

**Public Service Motivation Level of Bachelor in Public Administration Students,  
Pamantasan ng Lungsod ng Marikina, 2015 – 2016**

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**Abstract**

*This study is anchored in the belief of public administration scholars and practitioners that public service is a special calling. The present study aimed to determine the level of public service motivation of Bachelor in Public Administration students of the Pamantasan ng Lungsod ng Marikina, Marikina City who are expected to be the next batch of public servants. The study used the descriptive method of research using Public Service Motivation Inventory Scale developed by James L. Perry(1996), to identify the level and type of individual student's public service motivation in pursuing a career in public administration. A total of 110 junior Public Administration students were respondents in this study. The following findings were generated: Based on the three analytically distinct categories of motives (rational, - norm – based, and affective) the 6 Public Service Motivation (PSM) Constructs (attraction to public policy making, commitment to public interest, civic duty, social justice, compassion, and self – sacrifice), were categorized. Three public service motivations were reported by the student – respondents to be the major motives in enrolling Bachelor in Public Administration, namely: attraction to public policy making (rational motive), commitment to the public interest and civic duty (normative), and self – sacrifice (affective). However, social justice categorized under normative foundation of public service and compassion categorized as affective also associated with public service were reported by the respondents as less important in considering their enrolment in the program.*

**Keywords:** *public service, motivation, Bachelor in Public Administration, public interest*

The desire to understand why is an individual attracted to public service career is the primary reason for the development of public service motivation measure (PSM) initiated by

Perry (1996). Accordingly, to ascertain the validity and reliability of Perry's original measure, many studies have been done using the survey form. Quite a number of studies tested, modified, and expanded overtime to become more valid and reliable tool in public administration.

Public administration literature is growing in leaps and bounds as public service motivation research gains considerable attention among many practitioners and scholars of public administration. As interest continues to grow, important questions emerge necessitating clarification to further one's basic understanding of public service motivation.

The heart of the theory of Public Service Motivation (PSM) according to Wright & Grant (2010) assumes that some individuals have a predisposition to respond to motives grounded primarily or uniquely in public institutions and organizations. This statement is an extension and reiteration of the idea forwarded by Perry and Wise (1990) and supplemented by Brewer and Selden (1998) who said that individual motives induces them to perform meaningful public, community and social service. That is, in following the preceding idea, the theory suggest that individuals with greater Public Service Motivation (PSM) are more likely to work in government because of the opportunities it offers to provide meaningful public service. This assumption is supported by a growing body of empirical research that has found PSM to be existing and dynamically operating in government sector because of the opportunities it offers such as: to provide meaningful public service and to perform better in and feel more satisfied with their public sector jobs because they find this type of work intrinsically rewarding (Wright, 2010).

Recently, several scholars in the discipline of public administration and political science have conducted studies on PSM and examine its relationship with job satisfaction (Bright, 2008; Steinj, 2008; Taylor,2008; Wright and Pandey, 2008), organizational commitment (Moynihan and Pandey, 2007; Taylor, 2008), job performance ( Alonso and Lewis, 2001; Bright, 2007; Frank and Lewis, 2004; Naff and Crum, 1999), and organizational performance (Brewer and Selden, 2000; Kim, 2005). Despite all these research achievements, it seems not enough to extend further the basic understanding of PSM.

Amid the immensity of knowledge on PSM and its various relationships with other disciplines, there exists no common agreement as regard what really is the concept all about. Accordingly, public service motivation which originated in 1982 is generally understood as an employee's desire to work for the public interest (Rainey, 1982; Perry and Wise, 1990) and covers motives of employees in the public sector desiring to do good for others and shape the

well – being of society (Perry and Hondeghem, 2008) in Petrovsky (2009). Likewise, the same idea is shared by Kachornkittiya, Trichan, and Lerkiatbundit (2012) who stated that PSM is the mechanism that reflects public service behaviors of public employees. However, Peter and Wise (1990) stated that Public Service Motivation (PSM) was the personal motive of a person in his response to the basic motive of the organization in public services. It is an important phenomenon leading to efficient operations in public service. PSM is therefore a significant quality of public employees. It can be reflected in an individual's efforts and attention in meeting the mission of public organization.

Corollary to the above definition, Rainey and Steinbauer(1999) define public service motivation as a general, altruistic motivation to serve the interests of a community of people, a state, a nation or humankind. However, Brewer and Selden (1998) in Petrovsky (2009) conceptualized public service motivation as the motivational force that induces individuals to perform meaningful public, community and social services. Following the explanation of Petrovsky (2009) which argued that the essence of the concept is that PSM is one type of intrinsic motivation, concerned with the well being of others.

Kachornkittiya, Trichan, and Lerkiatbundit, (2012) identified three concepts embedded in the public service motivation, namely: rational motives, norm- based motives, and affective motives. Rational motives refer to any actions taken by an individual to achieve the greatest goal of his or her satisfaction. This can be attained when the person gets involved in the process of policy formulation; the participation in the policy making results in motives in their work and build up their self – image. Rational motives can motivate an individual in his/her attraction to public policy making, commitment to a public program and satisfaction in giving public service.

On the other hand, norm – based motives are the most consensus quality of public employees in providing public services. This type of motives results from an attempt to provide public services for all people at the same standard. Norm – based motives leads to another major motive in public service, loyalty to duty, which is based on the concept of social equity and social justice, all people should have the same privileges in accessing public resources for their better life.

The affective motives are the reasons for driving individuals' awareness of diverse social contexts, being nationalistic and sensitive to others. Affective motives show their commitment in public service programs.

In 1996, Perry studied six dimensions of the public service motivation of public employees. The six dimensions under investigation were: 1) attraction to public policy making which refers to the motives to urge and enforce self – image building; 2) commitment to the public interest is the co – occurred motive in showing the interest for public service; 3) civic duty concerns awareness of one’s duty to the public; 4) social justice concerns the activities to promote the underprivileged group for resource or economics and political privileges; 5) self – sacrifice is the motive closely related to public service motivation, concerning the willingness to serve other people; and compassion is the major motive held in most governmental officials. Results of Perry’s (1996) study showed that only four dimensions of 1) attraction to public policy making, 2) commitment to the public interest, 3) compassion, and 4)self - sacrifice can be used in measuring public service motivation. These four dimensions were widely used as the dimensions of public service motivation in several studies in Switzerland (Ritz, 2009), Korea (Kim, 2005; 2006), China (Liu, Tang and Zhu, 2008; Li, 2008).

The above discussion inspired the current researchers to conduct a study using the original PSM scale with six dimensions to determine the public service motivation level of the junior Bachelor of Arts in Public Administration students. Specifically, the study aims to address the following questions: 1. ) What is the level of public service motivation of the junior Bachelor of Arts in Public Administration students?, 2.) What public service motivation dimensions are possessed by the BA in Public Administration ? 3.) What intervention programs can be adopted to enhance the public service motivation level of the junior Bachelor in Public Administration students?

## **Methodology**

### **Research Design**

The researchers employed the descriptive research method which is the appropriate approach in describing the current state of public service motivation of the respondents. The population of the study included a total of 110 junior Bachelor of Arts in Public Administration students of the Pamantasan ng Lungsod ng Marikina. These student – respondents were the first batch of students who were enlisted under the Public Administration program. For a purpose of having consistent and uniformity in determining the academic performance, those who were included in the study are those graduates who were admitted in the university from the beginning of the offering of the program and whose grades were complete.

## **Data Gathering Procedure**

The researchers wrote a letter to the college dean requesting permission to float the questionnaire to the student- respondents. Upon the approval of the request, the researchers proceeded to the classroom to distribute the research questionnaire among the students. Only those students who are willing to participate in the research were given the questionnaire. The research instruments were retrieved right away as soon as the students finished answering the documents.

## **Results and Discussion**

The primary question posed in this study is to determine the level of public service motivation of the Bachelor of Science in Public Administration students. As future public servants, there is a need to prepare and equip these students with values and needs that are compatible with the public service mission. As Wright (2003) argues, and quoted by Camilleri (2007) the composition of the public workforce has been expected to reflect the nature of the work in the public sector whose employees are fulfilling higher – order needs and altruistic motives by performing public service. It is these individual attributes that every person should possess in order to regain public confidence in the declining trust in government institutions.

As educational institutions prepare these future professionals in the public service, it is but appropriate to determine the level of students' public service motivation so that they could be properly guided for the future work.

Table 1 showed the level of public service motivation of the junior Bachelor of Arts in Public Administration student – respondents based on the 6 dimensions. The average mean of students' public service motivation is 2.97 which can be interpreted as moderately high. Further appreciation of the data suggest that the student – respondents gained the lowest mean on the compassion dimension which gets a mean of 2.51, social justice dimension with a mean of 2.92 and commitment to public interest with a mean of 2.97. All means are interpreted as moderately high. Though, these means are interpreted as moderately high, this patriotism of benevolence as Frederickson and Hart (1985) termed it, is the central motive for civil servants.

Table 1

**Mean Score of Students' Level of Public Service Motivation**

<b>Dimensions</b>	<b>Mean</b>
1. Attraction to Public Policy Making	3.13
2. Commitment to Public Interest	2.97
3. Social Justice	2.92
4. Civic Duty	3.16
5. Compassion	2.51
6. Self Sacrifice	3.16
<b>Average</b>	<b>2.97</b>

It can be gleaned from the given data that the student – respondents are aligned to the degree program they are taking. They still have one more year to prepare themselves prior to totally integrating themselves to the government service. One more year in college and a semester's on – the- job- training may improve their mean average in each dimension.

Table 2

**Mean Scores of Public Administration Students on the Dimension Attraction to Policy Making**

<b>Indicators</b>	<b>Mean</b>
1. Politics is a dirty word.	2.76
2. I respect public officials who can turn a good idea into law.	3.64
3. Ethical behavior of public officials is as important as competence.	3.44
4. The give and take of public policy making doesn't appeal to me.	2.71
5. I don't care much for politicians.	3.12
<b>Average</b>	<b>3.13</b>

As shown in Table 2, attraction to public policy making registered an average of 3.13 which may be interpreted as high. However, further observation of the data suggests that indicators 4 and 1 gained a mean of 2.71 and 2.76 respectively. While the mean scores may be moderately high, the public administration students simply showed that they are already learned about the nature of public administration. Number 4 indicator is stated in a reversed form, thus the respondents mean that public policy making appeals them. This is an inspiring manifestation as regard their attitudes and behavior because when they started in the program no one is interested to enroll in the program. Each student wanted to be in another program except in the Bachelor of Arts in Public Administration. The admission office simply convinced the students to start in the Public Administration program and maybe later, if there will be available slots in the program of their choice, they can transfer after two semesters.

The desire to study is more demanding than the desire to be in their choice program, thus, the students agreed to enroll temporarily in the Public Administration program. After two semesters, nobody requested for transfer to his/her initial choice program. Now, these students are in their junior year in the BA Public Administration. The mean scores they register in this dimension and its related indicators maybe an articulation that the students have already internalize the value of becoming a public servant.

Table 3 in the next page showed the mean scores of the respondents on the dimension ‘Commitment to Public Interest’. The mean average in this dimension is 2.97 which may be interpreted as moderately high. Indicator number 1 under this dimension gained a mean score of 1.87 which is low. However, this low mean score simply suggests that the student – respondents do not believe that when people are talking about public interest they mean only self – interest. Following the assertions of Kaipeng, Linghua and Qiu (2013), which declared that government employees’ motivation is one of the most important issues in the practice of public administration. It is shown that these respondents are aware that government employee or future government employee should be and are strongly motivated by the desire to help the general public, and therefore are committed to public interest. The same perspective is incorporated in the previous research conducted by Houston(2005) and Mosher (1982) which claim that government employees or public employees are motivated by a sense of service.

**Table 3**  
**Mean Scores of Public Administration Students on the Dimension**  
**Commitment to Public Interest**

<b>Indicators</b>	<b>Mean</b>
1. People may talk about public interest, but they are really concerned only about their self – interest.	1.87
2. It is hard for me to get intensely interested in what is going in my community.	2.33
3. I unselfishly contribute to my community.	2.81
4. Meaningful public service is very important to me.	3.75
5. I would prefer seeing public officials do what is best for the whole community even if it harmed my interest.	3.27
6. An official’s obligation to the public should always come before loyalty to superiors.	3.19
7. I consider public service my civic duty.	3.26
<b>Average</b>	<b>2.97</b>

Accordingly, individuals who are strongly motivated to do public service are supposed to work for public organization, to perform better on the job and be more sensitive to intrinsic rewards (Houston, 2000; Perry and Wise, 1990). Kaipeng, Linghua, and Qiu (2013) further emphasized that public administration scholar's view that civil servants are characterized by a motivation to serve public interest. This commitment to public interest is premised on a strong desire to serve the society and others (Houston, 2006). Such perspective is described earlier by Brewer and Selden (1998) when they said that the motivational force that induces the individuals to perform meaningful public service is embedded in one's public interest.

In another view point, Rainey and Steinbauer (1999) described it as a general altruistic motivation to serve the interest of a community of people, a state, a nation, or mankind. Quoting Vandenberg, Scheeper, and Hondeghem (2006), Kaipeng, Linghua, and Qiu (2013) pointed out that public interest is the belief, values, and attitudes that go beyond self – interest or organizational interest, that concern the interest of a larger political entity and that induce, through public interaction, motivation for targeted action. Based on the various ideas stated, Houston (2006) concluded that a commitment to the public interest, service to others and self sacrifice underlie one's understanding of the public service motivation.

**Table 4**  
**Mean Scores of Public Administration Students on Dimension Social Justice**

<b>Indicators</b>	<b>Mean</b>
1. I believe that there are many public causes worth championing.	3.12
2. I do not believe that government can do much to make society fairer.	2.53
3. If any group does not share in the prosperity of our society, then we are all worse off.	2.81
4. I am willing to use every ounce of my energy to make the world a more just place.	3.18
5. I am not afraid to go to bat for the rights of others even if it means I will be ridiculed.	2.97
<b>Average</b>	<b>2.92</b>

Table 4 summarizes the mean scores of indicators of the dimension under social justice. The over – all mean under this dimension is 2.92 which is interpreted verbally as moderately high. It can be observed that indicator numbers 2, 3 and 5 achieved mean scores of 2.53, 2.81, and 2.97 respectively and are all interpreted as moderately high. It can be observed that the

statements are all stated in the reversed form. It can be said that the respondents are very positive with the government service and can still do much to make the society better and fairer, are likewise hopeful that despite the presence of social inequality it's not the worst of everything and are also willing to fight for the rights of other people despite possibility of being ridiculed. Collectively, the data suggests that the student- respondents have developed in them a better perspective on the concept of social justice.

Table 5 is a summary of the respondents' mean score on the civic duty dimension. The over – all mean is high at 3.16. An interesting finding is the perceived idea of the respondents that official obligations are not only meant for public officials who are sworn into office. It can be construed that the respondents are one in believing that once you are a public servant, like an elective official who are sworn to office, one has inherent obligation to perform for public good. That is, no matter who you are (elected or otherwise), for as long as you are employed in the government or public office you are bound to perform your obligation to the people.

**Table 5**  
**Mean Scores of Public Administration Students on the Dimension**  
**Civic Duty**

Indicators	Mean
1. When public officials take an oath of office, I believe they accept obligations not expected of other citizens.	2.89
2. I am willing to go great lengths to fulfill my obligations to my country.	3.33
3. Public service is one of the highest forms of citizenship.	3.58
4. I believe everyone has a moral commitment to civic affairs no matter how busy they are.	3.25
5. I have an obligation to look after those less well off.	2.91
6. To me the phrase “duty, honor, and country” stirs deeply felt emotion.	3.01
7. It is my responsibility to help solve problems arising from interdependencies among people.	3.21
<b>Average</b>	<b>3.16</b>

Likewise, the respondents also registered highest mean score in indicator number 3, which consider public service as the highest form of citizenship. The perception that the respondents have developed from their 5 semesters in the program showed that the students have learned to appreciate the program they were enrolled in. Patriotism as a value has been inculcated in them, thus, they can say that they are bound to assume their obligations to their country, they have moral commitment to the civic affairs in the government, they have

developed understanding about the meaning of interdependence among people, and they also value phrases like duty, honor and country.

In sum, the student – respondents 5 semesters has been a fruitful exposure to the expectations of public administration students because they were able to perceive concepts very important among public service workers.

Table 6 summarizes the mean scores on the dimension compassion. The over-all mean score under this dimension is 2.51. Though, interpreted verbally as moderately high, the indicators included under this dimension registered very low mean scores. Indicator number 8 gained the lowest mean at 1.77 which can be interpreted as low. The respondents probably are not aware or maybe not a beneficiary to the government programs thus, they claimed that they are not supporting them. Another point is that some government programs maybe are contrary to what they believed in, that is why they are prone not to support them.

Based on the perspective of Petrovsky (2009), the researcher claimed that there are issues under compassion that are truly causing some concern and therefore ,someone might oppose several social programs that in their opinion benefit only a few and not necessarily needy people. Yet that person might have a high level of public service motivation. F

**Table 6**  
**Mean Scores of Public Administration Students on the Dimension**  
**Compassion**

Indicators	Mean
1. I am rarely moved by the plight of the underprivileged.	2.66
2. Most social programs are too vital to do without.	2.17
3. It is difficult for me to contain my feelings when I see people in distress.	2.91
4. To me, patriotism includes seeing to the welfare of others.	3.25
5. I seldom think about the welfare of people whom I don't know personally.	2.24
6. I am often reminded by daily events about how dependent we are on one another.	3.03
7. I have little compassion for people in need who are unwilling to take the first step to help them.	2.09
8. There are few public programs that I wholeheartedly support.	1.77
<b>Average</b>	<b>2.51</b>

Table 7 summarizes the mean scores of the dimension – self sacrifice. It gained an over-all mean of 3.16, interpreted as high. It can be observed that indicator number 3 obtained the

lowest mean among the 8 indicators. However, it is interesting to note that student – respondents are saying that they would rather prefer to do good deeds than doing well financially. This score

**Table 7**  
**Mean Scores of Public Administration Students on the Dimension**  
**Self Sacrifice**

Indicators	Mean
1. Making a difference in society means more to me than personal achievements.	3.12
2. I believe in putting duty first before self.	3.34
3. Doing well financially is definitely more important to me than doing good deeds.	2.58
4. Much of what I do is for a cause bigger than myself.	3.14
5. Serving citizens would give me a good feeling even if no one paid me for it.	3.57
6. I feel people should give back to society more than they get from it.	3.20
7. I am one of those rare people who would risk personal loss to help someone else.	3.14
8. I am prepared to make enormous sacrifices for the good of the society.	3.23
<b>Average</b>	<b>3.16</b>

suggest that being a public servant does not imply to get you financially well. Rather, the respondents claimed that as a public servant, your duty is to serve the people.

Following the argument of Petrovsky (2009) quoting Steijn (2008) suggests that public service motivation can be considered an intrinsic – socio – centric work orientation whose desire is to better the lives of others. That is, the specific intrinsic motivation is concerned with the promotion of the well – being of others.

In concluding, it can be said that the general public service motivation level of the junior Bachelor of Arts in Public Administration students are moderately high. But the students also gained high average in attraction to public policy making, civic duty, and self sacrifice. Of the six dimensions in the public service motivation, the student – respondents scored moderately high in commitment to public interest, social justice and compassion. These dimensions can be strengthened with the remaining semesters in their college days prior to graduation. So that it is highly recommended that before the respondents graduate from the degree they are pursuing, similar questionnaire be administered to ascertain their level of commitment in the public service.

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