

EMPLOYEE INVOLVEMENT IN HEALTH CARE GOAL SETTING

Background

In the public sector, politicians set the overall direction. This is often done by defining objectives for public organizations and holding the organizations accountable for their success in meeting these politically determined goals.

Existing research shows that if employees in public organizations view their organization's goals as unclear or conflicting, it can have negative consequences for their job satisfaction and motivation. This can potentially decrease the organizational goal achievement.

Public managers therefore need to translate the broader policy objectives into context-specific, meaningful goals. Balancing the different stakeholders is a central leadership task.

At the same time, public managers are responsible for employees with highly specialized, theoretical knowledge, who solve complex tasks. Therefore, it can also be challenging for managers to have the necessary knowledge to translate politically determined objectives into meaningful goals in local, professional contexts and to balance them with professional norms.



Objective and methods

The project investigates whether public managers' involvement of employees in the local goal setting process can help create greater goal clarity for the employees. The project focuses on the goal-setting process in healthcare. First, healthcare leaders often face situations where they must translate political objectives that may seem contradictory (e.g. faster patient discharge combined with reduced readmission). Second, a large proportion of healthcare workers have a high degree of specialized knowledge (e.g. doctors and nurses), and healthcare is very complex. As a professionalized area, the healthcare system has some characteristics that can be expected to challenge translation of broadly formulated political objectives into a local, professional and specialized context.

The project primarily uses quantitative data sources to answer the following three questions:

1. What types of employee [involvement](#) are used by leading doctors and nurses in the goal-setting process?
2. What influences [whether managers choose to involve their employees](#) in the goal-setting process?
3. What are the effects of involving employees in the goal-setting process?

Additional information

The project is headed by PhD student Mathias Østergaard-Nielsen and supported by Associate Professor Christian Bøtcher Jacobsen and Professor Peter Bjerre Mortensen.