Measuring the Perceived Value of Public Service Media in Germany. A Case Study Analysis

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1 Introduction

Public service media (PSM) are mainly public service broadcast media and their digital and online services provided by public organizations which are funded by a license fee or tax and operate for the benefit of the public. Their legal remit is to inform, entertain, and educate the public who pay for them. But in doing so they must also protect their independence and ensure accountability. Their core mission is to serve the public interest.

Across Europe and beyond, PSM are increasingly challenged in many respects, notably (1) by economic funding, which pertains to debates about whether PSM should continue receiving public funds, and if so, how much and through what

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sources they should receive them (Lowe and Berg 2013; Murschetz 2020; Saurwein et al. 2019); (2) by audience demands for higher levels of accountability, whereby concerns are raised about interventionist political schemes which would endanger journalistic freedom both editorially and structurally through issues of capture (Nielsen 2017); and (3) fundamentally because a growing sense of audience mistrust in traditional *legacy* news media in general (Schudson 2022), driven by news avoidance of younger audiences in general and their migration to social media, are hurting PSM more particularly (Lowe and Maijanen 2019).

However today, PSM are increasingly challenged with questions about what public value (PV) they add to society and what individuals expect of them. Certainly, the assumption that PSM only remain legitimate if they deliver PV for improved accountability and impact in the eye of the public, is reasonably valid. There are two major questions that are making the future of PSM difficult: (1) What is *evidently* perceived as PV of a PSM in the eye of an individual citizen, and (2) how can this perceptual value of a PSM best be measured? This contribution addresses these questions**.** To answer them, we use Meynhardt's (2019) *Public Value Scorecard* (PVSC), a decision-making tool to help organizations understand and increase their value to citizens and society. The PVSC is a perception-based framework for measuring the PV of an organization. It posits that only when PV is experienced and validated by individuals, as a perception of their beliefs, attitudes, values, sentiments, and feelings when experiencing a service (or project and initiative), are citizen needs best satisfied, and is PV hence generated for the benefit of society at large (Meynhardt 2019).

This study is organized as follows: First, some aspects of PV theory as posited in PSM-related media management scholarship are discussed as they apply to PSM research. Then, key elements of the PVSC are introduced. Next, a survey-based case study analysis of the *Mitteldeutscher Rundfunk* (MDR), a large PSM in Germany, is conducted. Finally, results are presented and discussed, and a conclusion is drawn.

2 The Public Value(s) of Public Service Media

There is a panoply of perspectives on public value(s) in media and media management-related scholarship analyzing PSM. In this literature stream, public value has been broadly identified as heuristic framework, concept, operational tool, outcome, management practice, shareholder value, strategic imperative, and aspect of a relationship between media organization and audience (Martin and Lowe 2014; Lowe et al. 2018; Van den Bulck et al. 2018; Freedman and Goblot 2018;

Puppis and Ali 2023; Karmasin et al. 2011; Karmasin and Bichler 2017; Karmasin 2009; Sehl 2020). As has been pointed out earlier by Karmasin (2009, 2011, 2012), a leading figure on PV research for media in Europe, some of the confusion about this construct comes from a lack of agreement as to its nature, role, and effects. Certainly, as Karmasin (2011) rightly argues, the PV of public services such as PSM are required to provide versatility and diversity in their overall programming and services supply. Doing so, however, they tend to slip between the horns of this dilemma when asked for action to offer people something which they cannot otherwise see, serve minorities as well as fulfil the function of a national culture-identity carrier for majorities, and cater for high-quality programming while spending public money cautiously. Hence, the diversity value strives to both protect vulnerable values and groups in society (e.g., to safeguard linguistic plurality and ethnic diversity), both in terms of content and people, and remain relevant to the general public. In all, this balance between relevancy and diversity is difficult, both in terms of content quality for all and PSM's commitment to spending public money efficiently. As if this was not enough, the issue of PV performance measurement aggravates the problem, because PV is stubbornly difficult to operationalize, while also being dynamic and shapeshifting over time (McDonald 2023; Talbot 2011). The critical challenge, therefore, is how to validate public value performance of PSM in ways the public appreciates.

Given the strong academic output in this field, one might expect a rich theoretical base and ample empirical insights into the important role PSM play when creating PV in a networked society (EBU 2016). However, our own review of this literature concludes that there seems to be little interest in analyzing how citizens as primary stakeholders of PSM perceive their PV contributions to society. This is not only due to the hybrid intellectual architecture of the PV concept, but also resides in one major caveat: What counts as PV is not only a problem of definition and agreement between different stakeholders in a society in the sense that PSM automatically create value as a matter of their remit, but, more essentially, a problem of measurement and proven evidence in PV performance as perceived by the audience.

Certainly, across Europe, there are various attempts to sustainably strengthen PV management practices in PSM. One such *best practice* example is the principled declaration of core values by the European Broadcasting Union (EBU), the world's leading alliance of public service media, which define why PSM are indispensable in true democratic societies (EBU 2012). Mandated by law, PSM are obliged to fulfil a critical role in society. Their mandate is to generate and deliver PV in a variety of ways, such as informing and educating the public, creating content of public interest, promoting democracy and pluralism, enhancing cultural and

linguistic diversity, protecting independent journalism, guaranteeing equal access over diverse platforms and channels, and fostering accountability, transparency, and sustainability of communication (Puppis and Ali 2023).

For example, one such core PSM value defined by EBU is *universality*, which literally means that everyone (in a viewing nation) should have equitable and affordable access to all forms of PSM content and services, across all channels. Universality is a declared foundational principle for legitimating PSM as a public trust. Indeed, the purposes of PSM require the provision of programs dealing with a wide range of subject matters (programming universality), media services that are likely to meet the needs and satisfy the interests of as many different audiences as possible (services universality), a proper balance of programming for all media audiences in a country (audience universality), and their delivery across all channels in an equitable and accessible manner (channel and platform universality). While PSM in Europe agree on the importance of universality, measuring it, however, remains problematic, as traditional audience measures such as reach do not at all cover ambitions for equitable and affordable access to and consumption of PSM services by all audiences in a region. As it seems, *value for money* measures (i. e., the efficient use of public resources for public purposes; see, BBC 2004), or any other new forms of audience engagement measures (such as social media metrics) are considered indicators which much better account for measuring media universality today.

But while normative expectations of PSM and their performance have been extensively discussed from a theoretical perspective (Martin and Lowe 2014; Lowe et al. 2018), studies which focus on PV impacts as perceived by audiences of PSM offerings are scarce. There are, however, some notable exceptions. For example, a study by Campos-Rueda and Goyanes (2023) lately found that audiences-as-citizens may well evaluate the PSM performance of their national PSM broadcaster in Spain (TVE), whereby perceptions of independence and journalistic performance were positively associated with all dimensions of the roles and functions TVE plays (watchdog, analysis, mobilization, public forum, social empathy, and information), while a negative relation between political knowledge and TVE performance was more significant for the watchdog and analysis functions. In the practitioner's literature, the BBC's public value-based performance framework called RQIV (*Reach*, *Quality*, *Impact* and *Value for money*) is one of the most developed PV measurement frameworks. It has long testified to the BBC's commitment to measure its activities, also against user-oriented needs and interests.

In many ways, identifying what PV means for individuals, and how PSM can best satisfy individual audience needs and thereby prove their PV contribution to society is the Archimedean point from which PSM may improve their public

legitimacy. Ideally, this would help PSM to overcome their credibility and trust problems, and strengthen the view that PSM values reach far beyond issues of economic efficiency and effectiveness, and more particularly help democratic and civic values to gain the upper hand. On that score, capturing data is key to measuring the value of PSM. In this context, Mazzucato et al. (2020) developed new metrics that can assess how the BBC delivers against its mission, creates public value and co-shapes markets. In their report *Creating and Measuring Dynamic Public Value at the BBC*, the authors tackled questions of how to measure the BBC's public value more dynamically and holistically. By widening the picture beyond mere audience reach numbers, it identified three layers of public value in that the BBC creates broader value for both individuals, industry, and society at large. In doing so it has created value for individuals in their experiences as citizens; for society in contributing to a more inclusive, tolerant, and diverse culture; and in industry in taking the kinds of risks necessary for new markets to emerge. Certainly, traditional metrics such as audience share and reach remain important, but new measurement approaches necessarily emerge. Mazzucato pointed out that "consumption figures help to show the BBC's reach, efficiency, and commercial success – these are key indicators of public value as without successful and widely viewed programming, the BBC would not have the legitimacy and scale to engage the wider public. But by widening the picture beyond numbers, we can see that the BBC creates broader value for individuals, industry, and society" (Mazzucato et al. 2020, p. 23). However, as was shown in this study, PSM performance needs to be measured alongside a broad set of criteria which leverage PSM's value delivery to improve both individual, organizational, and societal welfare.

3 The Public Value Scorecard

The BBC's embrace of the PV doctrine echoes an important theme in public management theory, crystallized in the US scholar and Harvard management theorist's, Mark Moore (1995) canonical book *Creating Public Value*. Then, Moore formulated and successfully mobilized the idea of PV as a public sector management doctrine. Moore was also first to coin the term *public value scorecard* in 2013. He described it as a framework that "translates an abstract idea of public value creation into a concrete set of performance measures that can both monitor value creation in the past and guide managerial action necessary to sustain or create greater value in the future" (Moore 2013, p. 110). Moore's intention was to modify Kaplan and Norton's (1992) use of the Balanced Scorecard (BSC) as performance measurement tool of private companies. While Kaplan and Norton's

classic BSC measured an organization's overall performance by integrating financial measures with other key performance indicators around customer perspectives, internal business processes, organizational growth, learning, and innovation, Moore aligned his model to the need to integrate three essential perspectives: (1) *Legitimacy and support* (the extent to which "authorizers" and "contributors" beyond those who benefit from the organization remain willing to license and support the enterprise); (2) *Operational capabilities* (the question of whether the organization has the ability to achieve the desired goals), and—the most intriguing issue—(3) *Public value* (the extent to which the organization achieves its mission, the benefits it delivers to clients, and the social outcomes it achieves) (Moore 2013).

As indicated above, there is scarce research on measuring PV impacts of PSM. Although the importance of a media-specific Balanced Scorecard is generally recognized, previous research has neither considered characteristics of management sufficiently, nor has it applied scientifically sound methods to collect data or validate results with practitioners (Brösel and Keuper 2004; Kunz et al. 2016). As of today, however, organizations across industries need a better sense of society's expectations. They need management tools to evaluate PV and constantly monitor how things evolve over time. Hence, a common framework is needed that allows for a language that is robust enough to systematically give different world views and value systems. Hence, we believe that reviewing the lineages of the current PV debate in public management is useful for answering questions surrounding the fundamental change in the media industry and independent journalism, the challenges that media are currently facing, and the grounding public value performance measurement (and management) thinking, and its contradictions, offers for media practice in understanding the breadth and complexity of these challenges. Briefly, the claim of PV researchers to empirically validate the concept is well acclaimed (Faulkner and Kaufman 2018; Hartley et al. 2017; Mulgan 2011; Spano 2014; Talbot 2006).

This notion points to the key dogma in PV management (and measurement) in the media: Managing impacts of PV offerings through qualifying their efficacy across various dimensions shall ultimately better connect PSM with their audiences. Measuring audience-related perceptions on PV outcomes would hence strengthen PSM legitimacy by identifying their value to society (Nabatchi 2012). However, research has shown that the question of how PV impacts on society are most effectively measured, is complicated by three factors:

1. Although PV is widely accepted among PSM in Europe, as it generally falls within the remit of PSM, there is scant scientific evidence that this is beneficial for both individuals and society.

2. It is far from obvious which PV measures and systems a PSM should adopt, as the systems applied are mostly based on traditional supply-side metrics confirming the success of a PSM in the market.
3. As most PSM are competing in an environment where value, not market success (as indicated by output measures such as reach or ratings) is the key driver, value-based assessment models of what individuals perceive as PV contributions of a PSM, are still largely missing.

Given this context, we argue that measuring the PV of PSM requires a new conceptual and methodological approach which places the perception of PV impacts at the center of the PV services impact evaluation process. Naturally, public value reaches beyond individual self-interests of media audiences. PSM services are primarily designed to contribute to the common good as main outcome (Martin and Lowe 2014). Therefore, PSM create institutional value, which relates to the value that society collectively places on PSM, now and for future generations. This means that PSM must foremostly deliver value for individual members of society, but they are also obliged to cater for those who do not individually draw value from consuming their programs and services. Only when PSM are capable to create value that is perceived as valuable and beneficial for *all* members of society (that is also those that avoid PSM content), will they gain legitimacy and true democratic meaning.

The PVSC's key idea is that PV starts and ends within the individual. PV is not created on delivery, but only when perceived and experienced by audiences. Following this notion, PV is best measured against an individual's audience perception of value offerings provided by a PSM. Meynhardt's (2009) PVSC is based on Epstein's (1989) psychological needs theory and measures PV impact perceptions of individual audiences along five PV organizational-level dimensions, seeking to satisfy various needs of an individual. These are:

- *Task fulfilment* (TF): Does the organization fulfil its core tasks, and does it satisfy needs for information and an individual's orientation in society, just as formulated by its mission and objectives, or *is it useful*?
- *Morality* (M): Does the organization behave decently, and does it satisfy moral-ethical needs of an individual, such as those necessary for personal growth and self-development, or *is it decent*?
- *Quality of Life* (QoL): Does the organization contribute to quality of life of an individual, and does it maximize pleasure (and reduce pain), or *is it a positive experience*?

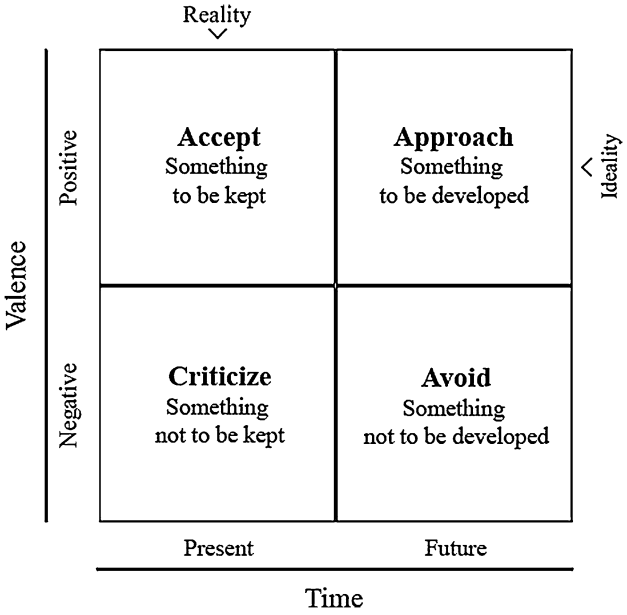
- *Social cohesion* (SC): Does the organization strengthen the cohesion of society, and does it satisfy needs for belonging, or *is it acceptable*?
- *Profitability* (P): Does the organization use economic resources efficiently, or *is it viable*?

Obviously, the PVSC thus looks far beyond economic value when evaluating the worth of a service. As a result, organizations which contribute to the common good need a well-balanced focus on all five PV impact dimensions.

4 Method

In the present study, the empirical research followed a case study research design, using a mixed method investigation, whereby several methods of research and data collection were used (Denzin and Lincoln 2000). In general, case study research is said to be particularly well-suited to the study of emerging and complex phenomena (Yin 2018). This was a valid proposition for the present task. Data was drawn from a survey with key stakeholders (n = 34) of the *Mitteldeutscher Rundfunk* (MDR) in Germany in 2017, supported by document analysis and interviewing. Resulting data was examined by applying the *WertwissenGuide* (*Value Knowledge Guide*, VKG), a special interviewing method introduced by Meynhardt (2004). The VKG collects a person's perceived value attributions when evaluating an organization. It combines an analysis of qualitative (semantic) explorations with a quantitative evaluation of individual value constructs in terms of their benefit to society along the five dimensions of the PVSC. Resulting data therefore consists of a rich set of statements that can be analyzed through content analysis and clustering procedures, and a completed evaluation grid that once analyzed through descriptive statistical methods shows how strongly the organization creates PV in the eyes of the interviewees.

In the first part of the interview, participants were required to generate their individual constructs using their personal language. They were asked to name key characteristics they associated with the organization. Next, they had to contrast them with an opposite that most differed to the characteristics of the organization (e.g. *trustworthy—unreliable* or *trustworthy—superficial*). During this process, respondents were queried on four VKG constructs regarding MDR characteristics (*Accept, Criticize, Approach*, or *Avoids;* see Fig. 10.1). These constructs entail implicit relationships between a *real* and an *ideal* state, as perceived by the individual. *Accept* and *Criticize* reflect positive and negative



Source: Meynhardt, 2004, p. 241

Fig. 10.1 The four constructs of the VKG. According to Meynhardt (2004), p. 241

evaluations of contributions to society at present (*Reality*). *Accept* and *Approach* reflect an individual perception of *Ideality.*

In the second part of the interview, individual perceptions were converted into a PV rating scale by reflecting the pairs of opposites of the personal constructs (stated characteristic and opposite from part one) against the dimensions of the PVSC. Participants were then asked to decide which aspect of the pairs of opposites (characteristic of the organization or its opposite) tended to be more favorable in the eyes of the public—reflecting every construct against every single dimension of the PVSC. Further criteria to ensure quality, as applicable to qualitative case studies were applied through comprehensive and consistent documentation of the whole process using an interview guideline, written protocols, audio recordings, and Excel files to be able to retrace all findings. In addition, we ensured external validity through data triangulation, using the literature and the interviews described (Denzin and Lincoln 2000).

4.1 Case Study Analysis

Germany has a Federal system of PSM. Two nationwide PSM, ZDF and *Deutschlandradio*, and nine regional PSMs together form the Working Group of the Public Broadcasting Corporations of the Federal Republic of Germany (ARD).

4.1.1 The Mitteldeutscher Rundfunk (MDR)

MDR is a large regional PSM, located in East Central Germany. MDR broadcasts in the *Länder* of Thuringia, Saxony, and Saxony-Anhalt, former parts of the German Democratic Republic (GDR). MDR emerged from the former GDR broadcasting and was founded in 1991, after German reunification. Like all PSM in Germany, it is legitimized and mandated by the State Media Treaty. To evaluate whether and how the MDR delivers public value, the study authors approached key stakeholders of the MDR and conducted exploratory interviews in 2017. The survey's main question was: *What makes the MDR valuable to society?*

4.1.2 Sampling and Data Collection

Back in 2017, interviewees were selected through purposeful sampling technique. Interviewees were recruited among key stakeholders of the MDR. They had to represent a broad range of societal domains in the region and were expected to best assess the MDR's value to society. Interviewees were among the field of media politics from all political parties in the regional Parliaments (8), professionals in the media industry and science (10), representatives of civil society from unions, welfare associations, migrant societies, and education (7), representatives of the economy (2), and the arts and culture (3), and MDR managers (4). Of the 34 stakeholders interviewed, ten were females, and 24 males. Respondents were aged between 30 and 70, with an average age of 51. They were typically senior managers with 28 years of professional experience on average.

4.1.3 Interview Procedure

The interviews contained two parts (see Fig. 10.2). In the first part, interviewees were asked to identify significant characteristics of the MDR with perceived relevance to society. They had to mention three value perceptions for each of the following four VKG constructs: *Accept, Criticize*, *Approach*, and *Avoid* (see Fig. 10.1). Interviewees were then asked to contrast their value statement ascribed to the MDR (A) with an opposite (B). These pairs of opposites (A and B) then

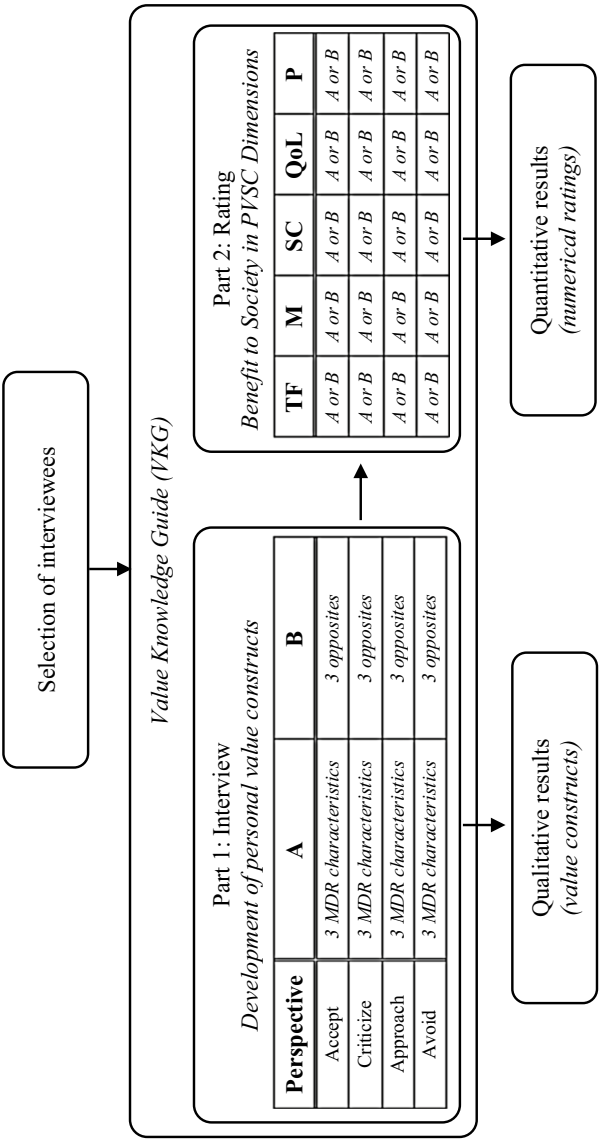


Fig. 10.2 Empirical design. Authors' work

marked the two ends of a personal value construct. In the second part of the interview, respondents had to assign ratings to their statements chosen (A and B) against the dimensions of the PVSC. They were asked to decide which poles of their pairs tended to be more valuable to society according to each dimension of the PVSC.

4.2 Data Analysis

Data collection generated descriptions of MDR's value contributions to society. The dataset consisted of 408 value constructs, 12 pairs of opposites per interview, three in each of the four categories (*something to be kept, something to be developed*, *something not to be kept* and *something not to be developed*). Since there were no restrictions made, the respondents could name nouns or adjectives, short phrases and full sentences as statements. Following grounded theory technique, we explored the data through content analysis and a collaborative clustering process. The researchers reviewed all statements individually and then consensually developed main components and relationships between them based on pairs of opposites to form clusters of similar features and value contributions. Essentially, the resulting clusters described how the MDR created or failed to create PV. The second part of the interview transferred the semantic statements into a quantifiable evaluation pattern. The standardized analysis of these patterns was based on a specific formula, calculating how many of the stated characteristics of the MDR (A) were considered beneficial to society, and in how many cases this applied to its opposite (B).

Based on this, we calculated a *Reality Score* and an *Ideality Score*. The *Reality Score* reflects the ratings for the *accepted* and *criticized* features of the MDR, indicating how strongly the MDR contributes to society at present. The Ideality Score relates to an ideal state of the MDR (*accepted* and *to be approached*). Both scores range from 0 to 12, as there are 12 pairs of opposites. The optimum value of RS is at 6, which means that the characteristics of the MDR are considered relevant for both the present and the future. A value of 12 would indicate that the characteristics are highly relevant at present, but not for the future. The optimum value of IS is at 12, which stands for characteristics that are generally perceived as very positive (ideal) (see Fig. 10.3). Therefore, the optimum of PV creation is represented at RS = 6 and IS = 12. Characteristics rated in this way are assessed as very positive for society and are both already experienced in the present and desirable for the future.

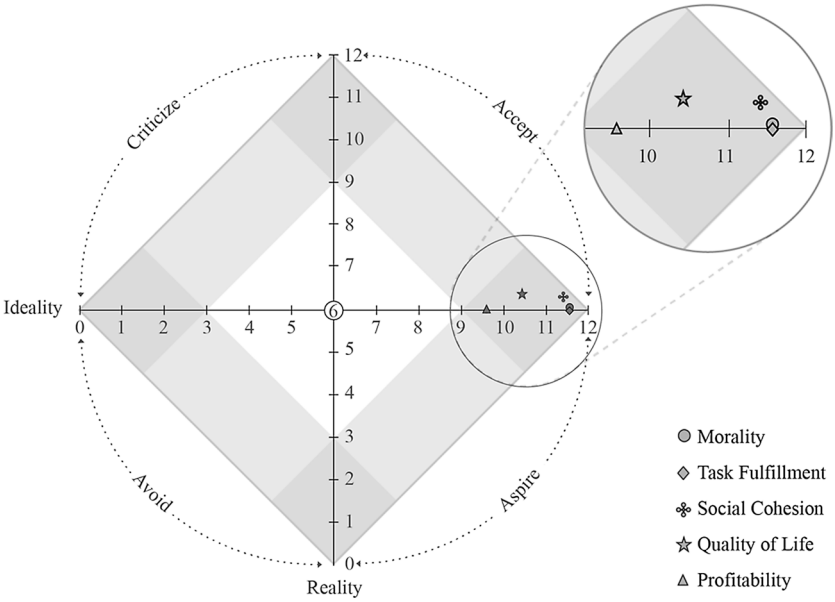


Fig. 10.3 MDR's PV evaluation in terms of valences of action. Authors' calculations

5 Results and Discussion

Results of the 2017 survey are shown in Table 10.1 below. The values indicate that PV offerings were perceived as being both positive and impactful at present and relevant for the future. Findings supported the view that the MDR was perceived as a strong PV service now and in the future. As shown in Table 10.1 below, given a scale from zero (not relevant at present) to 12 (only relevant at present), the *Reality Score* (RS) of 6 marks the perfect balance between relevant at present and relevant for the future (see Fig. 10.2). The RS ranges in all dimensions of the PVSC are close to 6. On average, respondents viewed the MDR as a carrier of strong public value. However, MDR's contributions for QoL (RS = 6.36) and SC (RS = 6.30) were rated as only slightly more relevant at present than in the future.

The *Ideality Score* (IS) indicates the perceived valence (positivity/negativity) of MDR's value contribution, from zero (completely rejected) to 12 (very appreciated). In all dimensions of the PVSC, the IS was rated very highly, generally stating

Table 10.1 Reality Score (RS) and Ideality Score (IS), as applied to the PVSC. Authors' work (data as of 2017)

	Task Fulfilment (TF)	Morality (M)	Social Cohesion (SC)	Quality of Life (QoL)	Profitability (P)
Reality Score (RS)	6.00	6.03	6.30	6.36	5.97
Ideality Score (IS)	11.61	11.61	11.45	10.48	9.64

a positive evaluation of MDR's PV by the raters. MDR's contributions to *Profitability* (IS = 9.64) is perceived as less positive.

However, as shown in Fig. 10.3 below, both scores have reached an optimal ratio in all dimensions. MDR's PV contributions are thus balanced as being relevant at present and for the future (RS near 6) and rated as positive (IS between 9 and 12). Thus, MDR is considered to have both value to society at present and in the future.

Clearly, the numerical results show that MDR's programming and services in general have met society's expectations and basic needs in the PV dimensions, leading to a highly appreciated PSM which creates and delivers public value. MDR's products and services have been perceived to be useful and meet the expectations regarding the quality of programming thus helping to satisfy society's needs for security and orientation (TF). The study has also found that the MDR has behaved decently and has supported individual development, maturity, and autonomy (M). Further, the MDR has been positively rated for contributing to social cohesion in the region and among various societal groups (SC). Although the evaluations regarding QoL and P have indicated room for improvement, the MDR generally provided positive experiences, causing pleasure for audiences, and was considered to efficiently use resources, creating a positive economic impact in the regional (media) industry. Seen this way, the MDR had largely fulfilled its legal remit. The cluster analysis of the qualitative data drove home seven fields of potential contributions to society (MDR's *Public Values*), vividly giving concrete insights of what MDR's PV creation (possibly) consists of. Different to the quantitative data, some qualitative results pointed to deficits in delivering PV.

The most valued PV contributions of the MDR were found to be (1) its *regional expertise*, that is the way it provides relevant information, understands, and shapes people's identities in the region; (2) its *diverse range of services and programs* for information, entertainment, and education; (3) and the way it *empowers free opinion making*, *personal maturity and a democratic mindset* by providing and enabling

participation in the societal discourse. By contrast, other PV outputs were perceived to be more ambivalent. While the (4) *quality* of editorial content met high standards, errors in reporting or lack of research weakened the PV perception. Even worse, respondents strongly criticized the MDR for not (5) *catering to the needs of individuals* by actively including them, for not offering a better (6) *design and usability of services*, and for (7) *not evidencing its financial and political independence appropriately*.

The MDR must build on its potential to sense the needs and fears of the people in the region and to respond to them. However, this is not enough. Securing legitimacy for the future requires involving people and shaping a co-creative society. In the new digital media landscape, it is important to provide access that people can easily navigate. Importantly, the MDR must advocate for society's needs with credibility, using its financial and political independence for the betterment of society's interests and values.

6 Conclusion

This paper sought to address two questions: What is PV in PSM, and how can PV of a PSM best be measured? In answer to the first question, we can reasonably conclude the following: Firstly, we reaffirm the importance of the public value doctrine to support media in the public interest. Evidently, PSM play a particularly crucial role in supporting public dialogue, enhancing knowledge about ways to support sustainable development, and holding governments accountable. Certainly, healthy news media and independent journalism are today more important than ever before. Generally, the PV concept contributes well to the debate on organizational legitimacy by providing insights into how individual and societal well-being are affected by organizational action. However, we stress the notion that PV creation is to be measured against factual evidence of audience appreciation and satisfaction with the offerings. Public value services must first be consumed by the publics before considered to be legitimate. Thus, to make valid predictions on their value contribution to society as perceived by their stakeholders, media organizations such as PSM need more qualified measurement tools.

Secondly, this study has brought to the fore that PSM value can no longer be measured solely based on traditional headline performance metrics such as audience reach in the national media grid. Instead, in a platform society, PV in PSM covers values which pertain to broad societal effects, such as, not only, universality, diversity, accessibility, democratic control, and accountability. Hence, new frameworks to measure audience perceptions of value in a sustainable media future are

to be explored. In this study, we suggest that PSM benefit from improving the efficacy of their PV remit by exploring the PVSC which measures public value from an individual audience perspective. It thereby builds on the idea of collective value creation, which sees all stakeholders as value creators, who should therefore share in that value equitably (Mazzucato 2022). To conclude, in the context of media life, PV is an important measure on the contribution to both individual welfare and the social good. PSM have a strong awareness of their social and democratic responsibility to create and deliver public value programming and services output. Ultimately, their impacts create shared values for society at large.

In answer to the second question, we suggest using the PVSC as measurement tool as it systematically generates management information on what it means to contribute to society at large. Building on insights from psychology, it measures impacts against peoples' basic needs for information, entertainment, education, and social well-being. Ultimately, the PVSC serves as a strategic performance tool that helps managers identify and improve their internal operations to optimize their external outcomes. Doing so, the PVSC evidently improves the efficacy of PSM output by closing the gap between PSM mission and audience preferences. This is a good thing given the need that PSM should become publicly more accountable. Secondly, audiences of PV content and services derive benefits from consuming PSM programs and services only if these are of *proven* and *real* value that satisfies their individual needs. If this individual benefit is *not* generated, no PV is generated, and thus no public sphere is created. Ultimately, this means that the insights presented here shall open the way to new departures for debates on how individuals' civic engagement may eventually fertilize into social structures of common interest. This happens when private cognitive models of perception and thinking about various issues of public concern are transformed into specific forms of action, transformation processes which may well be mediated by digital media, ICTs, and other interactive technologies.

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