' assessment of CSR. The lack of research on the topic might be caused by uneasiness about collecting data from HR professionals. In light of this, the present study surveyed HR professionals and attempted to identify the factors that influenced their perception of the effectiveness of CSR. Because this perception may influence the maintenance or expansion of such reforms, an examination of the factors influencing it is meaningful.

By using survey data from the 2010 Civil Service Reform Assessment, this study examined relationships between factors related to managerial competencies and demographic characteristics, which were chosen based on findings from previous CSR-

related studies (e.g., Battaglio & Condrey, 2009; Kellough & Nigro, 2006; West, 1986) on HR professionals' perceptions of the effectiveness of CSR. The next section reviews the literature on the effectiveness of CSR and on factors influencing HR professionals' assessment of it. This is followed by a description of the data and methods used in this study, a discussion of findings, and concluding remarks.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Effectiveness of Civil Service Reforms

Many efforts to improve organizational effectiveness in the public sector have been undertaken, and many public management scholars and practitioners have developed and tested public sector effectiveness (Pandey, Coursey, & Moynihan, 2007). Rainey and Steinbauer (1999, p. 13) defined organizational effectiveness as a situation in which "the agency performs well in discharging the administrative and operational functions pursuant to the mission." They said that the concept of effectiveness can refer to "whether the agency does well that which it is supposed to do, whether people in the agency work hard and well, whether the actions and procedures of the agency and its members are well suited to achieving its mission, and whether the agency actually achieves its mission" (p. 13). That is, effectiveness, including managerial and organizational effectiveness, depends on the degree of achievement of goals or missions.

In terms of measuring managerial effectiveness, Cohen (1993) emphasized that both the achievement of goals or missions and the process of the goal achievement need to be considered. Cohen also argued that communicating organizational goals or missions to employees is critical to improving effectiveness, and emphasized the roles of managers in the achievement of organizational goals or missions.

West (1986, p. 49) identified six CSR indicators: decentralization of personnel decision-making authority, separation of personnel administration from the merit-protection unit, creation of a separate managerial/executive service, consolidation of job titles, elimination of veterans' preference points for promotions, and expansion of the "rule of three" for certification of eligibility, meaning that selection officials could be provided with more names to choose from when hiring. These indicators are associated with the goals of CSR.

Specific CSR goals can vary among state governments. However, the U.S. Civil Service Reform Act of 1978 identified several key goals, including managerial flexibility and efficiency, political and public responsiveness, accountability, and increased managerial discretion (Choi, 2012). The effectiveness of CSR needs to be examined

by measuring whether and how those key goals are achieved.

Until now, there has been no study to measure the effectiveness of CSR, especially its perceived effectiveness from HR professionals' perspective. Since it is not easy to measure effectiveness, subjective measurement (perceived effectiveness) is sometimes used as a proxy, and it is important to consider from whose perspective effectiveness is seen (Brewer & Selden, 2000). Most previous studies have examined employees' attitudes toward CSR elements such as at-will employment or pay for performance. In this regard, examining the perceived effectiveness in reaching key goals and the process of goal achievement will expand the scope of CSR research.

Factors Influencing Perceptions of the Effectiveness of Civil Service Reforms

Managerial Competencies

According to Cohen (1993), one of the key factors that influence managerial effectiveness is managers' competency in dealing with employees, allocating resources to achieve organizational goals, and communicating with external parties. Rainey and Steinbauer (1999) also argued that the roles of managers are important to increase agency effectiveness, and they recognized that leadership in dealing with employees, organizational resources, information, and other issues needs to be carefully measured.

Recognition of Employees' Value

The importance of people for successful government has been emphasized through the term "human capital" (Selden, 2009). Public employees "possess values essential to the workplace" (Buss, 2009, p. xii), and careful management of human capital is required (Lawler & Worley, 2006). In this regard, Selden (2009) pointed out that recognition of employees and their management as valuable assets are keys for human capital management. Bowen (2000) also argued that appreciating employees as assets by recognizing them and rewarding them well is critical for the creation of an efficient workforce. O'Driscoll and Randall (1999) found that perceived organizational support is positively related to employee job involvement and organizational commitment. Bilmes and Gould (2009) found that many government agencies provide employees with more flexibility and discretion to improve their morale and overall performance. O'Reilly and Pfeffer (2000) argued that organizations need to unlock the hidden value in all employees to achieve productivity and efficiency.

Selden (2009, p. 63) asserted that there is a "changing psychological contract" in which "shared belief and perceptions and informal obligations between employer

and employee that develop through day-to-day interaction” become the basis of the psychological contract. Thus, job commitment by employees can hardly be expected, although employee commitment to the job or organizational mission and goal is an important factor closely associated with organizational productivity. Thames and Webster (2009, p. 68) defined commitment as “the act of binding yourself (intellectually or emotionally) to a course of action, or the trait of sincere and steadfast fixity of purpose.” They also argued that openness, intention, trust, agreement, action, and fulfillment are key elements for getting strong employee commitment in the workplace.

Adoption of at-will employment has eliminated job security, which is the critical tool of the traditional psychological contract. Younger public employees, in particular, may not plan to build a life-long career in public organizations, and they are able to leave the public sector to fulfill their personal goals and needs (Selden, 2009, pp. 63-64). The primary factor for employees’ decisions to leave their positions is whether they perceive that the organization values them as assets (Eisenberger, Huntington, Hutchison, & Sowa, 1986; Griffeth & Hom, 1995; Selden, 2009). That is, if employees perceive more support from an organization, they will be more satisfied with it and their commitment to it will increase. Finally, increased employee commitment is critical to improve organizational effectiveness. Dealing with employees as valuable assets is an important managerial competency that influences organizational effectiveness (Cohen, 1993; Rainey & Steinbauer, 1999). Therefore, the following hypothesis could be presented.

Hypothesis 1: An HR professional who appreciates employees as valuable assets will more positively perceive the effectiveness of CSR in his or her state.

Allocation of Resources or Opportunities to Employees

For many organizations in both the private and public sectors, providing access to resources and opportunities for career development is essential to retaining talented employees (Bowen, 2000). According to Wiersma (1992), employees can be intrinsically motivated when their work environment increases feelings of competence and self-actualization (Maslow, 1943), and opportunities for career development are an intrinsic motivator that can increase employee job satisfaction.

Selden (2009) stated that the most obvious reason for operating employee training and development programs is the improvement of “employees’ current knowledge, skills, and abilities” (p. 85), and said that, while most states spent approximately 1.3 percent or more of their payrolls on employee training and career development programs each year, the Georgia state government spent more than 5 percent. Mills (2003)

argued that education and training can provide employees with the strategic direction for career development, as well as ways to cooperate with organizations. Buss (2009) argued that improving employee capacity through continuous training, education, and personal career development opportunities is essential to building capacity in the workforce.

Despite the importance of such programs, some studies have pointed out ineffective or nonexistent employee career development programs (e.g., Bilmes & Gould, 2009; Buss, 2009). In the public sector, the importance of employee training and education has increased. Rainey and Steinbauer (1999) emphasized that developing human resources by providing adequate resources or opportunities for career development is critical to improving organizational and managerial effectiveness. Cohen (1993) argued that managers' skills in distributing resources and deploying incentives could influence organizational effectiveness. In a similar vein, managers' competency to allocate adequate resources or career opportunities to employees may influence the effectiveness of CSR. Therefore, the following hypothesis could be presented.

Hypothesis 2: An HR professional who perceives that his or her state management has the capacity to provide employees with adequate resources and opportunities for career development will more positively perceive the effectiveness of CSR in the state.

Consultation with Officials in Other States

According to Boudreau and Ramstad (2007), although HR practices are different in different places, efforts to emulate other organizations' practices have continued for a long time. According to Ammons (2005), for instance, performance benchmarks among state or local governments can be easily found in various places. Thames and Webster (2009) argued that benchmarking by learning about successes in other organizations can encourage innovation and build organizational capacity in a changing environment. Ammons (2005) also argued that benchmarks can be a reliable diagnostic gauge before a state establishes or adopts systems, policies, or standards. Although some common mistakes of benchmarking can be made due to misalignment between benchmarked HR programs and actual practices in different organizational environments (Boudreau & Ramstad, 2007), uses of benchmarking in the public sector have continued (Ammons, 2005; Selden, 2009).

CSR practices have also been benchmarked among states. Diffusion of key reform elements—at-will employment, pay for performance, and broadbanding (simplified and more flexible job grading)—seems to be based on latent pressures to benchmark more effective or efficient management practices (Ashworth, Boyne, & Delbridge,

2007). Additionally, case studies on CSR in various state or local governments, and even in various countries, have provided lessons learned (e.g., Battaglio & Condrey, 2006). This means that consultation with other states or local government officers may be helpful to improve the effectiveness of CSR. Since Cohen (1993) argued that communication with external parties could be an important competency of managers to improve managerial or organizational effectiveness, this study assumed that HR professionals' competency in consulting or communicating with other states' officers regarding CSR could positively influence the effectiveness of CSR. Therefore, the following hypothesis could be presented.

Hypothesis 3: An HR professional who has been consulting or communicating with officials in CSR-experienced states regarding development of CSR strategies in his or her state will more positively perceive the effectiveness of CSR.

Demographic Characteristics

Kellough and Nigro (2006) found that employees' demographic characteristics, including classified or unclassified status, tenure, race, gender, age, education level, and work position (for example, supervisor), had an impact on employee perceptions of post-reform personnel practices. Some scholars have attempted to find which factors are associated with employees' or HR professionals' attitudes toward key CSR elements. For instance, Battaglio and Condrey (2009) found that some factors, including perceptions of HR practices (for example, of job security and legal protection for whistleblowers), HR professionals' demographic characteristics (such as gender, age, education, and tenure), and organizational factors (such as percentage of at-will employees and agency size) were closely related to HR professionals' attitudes toward organizational or managerial effectiveness.

Age

According to Buss (2009), the development or encouragement of growth and leadership among younger employees is one of the most important requirements for human capital management. Since Generation Y workers value their own wants and needs more highly in their choice of job than do Generation X workers, who value job security, civil service systems have changed in order to recruit and retain younger workers (Bowen, 2000).¹ Developing better employee benefits systems has been

1. According to Strauss and Howe (1992), Generation X is the generation born after the baby

emphasized in the HR field to satisfy both younger and older employees and to improve engagement of both generations (Bowen, 2000; Kaye, Scheef, & Thielfoldt, 2003; Selden, 2009).

Previous studies (e.g., Kellough & Nigro, 2006) have found that younger employees have more positive attitudes toward change and reform than older employees. According to Battaglio and Condrey (2009), age may influence employees' perceptions of managerial or organizational trust because, for instance, older employees who generally have more work experience may have seen how power can be abused in the workplace and would have less positive attitudes toward at-will employment systems. Studies that examined managers' attitudes toward CSR elements, such as at-will employment (e.g., Cogburn et al., 2010), found that managers' demographic characteristics, especially age, could significantly influence their attitudes toward at-will employment. This study assumed that HR professionals' age may influence their perceptions of the effectiveness of CSR.

Hypothesis 4: A younger HR professional will more positively perceive the effectiveness of CSR in his or her state.

Political Ideology

Some previous research has noted that the characteristics of governors are major variables in state administrative deregulation and reform (Berman, 1994; Cogburn, 2001). While the fact that governors initiate CSRs demonstrates political responsibility and accountability to citizens, businesslike reforms simultaneously increase managerial power and authority within agencies. Recently, dramatic CSRs in Georgia, Texas, and Florida have embodied both Wilson's (1887) dichotomy between politics and administration and Waldo's (1952) theory of democratic administration. The reforms share several characteristics. They were driven by political powers, especially governors, who insisted on political responsiveness to citizens based on principles such as effective delivery of public services and better performance (Thompson, 2003).

Political ideology in the policy decision-making process is a critical variable, because politicians and political parties tend to base partisan affiliation on values (Ripley & Franklin, 1991). Administrative reform is strongly influenced by political variables (Cogburn, 2000; Kellough & Lu, 1993). For example, since Democrats are more

boom ended, from 1961 to 1981. Members of Generation Y, also called the Millennial Generation, were born in the 1980s or 1990s and are marked by an increased use of and familiarity with new communications, media, and digital technologies.

likely than Republicans to be labor-friendly (West & Durant, 2000), CSR oriented toward privatization is more likely to occur in states with a Republican governor and a state legislature dominated by Republicans (e.g., Coggburn, 2000, 2001). In a similar vein, Coggburn (2006) found that HR professionals' political ideology influences their attitudes toward CSR. Therefore, this study also assumed that HR professionals' political inclination influences their perceptions of the effectiveness of CSR.

Hypothesis 5: A more conservative HR professional will more positively perceive the effectiveness of CSR in his or her state.

Private Sector Work Experience

As state political leaders focus on setting goals and objectives under market-oriented public personnel reforms (Kellough, 1999), state agency managers and HR professionals are empowered with sufficient authority and flexibility to attain those goals and objectives (Ban & Gossett, forthcoming). Because top-level political leaders cannot implement specific plans, decentralization grants state agency managers discretion and authority to carry out plans as political leaders envision. As human resource policy is decentralized and deregulated, agency-level managerial discretion and flexibility based on professionalism have increased in accordance with CSR (Condrey, 2005; Kellough & Nigro, 2006).

Under the banner of reinventing government, many public sector agencies have adopted and implemented private sector management tools, such as at-will employment and pay for performance (Condrey & Battaglio, 2007; Kellough & Nigro, 2006; Park, 2012). Ingraham (1993a, 1993b), for instance, found that employees who had previous work experience in the private sector were not positive about the effectiveness of pay-for-performance implementation in the public sector. This finding is not that different from Coggburn et al.'s (2010) finding that HR professionals' previous private sector work experience was associated with commitment to CSR elements, especially at-will employment. The authors found that HR professionals who had previously worked in private sector HR jobs did not have positive perceptions of the results of at-will employment. Therefore, this study assumed that HR professionals' previous work experience in the private sector will influence their perceptions of the effectiveness of CSR.

Hypothesis 6: An HR professional who has HR work experience in the private sector will perceive the effectiveness of CSR in his or her state less positively.

DATA AND METHODS

This study utilized Civil Service Reform Assessment Survey data to examine the factors influencing HR professionals' perceptions of the effectiveness of CSR. The survey was conducted from February 26, 2010, to May 7, 2010. As Coggburn (2006) stated, HR professionals, and especially HR directors, have enough knowledge and experience to assess the effectiveness of CSR in their state government. Therefore, the survey questionnaire asked HR professionals, especially HR directors, to assess their state civil service system and CSR efforts such as pay for performance in terms of efficiency, effectiveness, flexibility, fairness, and helpfulness. Most survey items were taken from previous studies (including Battaglio & Condrey, 2009; Condrey & Battaglio, 2007; Kellough & Nigro, 2006).

Survey items that measured the effectiveness of CSR were developed based on the key goals of CSR, including the improvement of managerial efficiency, discretion, flexibility, helpfulness, and communication with external parties and organization members. These survey questions were developed based on the literature review and then tested by four CSR experts in both academia and the field.

The researcher requested HR professionals' contact information from the central personnel offices of six state governments: Colorado, Florida, Georgia, Kansas, Missouri, and South Carolina. Hays and Sowa's 2006 study and the states' annual reports indicated that these six states had experienced significant CSR including at-will employment, pay for performance, and deregulation. Each of the six state governments had implemented similar CSR elements, although to different degrees and durations. The survey was implemented online, with a postal version available upon request.

Of the 280 surveys distributed, 105 usable questionnaires (37.5 percent) were returned. Survey respondents were HR professionals, 61.5 percent female and 38.5 percent male, and the average age was 54.06 years. Most respondents (80.2 percent) did not have private sector work experience in an HR position similar to their current position. More specific demographic characteristics of survey respondents and response rates are presented in table 1.

This study used an ordered logistic regression method (Battaglio & Condrey, 2009; Long, 1997; Long & Freese, 2006; Wooldridge, 2005), because of the variable characteristics (categorical variables were measured as 1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = neutral, 4 = agree, and 5 = strongly agree), to explore what factors influence HR professionals' perceptions of the effectiveness of CSR. It employed the data analysis techniques utilized by Battaglio and Condrey (2009) and conducted Spearman correlations to diagnose multicollinearity and the accuracy of model specifications (see table 2).

Table 1. Demographic Characteristics of Survey Respondents

	State (sample size)					
	Colorado (25)	Florida (30)	Georgia (35)	Kansas (95)	Missouri (22)	South Carolina (73)
Response rate (%)	52	46.7	60	25.3	31.8	34.2
Sex (%)	Male: 46.2 Female: 53.8	Male: 42.9 Female: 57.1	Male: 38.1 Female: 61.9	Male: 25 Female: 75	Male: 14.3 Female: 85.7	Male: 52 Female: 48
Average age (years)	49.5	53.2	56.8	52.7	51.1	56.8
Race (%)	African American: 16.7 Hispanic: 25 White: 58.3	African American: 15.4 Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander: 7.7 White: 76.9	American Indian or Alaska Native: 10 African American: 25 White: 65	Hispanic: 8.3 White: 91.7	White: 100	African American: 16.7 White: 83.3
Private sector HR experience (%)	Yes: 30.8 No: 69.2	Yes: 21.4 No: 78.6	Yes: 15 No: 85	Yes: 30.4 No: 69.6	Yes: 0 No: 100	Yes: 12.5 No: 87.5
Public sector work experience (years)	18.5	22.5	19.4	20	20	20
Average time in HR field (years)	18	19.5	21.5	19.3	20	18.5
Education attainment (%)	4 years college: 50 MA degree: 50	High school: 7.7 2 years college: 7.7 4 years college: 46.1 MA degree: 23.1 Law degree: 15.4	4 years college: 40 MA degree: 60	High school: 4.5 2 years college: 18.2 4 years college: 41 MA degree: 31.8 Law degree: 4.5	High school: 14.3 4 years college: 57.1 MA degree: 28.6	4 years college: 43.5 MA degree: 52.2 Law degree: 4.3

Table 2. Spearman Correlations for Civil Service Reform Assessment

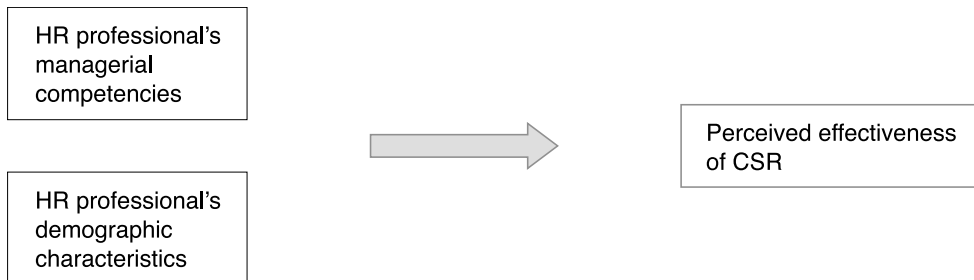
Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
1. Increased discretion	1														
2. Increased efficiency	0.5482**	1													
3. Changed job security	0.3791**	0.4029**	1												
4. Clear communication with employees	0.3595**	0.4241**	0.5129**	1											
5. Recognition of Employees' Value	0.0170	0.2533*	-0.0967	0.1374	1										
6. Resource or opportunity allocation to employees	-0.0069	0.1701	0.0724	0.3050*	0.4676**	1									
7. Consultation on CSR with officials in other states	0.1838	0.2725*	0.0438	0.1610	-0.0002	0.1856	1								
8. Age	-0.0407	0.1091	0.1931	0.2326	-0.0998	-0.1786	-0.0049	1							
9. Political ideology	-0.0306	-0.0524	0.0260	-0.0547	0.0237	0.0316	-0.0808	0.2924*	1						
10. Previous private sector HR work experience	0.0405	-0.0232	-0.1467	-0.0151	-0.0440	0.0645	-0.0321	-0.0388	0.1106	1					
11. Colorado	-0.1200	0.0138	-0.2477	0.0168	0.1677	0.2112**	0.0981	-0.1501*	-0.0295	0.1135	1				
12. Florida	0.0270	0.0275	0.3514**	0.1713	0.0101	0.0406	0.1712	-0.0776	-0.0295	-0.1635	-0.1091	1			
13. Georgia	0.5023**	0.5194**	0.4056**	0.3320**	0.1158	0.0352	-0.1244	0.1997	-0.0712	-0.0138	-0.1969	-0.1969	1		
14. Missouri	-0.0807	-0.1289	-0.0927	-0.2443	-0.0437	-0.2504	-0.0697	-0.1461	-0.0641	-0.1479	-0.0987	-0.0987	-0.1782	1	
15. South Carolina	-0.1963	-0.2603*	0.0013	-0.0730	-0.3217*	-0.2823*	-0.2138	0.2559*	0.3043*	-0.1412	-0.1635	-0.1635	-0.2951*	-0.1479	1

* p < 0.05 ** p < 0.01

According to Battaglio and Condrey (2009), Spearman correlations can be used for categorical variables when a linear relationship between variables is not assumed. The Spearman correlation results can be interpreted like Pearson correlations. As Battaglio and Condrey (2009) and Long and Freese (2006, p. 199) recommended, this study employed approximate likelihood ratio tests and the Brant test to check whether the proportional odds assumption that “the independent variables utilized in the ordered logistic regression have the same effect on the likelihood of each outcome in the dependent variables” (Battaglio & Condrey, 2009, p. 700) held. All data analyses were conducted using the statistics package Stata/SE, version 10.0.

Figure 1 summarizes the study framework.

Figure 1. Study Framework



Variables

Dependent Variables

Four survey items rated the perceived effectiveness of CSR on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = neutral, 4 = agree, and 5 = strongly agree):

1. Civil service reform in my state has increased the discretionary authority of supervisors and managers.
2. Civil service reform in my state has increased the efficiency and performance of state agencies.
3. Civil service reform in my state has changed the conventional wisdom concerning job security of civil servants.
4. The provisions and purpose of the civil service reform law in my state have been clearly communicated to state employees like me.

Independent Variables

The survey measured the following:

1. *Recognition of Employees' Value*: Respondents were asked to rate whether state employees are appreciated as valuable assets by senior agency management, on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = neutral, 4 = agree, and 5 = strongly agree).
2. *Allocating resources or opportunities to employees*: Respondents were asked to rate the availability of resources and opportunities for career development on the same 5-point Likert scale.
3. *Consulting with other states' officers on CSR*: The survey item asked whether consultation or communications with officers in CSR-experienced states helped to develop CSR strategies in the respondent's state, using the same 5-point Likert scale.
4. *Age*: Respondents gave their ages on a 6-point Likert scale (1 = 24 years or less, 2 = 25-34, 3 = 35-44, 4 = 45-54, 5 = 55-64, and 6 = 65 years old or older).
5. *Political ideology*: This was rated on a 5-point Likert scale (1=very conservative, 2 = conservative, 3 = moderate, 4 = liberal, 5 = very liberal).
6. *HR experience in the private sector*: Respondents were asked whether they had worked in the private sector in an HR position similar to the one they currently held. This variable was coded as a dummy variable (0 = no and 1 = yes).

State Control Variables

Cogburn et al. (2010, p. 200) argued that states' experiences with CSR differ because of their different political, cultural, and socioeconomic environments, and that HR professionals in different states may have different attitudes toward CSR elements because of this. Hays and Sowa (2007) conducted an in-depth study on each U.S. state government's CSR in terms of reform intensity and extent. According to the study, Colorado, Florida, Georgia, Kansas, Missouri, and South Carolina implemented CSR in different years but have experienced a significant level of reform with regard to decentralization, at-will employment, grievance handling, declining job security, pay for performance, and broadbanding. According to HR professionals who responded to the survey, each state has been in the process of reform (Hays, Byrd, & Wilkins, 2006).

The present study included states as control variables, with each state coded as a dummy variable (for example, Colorado = 1; otherwise = 0). In the statistical models,

Colorado, Florida, Georgia, Missouri, and South Carolina were included; Kansas, which has experienced the most extensive CSR of the six states surveyed, was the reference category.

RESULTS: PERCEIVED EFFECTIVENESS OF CIVIL SERVICE REFORMS

Perceived Increase in Discretionary Authority

The data analysis results suggest that HR professionals' management competencies influence their perceptions of the effectiveness of CSR, especially regarding the increase of discretionary authority. HR professionals' competency in CSR consultation with officials in other states was closely associated with their increased discretionary authority. A one-unit increase in HR professionals' assessment of CSR consultation with officials in other states (on a scale from 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree) is likely to lead to a 1.298 increase in the log odds of the level of agreement with CSR effectiveness in terms of increased discretionary authority of supervisors and managers, when all of the other variables in the model are held constant ($p < 0.01$). This result was consistent with Cohen's 1993 study and thus hypothesis 3 was partially accepted. HR professionals in Georgia were more likely to perceive an increase in the discretionary authority of supervisors and managers when all of the other variables in the model were held constant ($p < 0.01$).

Perceived Increase in Efficiency

HR professionals' recognition of employees' value and CSR consultation were key factors that may influence their perception of the effectiveness of CSR in terms of increased efficiency. A one-unit increase in HR professionals' competency in treating employees as valuable assets, and a one-unit increase in their attitudes toward CSR consultation with officials in other states, are likely to lead to 0.607 and 1.478 increases, respectively, in the log odds of their level of agreement with CSR effectiveness in terms of efficiency, when all of the other variables in the model are held constant ($p < 0.1$ and $p < 0.01$, respectively). HR professionals in Georgia who responded to the survey were more likely to perceive increased efficiency through CSR, when all of the other variables in the model were held constant ($p < 0.01$). As stated previously, Cohen (1993) argued that managers' competencies in ability to deal with employees as valuable assets and in communicating with external parties are important. This study found that

HR professionals' leadership and ability to communicate with external parties positively influenced their perceptions of the effectiveness of CSR, especially in terms of the increase of efficiency. Therefore, hypotheses 1 and 3 were partially accepted.

Perceived Change in Conventional Wisdom about Job Security

HR professionals' competency with regard to allocation of resources or career opportunities to employees was associated with their attitudes toward whether CSR changed the conventional wisdom concerning the job security of civil servants. A one-unit increase in HR professionals' perceived competency for the adequate allocation of resources or career opportunities to state employees is likely to lead to a 0.709 increase in the log odds of the level of their agreement that CSR has changed the conventional wisdom concerning the job security of civil servants, when all of the other variables in the model are held constant ($p < 0.05$). Survey respondents in Florida, Georgia, and South Carolina are more likely to perceive changed conventional wisdom about job security of civil servants through CSR, when all of the other variables in the model are held constant (significant at $p < 0.01$, $p < 0.01$, and $p < 0.05$, respectively). Increased managerial flexibility through the change in conventional wisdom about job security is one of the key goals of CSR. This study found that HR professionals' competency to allocate resources or opportunities to employees was likely to positively influence their perception of the effectiveness of the change in conventional wisdom about job security. Thus, hypothesis 2 was partially accepted.

Perceived Clarity of Communication with Employees on Civil Service Reforms

Some scholars (e.g., Cohen, 1993) have argued that managerial or organizational effectiveness needs to be measured in terms of both the achievement of goals and the process of achieving them. Therefore, this study included clear communication with employees regarding CSR provisions and purpose as an indicator of the perceived effectiveness of CSR. HR professionals' perceptions of the effectiveness of clear communication with state employees about the provisions and purposes of the CSR law is likely to be associated with their competency in the allocation of resources or opportunities for career development to state employees, consultations on CSR with officials in other states, age, and political ideology.

The results showed that a one-unit increase in HR professionals' competency in the allocation of resources or career opportunities to state employees is likely to lead to a 0.811 increase in the log odds of their perception of the effectiveness of clear communication with state employees regarding provisions and purposes of the CSR law,

when all of the other variables in the model are held constant ($p < 0.05$). A one-unit increase in HR professionals' attitudes toward consultation about CSR with officials in other states is likely to lead to a 0.902 increase in the log odds of the level of their perception of the effectiveness of clear communication with state employees about the provisions and purposes of the CSR law, when all of the other variables in the model are held constant ($p < 0.05$).

Additionally, a one-unit increase in age is likely to lead to a 0.734 increase in the log odds of the level of HR professionals' perceptions of the effectiveness of clear

Table 3. Perceived Effectiveness of Civil Service Reforms

	Perceived increase in discretionary authority	Perceived increase in efficiency	Perceived change of conventional wisdom about job security	Perceived clarity of communication with employees regarding CSR provisions and purposes
Recognition of Employees' Value	-0.049	0.607*	-0.572	0.129
Resource or opportunity allocation to employees	-0.290	-0.001	0.709**	0.811**
Consultation on CSR with officials in other states	1.298***	1.478***	0.486	0.902**
Age	-0.729	-0.053	0.343	0.734*
Political ideology	0.607	0.310	-0.048	-0.985*
Previous HR work experience in the private sector	0.561	0.264	0.046	0.737
Colorado	-0.204	1.119	0.058	1.054
Florida	0.873	1.283	4.871***	2.613**
Georgia	3.863***	4.304***	3.689***	2.716***
Missouri	0.382	1.038	1.467	0.440
South Carolina	0.378	0.941	1.935**	2.199**
N	61	61	61	61
X ²	29.39***	36.56***	37.76***	32.01***
Pseudo R ²	0.22	0.282	0.262	0.207

The likelihood ratio chi-square (X²) of each model ($p < 0.01$) showed that all four models for assessment of civil service reform elements were statistically significant.

* $p < 0.1$

** $p < 0.05$

*** $p < 0.01$

communication with state employees regarding the provisions and purposes of the CSR law, when all of the other variables in the model were held constant ($p < 0.1$). Such a result is in contrast to the hypothesis that a younger HR professional will be more likely to perceive positively the effectiveness of CSR, and thus hypothesis 4 is likely to be rejected.

More politically liberal HR professionals seemed to perceive more negatively the effectiveness of communication with state employees about the provisions and purposes of the CSR law, when all of the other variables in the model are held constant ($p < 0.1$). This finding is consistent with hypothesis 5 that a more conservative HR professional will more positively perceive CSR. HR professionals in Florida, Georgia, and South Carolina who responded to the survey are likely to perceive more positively the effectiveness of communication with state employees about the provisions and purposes of the CSR law, when all of the other variables in the model are held constant (significant at $p < 0.05$; $p < 0.01$; and $p < 0.05$, respectively).

Table 3 summarizes the perceptions discussed above.

CONCLUSIONS

For ideological, political, and technological reasons (Nigro, Nigro, & Kellough, 2007), elements of the CSR agenda have been adopted and implemented by U.S. state governments. This study selected six states that have implemented significant elements of the CSR agenda based on previous research findings (e.g., Hays & Sowa, 2006, 2007). Although CSR has been designed with the ultimate goal of increasing efficiency and productivity by adopting a market-based public service delivery model in all levels of government (Peters, 1995), reform has also caused side effects. The concerns of public sector employees who are directly influenced by such reforms have been examined (e.g., Battaglio & Condrey, 2009; Kellough & Nigro, 2006), since employees' satisfaction with CSR elements may be associated with their commitment to public organizations that are suffering from a human capital crisis (Chi, 2005). According to Pfeffer (1998), to create productive and innovative organizations and to foster productive employees, the mindset or perspective of employees needs to be changed.

However, there has been little research on how HR professionals, who may be closely associated with adoption and implementation of CSR, assess its effectiveness, and there has been no study of factors influencing CSR effectiveness focusing on HR professionals' managerial competencies and demographic characteristics. Rainey and Steinbauer (1999) as well as Cohen (1993) emphasized the importance of the managers' roles in improving organizational or managerial effectiveness. This study has examined

factors influencing HR professionals' perceptions of the effectiveness of CSR. Utilizing a 2010 Civil Service Reform Assessment survey, annual reports, and other internal memos and reports regarding human resources management (HRM) and elements of the CSR agenda from six states' central personnel offices, and findings from previous studies, this study examined which managerial competencies and demographic characteristics of HR professionals influence the perceived effectiveness of CSR.

It found that HR professionals' managerial competencies were likely to be positively associated with perceptions of the effectiveness of CSR. Overall, HR professionals who appreciated state employees as valuable assets and who provided employees with adequate resources and opportunities for career development were more likely to positively perceive the effectiveness of CSR. From such findings, this study was able to confirm the importance of human capital management, as other scholars (e.g., Lawler & Worley, 2006; Pfeffer, 1998; Selden, 2009) have emphasized. According to Huselid, Becker, and Beatty (2005) and Selden (2009), the workforce scorecard is an effective tool for managing human capital and an easy tool for building databases for future HRM. Additionally, Phillips, Stone, and Phillips (2001, p. x) argued that "measuring the return on investment" is a promising tool for building data about the contribution of certain "human resources programs and processes."

Through the implementation of CSR, professionalism has been emphasized, and some studies have attempted to conduct comparative analyses in the United States or internationally (Farazmand, 1997; Khator, 1997; Choi, 2012). Lessons learned from previous studies or experiences usually become guidelines for future policymaking and other activities (Rose, 1993). Such learning processes could also help government make up for a lack of professionalism on certain issues or problems. In this regard, consultation with internal or external experts, or even, sometimes, with citizens (Pierre, 1998), is a good way to learn lessons before politicians or managers make decisions.

The diffusion of policy innovation occurs in a similar vein (Park, 2012). An HR professional in the Colorado state government who responded to the survey stated that employee advocacy groups were key actors in Colorado's CSR. This shows that participation of various stakeholders in policymaking processes (including CSR) has been extended.

This study found that consultation or communication on CSR strategies with officials in other states is important, and HR professionals' competency in such consultations was also likely to be connected to their perceptions of the effectiveness of CSR. One of the most interesting findings is that consultation with officials in other states was likely to positively influence the achievement of CSR goals, including increase of discretionary authority and increase of efficiency, as well as the process of achieving

these goals, including clear communication with employees regarding CSR provisions and purposes. This means that HR professionals' competency in communicating with external parties might be positively associated with improved CSR goal achievement processes, and thus that HR professionals should improve their competency in communication internally and externally. The result also implies that knowledge sharing about CSR among external parties needs to be expanded.

While the value of reform, innovation, or reinvention has been emphasized all over the world (Frederickson, 1997), the pain from changes has raised concerns about the effectiveness of reform or innovation (Ingraham & Jones, 1997). According to Abrahamson (2004), "change without pain" is possible when organizations pursue incremental change (redeveloping, reusing, or recombining policy processes). Wilson (1966) argued that organizational change needs to be understood from the underlying assumptions of innovation that include political relations, organizational culture, and other socioeconomic impacts (Drucker, 1999). Such recommendations may imply that various factors need to be carefully considered in CSR, and incremental reform can reduce the pain that might be caused by more radical changes.

Another interesting finding from this study is that HR professionals' previous work experiences in the private sector may not influence their perceptions of the effectiveness of CSR, and a result that was quite different from previous studies. This result may have been caused by the small samples, and further study is needed to carefully reexamine it.

This study had some limitations. The sample size was fairly small, and the study dealt with only six state governments in the United States. However, it surveyed HR professionals, especially directors and managers. In addition, it selected six state governments that have experienced a significant level of CSR. Thus, it could examine HR professionals' perceptions about the effectiveness of actual CSR programs. Such efforts to examine the real effect of CSR and the attempts to find ways to improve civil service systems may contribute to the body of CSR studies despite these research constraints. In this regard, the present study is meaningful both academically and practically. Future studies need to consider the relationship between the intensity and extent of CSR and systemic and managerial factors in the South Korean context. In addition, comparative studies among countries need to be conducted, as Choi (2012) did in analyzing CSR in the United States and South Korea.

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