

## Leadership roles, organizational support, and public service motivation among public sector employees: A mediation model



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### ARTICLE INFO

#### Article history:

Received 28 October 2024

Received in revised form

22 February 2025

Accepted 13 March 2025

#### Keywords:

Public service motivation

Public leadership

Organizational support

Social exchange theory

Policymaking attraction

### ABSTRACT

As public governance grows more complex, public organizations are increasingly focused on enhancing employee behaviors that improve service quality, with public service motivation being a key area of interest. While leadership is known to influence public service motivation, limited constructs and the exclusion of organizational support as a predictor indicate a need for further research. This study explores the relationship between public leadership roles, perceived organizational support, and public service motivation among 150 public sector employees in a Philippine province. Using a cross-sectional design, data were collected through an online survey with adapted questionnaires. Results show high public leadership ratings for supervisors, moderate perceived organizational support, and high public service motivation. Attraction to policymaking emerged as a major factor in public service motivation. Accountability leadership was the strongest predictor of perceived organizational support, while network governance leadership best predicted public service motivation. Although perceived organizational support positively correlated with leadership and public service motivation, it did not act as a mediator, suggesting the non-applicability of the reciprocity concept from a social exchange perspective. Additional factors such as social group identification and the opportunity to serve point toward a new perspective on public service motivation, emphasizing social belongingness and purpose.

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### 1. Introduction

Public governance has recently grown increasingly complex, particularly in the quest for quality public service. Public organizations are becoming more concerned with the promotion of employee behaviors that can enhance service quality during the dynamics and demands of bureaucratic processes, and one aspect that merits attention is public service motivation (PSM).

Public service motivation is a concept that captures the interest of academicians and practitioners, particularly public administrators and managers who deal with the multiple complexities of public service while striving for efficient use of financial and human resources to meet public needs (Zubair et al., 2021). Perry and Wise (1990) considered forerunners, defined it as an individual's

predisposition to respond to motives grounded primarily or uniquely in public institutions. It can be understood as motivation directed towards society or an individual, as public service employees are highly expected to perform altruistic behaviors (Zubair et al., 2021). It is an altruistic need that attracts individuals to opportunities to contribute to the well-being of their communities and society (Bright, 2021).

As postulated by previous studies, public sector employees carry a motivation and zeal of public service and have relatively higher public service motivation than those of private-sector employees (Zubair et al., 2021, Liu et al., 2012), there is an existing notion that when somebody is working in the public sector, his/her public service motivation is high. This is not always the case, as evidenced by various studies from different countries. Most state civil servants in parts of Russia did not consider public service as the leading motivation for their service (Sharin, 2020), and public sector workers in Japan, Taiwan and South Korea placed higher importance on the intrinsic motivations, like a job that is useful to society, compared to intrinsic ones like higher pay (Gao, 2015). This is because

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<https://doi.org/10.21833/ijaas.2025.03.016>

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individuals vary in their preferences and interests, and employees may also vary in their motivations to serve. Other studies show that the motivations of individuals who pursue public service depend on leadership practices (Hameduddin and Engbers, 2022), supervisory support (Deng et al., 2021), hierarchical authority and reform efforts (Moynihan and Pandey, 2007), quality of political and administrative leadership (Ugaddan and Park, 2017). Meanwhile, in the Philippines, Tudy (2024) emphasized that the desire to serve the Filipinos, participate in policymaking, and commitment to the public are the three latent variables of PSM among Filipino public sector employees. Meanwhile, a high level of public service motivation was found among public school heads and local government unit employees in the Philippines (De la Salde and Gempes, 2018).

Although previous studies found a correlation between public service motivation and leadership, their focus was narrow, as they only considered a few prominent leadership constructs (Hameduddin and Engbers, 2022), thereby providing suggestions for future research. Further, Gao (2015) postulated that research findings on PSM in Western societies are not fully applicable in other areas of the world. To date, there has been very limited systematic research that examines the combination of leadership and organizational support as predictors of public service motivation, leaving this aspect of the literature unstructured. To contribute to the body of literature about Philippine public sector employees' public service motivation and investigate how their supervisors' public leadership roles and organizational support might impact their motivation, this study was initiated.

This study is anchored on self-determination theory and social exchange theory. According to Ryan and Deci (2000), self-determination theory

claimed that competence, autonomy, and relatedness are three basic psychological needs that people must satisfy to experience ongoing growth, integrity, and wellness. As pointed out by Andrews (2016), motivated individuals perform their duties or act in autonomy or without externally imposed constraints or coercion. Hence, public sector employees may develop public service motivation due to autonomous choice and volition to serve the public. This study is also anchored on social exchange theory, which was described by Cropanzano et al. (2017) as an attitudinal and behavioral relationship between the actor and the target that resulted in reciprocity. Social exchange may exist in the relationship between an organization and employees, to which employees may develop associated perceptions of how their organizations provide for their social and material needs and, in turn, may reciprocate it in the form of behaviors or performance. If employees believe that discretionary control of the organization resulted in favorable treatment and human resources policies, they will likely attribute it to the organization and thus result in a feeling of gratitude (Eisenberger et al., 2020). This feeling of gratitude may be manifested in the positive performance of public service.

This study aims to achieve the following objectives: a) to provide a descriptive account of the state of public leadership roles, organizational support, and public service motivation; b) to identify patterns of association between public leadership roles, organizational support, and public service motivation; c) to determine how organizational support might replace public leadership, or work with it, to impact public service motivation; and d) to identify other factors that facilitate public service motivation among public sector employees under study. Fig. 1 shows the paradigm of the study.

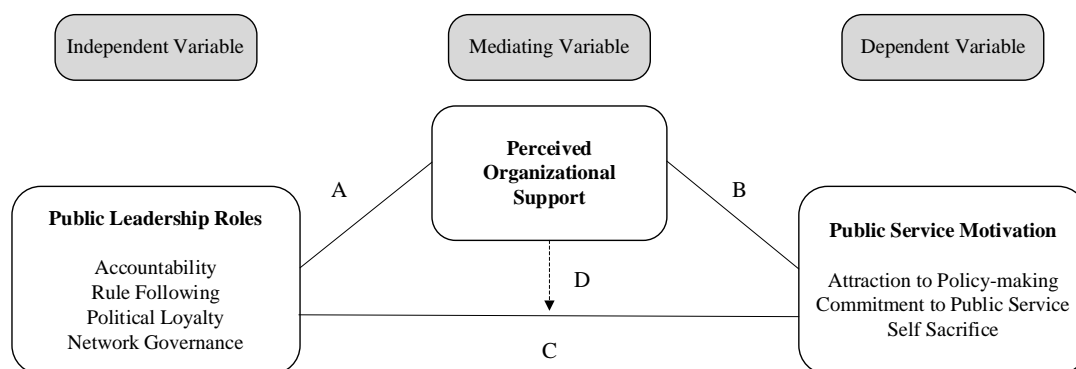


Fig. 1: Paradigm of the study

The paradigm indicates public leadership roles such as accountability, rule-following, political loyalty, and network governance as independent variables, while public service motivation in terms of attraction to policymaking, commitment to the public interest, and self-sacrifice as dependent variables. Perceived organizational support is the mediating variable, which is yet to be tested for its effect on the relationship between independent and

dependent variables. In the framework, an assumed relationship between variables was indicated as to the paths labeled as A, B, C, and D.

## 2. Related literature

Public service motivation's four dimensions, which are attraction to public policymaking, commitment to the public interest, compassion, and

self-sacrifice, were first coined by [Perry \(1996\)](#). In some Asian countries, leadership practices, supervisors' support, hierarchical authority, reform efforts, transactional, transformational, and distributed leadership styles were found to be positively related to public service motivation ([Hameduddin and Engbers, 2022](#); [Deng et al., 2021](#); [Moynihan and Pandey, 2007](#); [Punchard, 2023](#); [Belrhiti et al., 2020](#)). Studies from Portugal, Indonesia, and Russia had unraveled common factors of public service motivation of public sector employees such as dedication or commitment to the public interest, self-sacrifice, and interest in policy making or participation in the development of public policy ([Forte et al., 2022](#); [Lesmana et al., 2022](#); [Sharin, 2020](#)). Consistent with the mentioned findings is the result of the study among Philippine public sector employees that desire to serve the Filipinos, participation in policymaking, and commitment to the public are three latent variables of public service motivation ([Tudy, 2024](#)). Meanwhile, a high level of public service motivation was found among public school heads and local government unit employees in the Philippines ([De la Salde and Gempes, 2018](#)).

As to organizational support, authentic leadership and perceived organizational support are related ([Ladao et al., 2022](#)), whereas leader-member exchange, perceived supervisor's support, and transformational leadership were found to be positively related to perceived organizational support ([Kurtessis et al., 2017](#)). While it is assumed that the presence or absence of organizational support may facilitate or hinder commitment to stay in public service, [Palma \(2024\)](#) finds that a positive work environment, fair pay, convenient location, and the chance of securing a tenured position incited non-tenured employees in the Philippines to continue working in the public sector, while political interference, limited professional development, and complicated tasks are what make them leave. Thus, perceived organizational support is increased by the presence of favorable working conditions, support from leaders, and human resource practices. In relation to this, skill variety, task significance, and feedback are positively associated with PSM ([Kim, 2016](#)), while the presence of negative organizational processes and characteristics like red tape may weaken PSM ([Moynihan and Pandey, 2007](#)).

### 3. Methods

#### 3.1. Research design

In this research, the researcher adopted a non-experimental, cross-sectional design. Non-experimental, cross-sectional research design analyzes data at a single point in time, measures the prevalence of outcomes, understands determinants, and describes the features of the population ([Wang and Cheng, 2020](#)). As adopted in this study, it investigated the relationship between public leadership roles and public service motivation and

the effects of perceived organizational support on the existing relationships.

#### 3.2. Respondents of the study

The respondents of this study are public sector employees in the province of Negros Oriental in the Philippines. With the use of a G\*Power calculator with parameters at effect size  $f^2 = .20$ , power  $= .95$ , error probability  $= .05$ , and number of predictors  $= 6$ , the number of samples was identified. The associated calculation yielded the required minimum sample size of 111 respondents, but the researcher randomly included 150 public sector employees. The participants who are working in various agencies like local government units, state universities and colleges, and national government agencies were selected through convenience sampling. Convenient sampling is a type of non-probability sampling method that collects data from readily available sources or groups of people.

#### 3.3. Instrument and data collection

The researcher employed a combination of standardized and modified instruments consisting of five parts. Part one is a researcher-made questionnaire that gathered the demographic profile of respondents. Part two is a 21-item public leadership roles questionnaire adopted from [Tummers and Knies \(2016\)](#), which includes four specific roles of public leaders; (1) accountability (six items), (2) rule-following (four items), (3) political loyalty (five items), and (4) network governance (six items) which was proven to have sufficient reliability ( $>.70$ ). Part 3 of the instrument is an adopted 6-item perceived organization support questionnaire by [Eisenberger et al. \(1986\)](#). The instrument has a mean reliability coefficient from 58 studies reporting internal consistency, .88 (SD  $= .10$ ; SE  $= .134$ ). The instrument was also previously used by [Ladao et al. \(2022\)](#) in the Philippines, which yielded substantial reliability (AVE  $= 0.775$ ; CR  $= 0.954$ ; CA  $= 0.942$ ). Part 4 of the instrument is the public service motivation survey questionnaire, which was adopted from [Perry \(1996\)](#) but modified by [Tudy \(2024\)](#) in a Filipino context. [Tudy's \(2024\)](#) exploratory factor analysis and confirmatory factor analysis validated only three dimensions of PSM among Filipinos, which include self-sacrifice (6 items), commitment to the public interest (2 items), and attraction to policymaking (3 items). Part five of the instrument is an open-ended question about the other factors that facilitated public service motivation aside from organizational support. The instrument was subjected to validation by three expert evaluators, whose comments were subsequently integrated into the instrument. To test the reliability of instruments within the context of the target participants, it pilot-tested public sector employees in Iloilo province in the Philippines and arrived at calculated results of Cronbach's alpha, which range from .64 to .73 in all four public

leadership roles, .74 for perceived organizational support, and ranges of .71 to .76 in three public service motivation dimensions. For the collection of data, the researcher has randomly sent the questionnaire online (through Google Forms) to public sector employees in the different government agencies in the province of Negros Oriental in the Philippines. There was a total of 150 completed survey instruments, and all the responses were recorded, coded, and subjected to data analysis.

### 3.4. Data analysis

The researcher collated the responses on the questionnaires that were submitted online, categorized them, assigned codes, and encoded the responses using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences software. Encoded data were analyzed using appropriate statistical tools such as mean, frequency, standard deviation, Pearson  $r$ , regression, and mediation analysis. The researcher conducted linear regression analysis to ascertain the impact of each type of public leadership role on public service motivation and then employed [Baron and Kenny's \(1986\)](#) causal step approach to investigate how perceived organizational support, or lack thereof, could influence these relationships. As postulated by [David and Sava \(2015\)](#), [Baron and Kenny's \(2015\)](#) causal step approach is the most common method in mediation analysis within the non-experimental approach. The approach employs four conditions to identify the mediation effect through statistical regression. Step 1 is finding a significant association between predictor variables (public leadership roles) and outcome variables (PSM) (the  $c$  path); Step 2 is finding a significant association between predictor variables (public leadership roles) and mediator variables (POS) (the  $a$  path); Step 3 is finding a significant association between mediator variables (POS) and outcome variables (PSM) (the  $b$  path); and Step 4 is finding the association when predictor variables (leadership constructs) and mediator variables (POS) are simultaneously included in the regression equation for outcome variables (PSM) (the  $d$  path). Full mediation is present when the mediator variable (now simultaneously included with the predictor variables in the regression equation) is the only remaining significant predictor of PSM, and partial mediation occurs when the magnitude of the relationship between the predictor variables and the outcome variable decreases compared to the first test. Responses to open-ended questions were analyzed through the identification of emerging themes.

## 4. Results and discussion

### 4.1. Leadership rules, organizational support, and public service motivation

As indicated in [Table 1](#), employees in the public sector rated their supervisors' overall performance

of public leadership roles as high ( $M = 4.17$ ,  $SD = 0.64$ ). As to specific roles, there is a high level of accountability leadership ( $M = 4.20$ ,  $SD = 0.78$ ), rule-following leadership ( $M = 4.48$ ,  $SD = 0.68$ ), political loyalty leadership ( $M = 3.79$ ,  $SD = 0.75$ ), and network governance leadership ( $M = 3.96$ ,  $SD = 0.70$ ). Filipino public sector employees under study perceived their supervisors' leadership as positive and nurturing, especially when it comes to following the law. They consider the actions and discretionary decisions of their supervisors to be supportive of the organizational requirement relative to accountability, lawfulness, political loyalty, and network governance.

Also indicated in [Table 1](#), public sector employees perceived organizational support to be moderate ( $M = 3.44$ ,  $SD = 0.58$ ) only. They believed that the organization values their contribution and supports their well-being, but only to a moderate extent. They may have observed organizational practices, policies, or discretionary choices that are less supportive of their well-being.

Further in [Table 1](#), the public service motivation of employees in the public sector is generally high ( $M = 4.17$ ,  $SD = 0.49$ ). It is also high when viewed in terms of attraction to policymaking ( $M = 4.26$ ,  $SD = 0.69$ ), commitment to public service ( $M = 4.19$ ,  $SD = 0.69$ ), and self-sacrifice ( $M = 4.20$ ,  $SD = 0.54$ ). The results mean that Filipino public sector employees who participated in the study are highly engaged in altruistic and pro-social behaviors for the interest of the larger public. This supports the findings of [De la Salde and Gempes \(2018\)](#) of a high level of public service motivation among Filipino public-school heads and local government unit employees. Meanwhile, it is noted that among the three dimensions listed, participants are more inclined and attracted to policymaking, which indicates their interest in being involved in making policies or introducing changes to the previously existing system or processes. This is consistent with the findings of [Tudy \(2024\)](#) that participation and contribution to laws or policies that benefit the country and not monetary compensation, and rewards drive Filipino public sector employees' interest in policymaking, which in turn contributes to their public service motivation. The findings also corroborate that dedication or commitment to public interest, self-sacrifice, and interest in policymaking are common factors of public service motivation ([Forte et al., 2022](#); [Lesmana et al., 2022](#); [Sharin, 2020](#)).

### 4.2. Relationships between variables

As shown in [Table 2](#), the general public leadership level of supervisors has a moderate correlation with employees perceived organizational support ( $r = .526 < .01$ ). When viewed in terms of specific leadership roles, the association is still prevalent but lower, with moderate correlation with accountability leadership ( $r = .501 < .01$ ), lawfulness leadership ( $r = .420 < .01$ ), network governance

leadership ( $r = .447 < .01$ ), and low correlation with political loyalty ( $r = .397 < .01$ ). It is noted that among the four public leadership roles, accountability has the highest correlation coefficient with perceived organizational support, while political loyalty has the lowest. While the correlation does not assume causation, it is safe to note that as their supervisors positively and constructively performed public

leadership roles, Filipino public sector employees tend to perceive it as a form of organizational support. The result is supportive of previous studies that transformational, supportive leadership, servant leadership, perceived supervisor's support, and leader-member exchange are positively related to perceived organizational support (Eisenberger et al., 2020; Shetty et al., 2022; Kurtessis et al., 2017).

**Table 1:** Public leadership roles, perceived organizational support, and public service motivation

Categories	n	Mean	SD	Description
Public leadership roles	150	4.17	0.64	High
Accountability	150	4.20	0.78	High
Rule following	150	4.48	0.68	High
Political loyalty	150	3.79	0.75	High
Network governance	150	3.96	0.70	High
Perceived organizational support	150	3.44	0.58	Moderate
Public service motivation	150	4.17	0.49	High
Attraction to policy making	150	4.26	0.69	High
Commitment to public service	150	4.19	0.69	High
Self-sacrifice	150	4.20	0.54	High

1.0-1.5: Very low; 1.6-2.5: Low; 2.6 -3.5: Moderate; 3.6-4.5: High; 4.6-5.0: Very High

Also indicated in Table 2, there is a low positive correlation between the supervisors' public leadership level and employees' public service motivation ( $r = .468 < .01$ ). When viewed according to specific leadership roles, public service motivation has a low correlation with accountability ( $r = .378 < .01$ ), rule following ( $r = .359 < .01$ ), political loyalty ( $r = .360 < .01$ ), and moderate correlation with network governance ( $r = .483 < .01$ ). Despite the low correlation level, the results show that when supervisors perform positive and constructive leadership, Filipino public sector employees are more likely to display feelings of selflessness and engage in altruistic behaviors. The findings confirm previous studies' proposition that leadership (Hameduddin and Engbers, 2022), supervisory support (Deng et al., 2021), and hierarchical authority and reform efforts (Moynihan and Pandey,

2007) were associated with PSM. However, it is noticeable that there is a very low correlation between perceived organizational support and public service motivation ( $r = .215 < .05$ ). This can be connected to the moderate level of perceived organizational support in Table 1, which may indicate the public sector employees' perception that their well-being is least valued. Surprisingly, although POS is low, the PSM of public sector employees under study is high, and they are positively related to some degree. The result is contrary to what Moynihan and Pandey (2007) stated, that negative organizational processes and characteristics like red tape may weaken PSM, as although Filipino public sector employees may have observed negative organizational practices and bureaucratic processes, it did not weaken their public service motivation.

**Table 2:** Correlations

	Public service motivation	Perceived organizational support
Leadership	.468**	.526**
Accountability	.378**	.501**
Lawfulness	.359**	.420**
Political loyalty	.360**	.397**
Network governance	.483**	.447**
Perceived organizational support	.215*	

\*\* :  $P < .01$ ; \* :  $P < .05$

#### 4.3. Mediation analysis

The first and second steps in testing the mediation are shown in Table 3. The first column shows the result of the first regression analysis using public leadership roles as predictor variables and public service motivation as an outcome variable, of which public leadership roles accounted for 22.5% of the variance in public service motivation and demonstrated a significant model of relationship ( $F = 11.82$ ,  $R = .496$ ,  $p < .01$ ). Based on these results, we assume that the "C path" is significant. It is noticeable, however, that only network governance is independently related to public service motivation ( $b = .287$ ,  $p < .01$ ), making it the strongest predictor.

The findings mean that supervisors' performance of leadership roles moderately influences employees' public service motivation. As they see their leaders performing their leadership roles positively, employees' propensity to be motivated to work for the public interest also increases. This confirms previous findings that leadership practices, supervisor support, hierarchical authority, and reform efforts, transformational, and distributed leadership styles are positively related to public service motivation (Hameduddin and Engbers, 2022; Deng et al., 2021; Moynihan and Pandey, 2007; Punchard, 2023; Belrhiti et al., 2020).

Column 2 displays the results of the second step, where we used public leadership roles as predictor

variables and perceived organizational support as the outcome variable, and findings demonstrate a significant moderate relationship ( $F = 14.68$ ,  $R = .537$ ,  $p < .01$ ) in which public leadership roles account for 26.9% of the variance in perceived organizational support. The moderate relationship between variables and the low impact of public leadership levels on perceived organizational support indicate that supervisors' leadership has a minimal impact on employees' perceptions of organizational support. With these results, we can conclude that the "A path" is significant. However, when viewed independently, only accountability leadership has managed to have a significant coefficient ( $b = 3.176$ ,  $p < .05$ ), making it

the strongest predictor of POS. It is consistent with the result in [Table 2](#), wherein accountability leadership has the highest degree of association among the four public leadership roles. The result indicates that Filipino public sector employees' perception of organizational support is related to their supervisors' performance in their public leadership roles. This is because Filipino workers give high regard to the role of leaders in an organization, thus viewing leadership as an intangible form of organizational support. [Ladao et al. \(2022\)](#) had consistent findings that authentic leadership and perceived organizational support are positively related.

**Table 3:** Regression results, non-mediated: Leadership with PSM and POS as outcome variables

Predictor variables	Outcome variables					
	PSM			POS		
	$\beta$	t	Sig	$\beta$	t	Sig
Accountability	.079	1.195	.234	.239	3.176	.010
Lawfulness	.022	.290	.773	.056	.647	.937
Political loyalty	-.018	-.255	.799	.053	.651	.506
Network governance	.287	3.360	.001	.131	1.342	.362
R		.496			.537	
Adj. R <sup>2</sup>		.225			.269	
F		11.82**			14.68**	

\*\* $P < .01$ ; \* $p < .05$

[Table 4](#) displays the result of the third step in the mediation test. A very low coefficient of relationship between perceived organizational support and public service motivation ( $F = 7.14$ ,  $R = .215$ ,  $p < .01$ ) was found, in which perceived organizational support accounts for only 4.0% of the variance in public service motivation. Despite the low association, there remains a significant relationship between perceived organizational support and public service motivation, which may be attributed to certain organizational characteristics, work

environment, and organizational culture that the employees find favorable. The findings were consistent with the result of [Moynihan and Pandey \(2007\)](#) that public service motivation of public employees may result from the organizational environment in which they find themselves and not from individual socio-historical background. The result indicates that the "B path" is also significant, thereby aligning the first, second, and third steps with [Baron and Kenny's \(1986\)](#) procedure for determining the mediation effect.

**Table 4:** Regression results, POS with PSM as the outcome variable

OV	PV	$\beta$	t	Sig	R	Adj. R <sup>2</sup>	F	Sig
PSM	Perceived organizational support	.183	2.673	.008	.215	.040	7.14**	.008

\*\* $P < .01$ ; PV: Predictor variable; OV: Outcome variable

The fourth step is the test of mediation, with all the variables being simultaneously considered as predictor variables. In this step, perceived organizational support and public leadership roles were considered predictor variables and were simultaneously tested for their impact on public service motivation. [Table 5](#) shows that there is a moderate relationship ( $f = 9.47$ ,  $R = .497$ ,  $p < .01$ ) where public leadership roles and perceived organizational support accounted for 22.10% of the variance in public service motivation. It is of note when viewed independently; three of the leadership role variables turn out not to be significant, while the mediator variable (POS) also turns out not to be significant. Interestingly, this means that perceived organizational support does not mediate the relationship between public leadership roles and public service motivation. It did not increase or lessen the association between the two variables. Filipino public sector employees under study may have developed their public service motivation from

factors other than perceived organizational support. They may have established the mindset of having to work towards the interest of the public, regardless of the presence or absence of organizational support. [Palma and West \(2023\)](#) similarly found in their study among Filipino public sector employees that organizational support does not mediate, correlate, or regress with their commitment to their organization, which means that despite the status of POS, their commitment to work in public office is still strong. Meanwhile, findings are inconsistent with [Taylan \(2022\)](#) that mutuality of benefits, institutional trust, and organizational arrangements are facilitators of public service motivation, as public sector employees in this study tend to develop PSM for reasons other than mutual benefits or any organizational arrangements. With this, it is noteworthy to state that there are other factors aside from organizational support that have confounded their motivation to work for public service.

**Table 5:** Regression results, mediation of POS with PSM as the outcome variable

OV	PV	$\beta$	t	Sig	R	Adj. R <sup>2</sup>	F	Sig
PSM	Accountability	.088	1.290	.199	.497	.221	9.47**	.000
	Lawfulness	.024	.317	.751				
	Political loyalty	.016	-.224	.823				
	Network governance	.292	3.391	.001				
	POS	-.039	-.539	.591				

\*\* $P < .01$ ; \* $p < .05$ ; PV: Predictor variable; OV: Outcome variable

On other factors that may have facilitated public service motivation among public sector employees aside from organizational support, responses to an open-ended question resulted in two identified themes, which are: (1) social group identification, and (2) opportunity to serve.

1. *Social group identification*: Public sector employees believed that they found people who shared the same interests and values as they did in their line of work. They established relatedness within their group, which makes the workplace more comfortable. Working with people who they perceive to represent their values, traits, and preferences gives them joy and makes them feel proud. One of the in-group values that they have is serving the public interest, and this has fuelled their motivation towards public service.

2. *Opportunity to serve*: Working in the public sector means finding opportunities to help other people every day. As a result, the joy they experienced from helping and bringing services closer to the public cannot be compared to any financial gain. This is reflective of the Filipino hospitality, which radiates in the way they work for the interests of others.

These findings align with [Alcoba and Phinaitrup \(2019\)](#), who stated that people with high PSM feel less stressed and more satisfied because they enjoy their work and find meaning in helping others. The results also support research from Japan, Taiwan, and South Korea, which found that public sector employees value intrinsic motivations more than extrinsic ones, such as higher salaries ([Gao, 2015](#)). The Filipino public sector employees in this study may have developed PSM not as a response to the support they received, but due to internal motivations that are deeply rooted in their identity as public servants.

## 5. Conclusion

The findings of this study present a dynamic relationship between public leadership roles and public service motivation, and surprisingly, an abstract association with perceived organizational support. While Filipino public sector employees in the context of the study generally exhibited high public service motivation and considered their supervisors to have highly performing public leadership roles, they perceived organizational support to be moderate. They believed their leaders are highly supportive and constructive, primarily in accountability leadership, while they are more interested in participating in policymaking. They, however, find less evidence of organizational

support. Surprisingly, although POS is low, the PSM of public sector employees under study is high, and they are positively correlated to some degree. The results highlighted that, consistent with previous literature, attraction to policymaking was greatly considered by Filipino public sector employees to be a prime component of their public service motivation.

Public sector employees put importance on how their leaders navigate the wheel of governance. As they observed that their supervisors are positively and constructively leading them with accountability, lawfulness, loyalty, and network governance, they tend to associate it with a form of organizational support. Meanwhile, highly accountable, lawful, politically loyal, and network-capable leaders may elicit high public service motivation among their subordinates.

Public leadership roles influence both perceived organizational support and public service motivation. Specifically, accountability leadership is a strong predictor of perceived organizational support, while network governance leadership is a strong predictor of public service motivation. Although perceived organizational support is positively linked to both leadership roles and public service motivation, it did not serve as a mediator between them. It is important to note that factors other than organizational support may also influence high levels of public service motivation. Finally, the Filipino public sector employees in this study reported a sense of relatedness with colleagues who share similar values and saw their work as a way to help others. These social and value-based factors also contribute to public service motivation, suggesting that the role of organizational support in social exchange theory may be more complex and open to debate.

## 6. Implications and recommendations

The study of public service motivation in relation to perceived organizational support and public leadership roles is significant not only for researchers but also for public service practitioners, who are the actual people on the ground navigating the complexities of public service. Employee behavior is influenced by supervisors' performance in their leadership responsibilities within public organizations. The way leaders are handling their people and how they model the leadership characteristics that are expected from them impacts their subordinates' motivation towards public service. Public organizations may need to review/assess the public leadership levels of their

appointed heads, managers, or supervisors from the viewpoint of their subordinates to find venues to enhance public service motivation. Meanwhile, venues for participation may need to be facilitated to allow these employees to get involved in policymaking, for it can enhance employees' PSM.

The result of the study may foster consistency with the theory of self-determination. As public sector employees developed public service motivation because of reasons other than organizational support, they had self-directed choice and volition to engage in public service and find meaning in their work. Perceived organizational support does not serve as a reliable factor in explaining public service motivation, thus making it a debatable factor in explaining social exchange theory. It is relevant to note that Filipino public sector employees under study are not motivated because of the reciprocity concept as postulated by the social exchange perspective, but because they find belongingness within the social group in the workplace by sharing the same values and perspective. They also found personal purpose in line with their job, which is to help the public that they serve. With all these assumptions and propositions, it is imperative to focus more attention on a new standpoint on explaining public service motivation, which is the social belongingness-purpose factor. This perspective assumes that Filipino public sector employees' PSM is primarily directed by their need for belongingness and purpose. When individuals feel that they belong to a social group with shared values and a common purpose, they become more motivated to serve. They place greater importance on relatedness and a sense of purpose than on tangible organizational support. Their motivation to serve society comes not from a desire to repay support they have received, but from a deep, internal commitment rooted in their identity as public servants. This perspective reflects the Filipino value of hospitality, which emphasizes generosity and a strong sense of community.

This study has certain limitations as it measures public service motivation among Filipino public sector employees belonging to one province only, thus weakening the generalizability of this research. Future research may be conducted in other provinces or regions for a larger and more representative sample. Also, cross-sectional survey data cannot draw conclusions on the direction of causality; thus, this research's ability to make statements about causal relationships is constrained. This can be addressed in future research using different methods.

Nevertheless, public sector organizations may reflect on these findings to develop their human resource development programs with a great focus on identifying and reinforcing other factors that may enhance the public sector employees. It is vital to provide venues for participation in policymaking to give employees the opportunity to inject their outlook as part of and an instruments of public sector reforms. In enhancing public service

motivation, public organizations may consider other factors aside from tangible organizational support, but the intangible facets of support, which can be embedded in environmental characteristics, organizational climate, employer-employee relationships, and social groups.

## Acknowledgment

The author expresses gratitude to the participants of this study, as well as to the reviewers for their expert and valuable comments that helped improve this paper.

## Compliance with ethical standards

### Ethical considerations

An Informed Consent Form, which indicated the purpose and objectives of the study, the methods of how the study will be conducted, the benefits and implications of the result of the study, their rights to withdraw from participating, and the procedure for filling up the instrument, was distributed and were signed by respondents. The researcher has treated the confidentiality of information and anonymity of respondents' names with the utmost consideration throughout the data collection and analysis process.

### Conflict of interest

The author(s) declared no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

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