

Original article

## GEARING PUBLIC SECTOR MANAGEMENT EDUCATION CURRICULUM IN THE PHILIPPINES IN RESPONSE TO 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY NEEDS

---

**Perfecto G. Aquino, Jr.<sup>1</sup>, Revenio C. Jalagat, Jr.<sup>2</sup>**

<sup>1</sup> Duy Tan University, Vietnam.  
Socio-Economic Research Office  
E-mail: jesusper186@gmail.com

<sup>2</sup> Dr., Al-Zahra College for Women, Oman.  
Managerial and Financial Sciences Department  
E-mail: revjalagatjr@gmail.com

**Abstract.** The UNESCO World Conference on Higher Education, held in Paris, France in October 1998, adopted a universal declaration on the need for a new vision and paradigm in higher education responsive to the challenges of the 21st century. This study is an effort to answer this call but only in the limited field of public sector management education curriculum at the Master's level. This study attempted an evaluation of existing curricula in terms of the responsive objectives in knowledge, skills, and values as well as the perceived gap between theory and practice. Further, it sought to identify any differences among school administrators, faculty, and students including practitioners in their perceptions regarding these objectives. The study used a three-staged survey to surface data as basics for the proposed curriculum. The first stage was a request for printed materials of the Master in Public Administration/counterpart courses from 66 educational institutions. The second stage was a questionnaire to which 69/132 (52%) school administrators, 112/198 (56.5%) faculty, 188/330 (56.9%) students, and 76/76 (100%) are practitioners, representing an overall 60.4 percent retrieval rate. The questionnaires sought answers to the specific sub-problems of the study. The third questionnaire was sent to all respondents who replied to the second questionnaire; their opinion on the proposed objectives and courses/subjects were sought.

Based on the findings, the researchers developed the proposed curriculum. This curriculum in conformity with the Commission on Higher Education standards consists of the following: 1. Core/Professional Orientation (12 units), Theory and Practice of Governance (3 units), Human Behavior in Organization (3 units), Leadership and Organization Change (3 units), Administrative Laws (3 units); 2. Research and Evaluation

(6 units), Quantitative Methods of Management and Statistics (3 units), Research Techniques (3 units); 3. Major Subjects (15 units) on any of the following: Economic Development (3 units), Development Administration (3 units), Communication and Information Management (3 units), Public Management Issues (3 units), Ethics and Accountability in the Public Service (3 units), Environmental Management (3 units); 4. Thesis Writing (6 units). This study will be useful to schools or will offer a public sector management education course at the Master's level as well as to the Commission on Higher Education for standard setting.

**Keywords:** Public Sector Management, Education Curriculum, 21<sup>st</sup> Century, MPA/MPSE, Philippines.

**For citation:** Perfecto G. Aquino, Jr. and Revenio C. Jalagat, Jr. (2021) 'Gearing Public Sector Management Education Curriculum in the Philippines in response to the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Needs', *Public Administration Issues*, 6 (Special Issue II, electronic edition), pp. 172–191 (in English). DOI:10.17323/1999-5431-2021-0-6-172-191.

**JEL Classification:** I20, I25, I26, I28.

## Introduction

Various attempts had already been made on globalizing education in both public and private institutions of higher learning. Dating back to October 5–9, 1998, was a recollection of the World Declaration on Higher Education for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: Vision and Action at UNESCO headquarters in Paris, France. The Declaration underscores the universally perceived need for “A New Vision and Paradigm” of higher education and the responses that must be made to meet the challenges of change and renewal necessary to make higher education better able to induce change and progress in the society, and to transform the universities into the drivers of development (Profiroiu, Britcariu, 2021). This declaration encompasses all fields of higher education worldwide; however, it is limited to the discipline of public sector management called Public Administration.

Moreover, the study of Manoharan, Mirbel and Carrizales (2018) titled “Global comparative public administration: Are graduate programs responding to the call?” acknowledged the need to adopt a shared common public administration framework in response to globalization. In the Philippine setting, like the United States and the United Kingdom and others, public sector management has undergone various changes. Specifically tracing its roots, public sector management education in the Philippines is shaped on the United States example, where the conduct of public sector management education has attained a high degree of specialization. Through the years, the management system of the public sector in the Philippines has experienced numerous changes and challenges that include the education sector, and these were brought about for example by the rising demand for education with Master's and Doctorate degrees to comply with managerial and executive positions in the public service, expectations and quality services towards citizens, financial management and budgeting government expenditures, etc.

In response to these changes, the University of the Philippines College of Public Administration was created in the 1950s as a separate discipline that was adopted and followed by most public and private colleges and universities throughout the country. Faced with an entirely new discipline, the U.P. College of Public Administration adopted the U.S. Public Administration Curriculum, which emphasized staff functions such as budgeting, organization, personnel, planning, public finance, and others, commensurate with the requirements of economy and efficiency. In the Philippines today, many other schools have offered degree courses in public administration and allied fields. Their public administration courses range from Master in Public Administration (36 units) to Master in Business Administration or Special Management Program (MBA – SMP) with 42 units with or without thesis but with project paper or thesis. Some schools offer a Ph.D. programs in Public Administration and a Ph.D. in Public Policies and Business Management. Some consider their Master's and Doctoral Programs in Education Administration and Education Management part of their Public Administrative Programs. Some schools also offer Master's Programs in Health Administration. The statistics in 2019 showed 277 colleges and universities offering a Master's program in Public Administration in the Philippines.

This study aims to evaluate the existing MPA/PSME curricula in the Philippines to propose a generative curriculum that would gear public sector management/public administration education in the Philippines to the needs of the twenty-first century. It tries to address the following questions: (1) How responsive are the present public administration and public management curricula to the challenge of the 21<sup>st</sup>-century educational system as perceived by school administrators, public administration faculty, practitioners, and public administration students? (2) What is the extent of the gap between theory and practice of public administration and public management as perceived by school administrators, faculty, practitioners, and graduate students in public administration? (3) What are the problems encountered by schools offering the program and the program faculties in public management education? (4) How are the perceptions of the respondents influenced by their age, gender, educational attainment, position, and number of years of service? and, (5) What is the appropriate curriculum of public sector management for the 21<sup>st</sup> century?

## Education in the 21<sup>st</sup> century

The increasing demands for globalization have also brought greater challenges which have led to the introduction of new imperatives towards globalizing educational practices. With the perceived lack of fairness and inequities of delivering education worldwide, sustainable educational practices continue to become a challenge in the 21<sup>st</sup> century especially among children and the youth in both access to education and the quality of education (United Nations, 2016). The study of Care, Anderson, and Kim (2016) emphasized how the national educational system can be shifted towards global setting in consonance

with the global, regional, and national changes brought by educational reforms. They have also highlighted how to overcome the challenges that include curriculum assessment, pedagogy, and curriculum alignment that will address the educational system in the 21st century. Anchored on this condition, this study was conducted in order to determine the country's preparedness to deliver a quality public administration curriculum in the 21st century.

Ercikan and Oliveri (2016) used the term "21st-century skills" which refer to a combination of skills that are essential to the modern workforce as well as modern society as a result of many interpretations. UNESCO (2012) and Care and Luo (2016) describe these skills as transferable and transversal competencies that are suitable to varied situations and in contrast with vocational-technical skills that are confined to specific occupations. Moving forward to the new system of learning in the 21st century, much emphasis was focused on aligning the educational system into the three delivery mechanisms namely the curriculum, pedagogy, and assessment. In Wyse, Hayward, and Pandya's handbooks titled "Curriculum, Pedagogy, and Assessment" the main objective is providing a strong linkage between these three delivery mechanisms. Most studies have been conducted; however, only limited studies focused on establishing the link between curriculum, pedagogy, and assessment which shed light on the emphasis of this study. The curriculum, for example, has shifted from a teacher-centered approach to learner or student-centered learning wherein outcome-based curricula are preferred, which is also like the evidenced-based curriculum. The European Center for the Development of Vocational Training (CEDEFOP, 2012) emphasized the delivery of an outcome-oriented curriculum that significantly impacts the teaching and learning processes as it was found that it promotes learner-centered pedagogies where outcomes were measured by student learning.

The outcome-based curricula then link with the pedagogy which promotes the learner-centered pedagogy of learning evidenced by constructivist pedagogy. Anchored on Eccles and Wigfield (2002), the learners, in this case, acknowledge the role of motivation in learning and draw primary attention to information-processing models which led to students' active engagement in knowledge construction and learning per se. Hence, the transition from teacher-centered learning that utilized structured, content-wise, and information acquisition will be converted into processing models, explore, and discover approaches where the students are the ones who take charge of the learning processes. Likewise, traditional assessments that are primarily guided by curricular goals and traditional educational assessment practices will be transformed into an integrated approach with a mix of learner-centered curriculum and learner-centered pedagogy. However, the formal education process towards the 21st century is still a big task to be reckoned with considering the different expectations and the new system that overrides the standardized learning approach that learning institutions had been practicing for many years. Concerning the study, developing a curriculum that caters to the above-mentioned areas becomes a challenge that includes the status of engaging with teaching public administration in the Philippine setting.

## Concerns of the Public Sector Management Curriculum in Meeting Millennium Needs

Primarily built on The World Declaration on Higher Education for the Twenty-First Century, the Vision and Action Framework for Priority Action for Change and Development in Higher Education lends credence to the idea that education at the tertiary level should integrate within its curricula and experience global concerns. This entails that the Master of Public Administration (MPA) and Public Sector Management Education (PSME) curriculum for the third millennium should include subjects designed to help develop analytical, managerial, and broad policy perspectives to address global concerns of peace and security; government shifting ideologies; economic stability; health and societal concerns as water resources, etc. In Hou et. al.'s (2011) study, findings revealed that public administration programs require integration to a globalized education curriculum where students must gain international exposure and experiences for self-development and improvement. To public administrators, appropriate and timely response necessitates the development of student's skills in areas of "mediation, negotiations, sensitivity to human rights and diversity, beyond the usual, and traditional public service activities" (Jreisat, 2005, p. 236).

Earlier studies on comparative public administration related to the Master of Public Administration (MPA) program in the United States have noted varying outcomes. For instance, the American Society for Public Administration (ASPA) first established in 1973 a section called "The Section on International and Comparative Administration" (SICA), comprised academicians and practitioners whose emphasis was on the promotion of research and international public administration activities and communication of such activities (SICA, 2015). For the educational system in the Philippines, particularly in the public administration field, one of the major challenges is how to tailor the present curricula to the demand of the industry, the national demands, and in the global setting. Hence, the need to re-assess and re-evaluate the present curriculum of institutions of the country to ensure that they are ready for the 21st century and at the same time comply with the regulations set by the Commission on Higher Education (COHE).

### The Urgency to Meet the Needs of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century

The changing environment in business, teaching, learning, public sector policies, and regulations have inculcated pressures that require action and responses within the appropriate and desired time. Along with these necessary changes are development and challenges that need to be linked between theory learned from education and real-life scenarios (Kearns, 2014; Majgaard et al., 2016; Pedersen and Jensen, 2007; Van der Meer and Marks, 2016; Van der Meer and Ringeling, 2010). In most cases, students, for instance, learned the nature of their jobs in their workplaces through experience and the support of colleagues helping them to learn and improve but did not realize the importance

of applying the learned theory into practice. This becomes more complicated when students are promoted in their jobs where it requires higher responsibilities, accountabilities, and decision making. The study of Reichard and Schroter (2018) postulated that efforts should be done to develop the students' ability for long-life learning, which means that continuous updates should be done on program and curriculum design, content and approaches of curriculum, and linking theory into practice in the delivery of curriculum, although they acknowledge that doing such things cannot be done overnight.

In the study by Van der Meer and Marks (2018) titled "An Agenda for Rethinking Mid-Career Master Programs in Public Administration", they pointed out that updating or changing curriculum can be brought about by three reasons: (1) societal development; (2) the general structure of academic teaching programs; and (3) outdated programs that no longer match the demand in the workplace. Societal developments encompass recent trends in public organizations related to strategic plans and programs and new governance approaches. While changes in the structural aspect of teaching may include requirements by accrediting bodies, institutional demands, changing requirements and the like, MPA has needs that require matching theory with practice in learning. Congruent to this study, the examination and evaluation of the present curriculum are endeavored to prepare the MPA/MPSE program to the demands of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

### Bridging the gap between theory and practice in Public Administration and Public Management

In the study of Elias (2020) titled "Phenomenology in Public Administration: Bridging the Theory-Practice Gap", she stressed that studying phenomenology enables administrators and executives to bridge the gap between the theory and practice in public administration because through applied phenomenology they will be able to develop an in-depth understanding that situations or phenomena depend on different knowledge and an epistemology which she believed fosters democratic public administration. The phenomenology concepts dealt with the focus on "Situations as they occur" thus, undermining the idea of pure experience and rather emphasized decisions based on what is the current situation. Stivers (2018, p. 201) reinforced the work of Mary Follett by making a case for "situational thinking in public administration" wherein she emphasized the concept of responding during the situations as they occur rather than controlling them. However, this literature is more applicable to the governance of the administrators in public organizations but is still to be proven in educational institutions where the focus is on delivering a public administration and public management curriculum to the students. Stivers (2018) also ironed out that the public administrators were generally confined with past experiences as the basis for governance, thus, she affirms the study of Elias by trying to introduce phenomenology as a concept to reckon with the public administrators.

Much of the research into public administration and social sciences has become too general, rather than focusing on the specific context, with scholars pro-

ducing research outputs from grants and awards. It has become a production machine that has resulted in research outcomes with little relevance and applicability into practice (Piccorelli and Zingale, 2018). Furthermore, the state of competition and the prestige of publications were given much attention, rather than emphasizing the significant impact of the studies on the benefits of the stakeholders (Harmon, 2006). Farmer (2010) also found that because of the low impact of studies on public administration and governance, theories and frameworks remain to be disconnected from the realm of practice which makes the scholarly publications become irrelevant in policy and decision making. In this context, the public administration is in dire need of a scientific approach that will address the question “how?” to get results by approaching the current situation and providing solutions as much as possible. When applied to this study, the central issue dealt with how to offer the best curricula that will deliver better and justifiable outcomes through offering public management programs that suit the needs of stakeholders in the 21<sup>st</sup> century in the Philippine setting.

## Methodology

The study employed a descriptive and status trend approach. According to Garcia et. al. (2011), this method describes the present, reveals the relationship that exists or does not exist, practices that prevail or do not prevail, beliefs or points of view, or attitudes or held or not held, or trends that are developed. The study commenced with analyzing and evaluating the existing MPA curricula in terms of concerns, purposes, objectives, subject offered, number of units required, and types of research done in the schools offering the subject. Primary data were obtained from a two-part questionnaire which was completed by the Vice President, the Dean of the Graduate School, three senior faculty members and at least five graduate students enrolled in the study school’s MPA Public Sector Management Program. All schools in the country offering courses in MPA were sent copies of the questionnaire by courier or mail. Using the Delphi Method, only schools with accomplished questionnaires retrieved were subsequently given another set of questionnaires. And only those who replied to the second questionnaires were provided the third questionnaire enclosing the proposal MPA/PSME curriculum.

To determine the population and sample size, the target population were all the Graduate Schools in the country offering courses/granting degrees in public administration / public sector management at graduate level. The survey sample respondents were identified through applying the Slovin formula which then included: 1) VPAA, 2) Graduate School Dean, 3) Senior Graduate School faculty in public administration management, and 4) Graduate students in public administration for each participating educational institution, of which 44 were in Luzon, 10 in the Visayas, and 12 in Mindanao. There were 66 schools in the researchers’ first mailing list. Out of the 66, only a total of 48 schools responded. The same 66 schools were sent the second questionnaire but only 46 schools responded. Of the 46 school respondents sent the third questionnaire, only 38 responded. Moreover, the questionnaires

were the instruments used to respond to the different problems on public administration education, particularly the question relative to discrepancy between theory practice, as well as the relationship between the responsiveness of the curriculum and the roles of public administration educators, practitioners, and students.

Since the study is a three-stage survey, data collection was made by sending formal letters to Deans and VPAAAs of 66 Graduate Schools Universities in the Philippines offering MPA. The Graduate School Deans and Vice-Presidents for Academics Academic Affairs of 48 schools (72% response) sent back their respective curriculum, which would show the objectives and purposes of the MPA curriculum in terms of 1) Knowledge; 2) Skills; 3) Values/Attitudes as well as the subjects/ courses in their curricula. Furthermore, in determining the purpose/ objectives of the graduate schools surveyed, a documentary analysis technique was used. The technique enabled the researcher to gather information from the bulletin of information and brochures mailed by the respondents and to analyze it. The different objectives found and contained in their brochures were further classified by the researcher accordingly and grouped along with knowledge, skills, values, and attitudes. This is to avoid repetition. Objectives drawn from the various MPA/PSME prospectuses were then sent to 4 groups of respondents.

Finally, data analysis was undertaken using SPSS version 21 to analyze the quantitative part of this study that consists of frequencies, percentages, regression, and ANOVA based on the research objectives and the hypotheses developed.

## Data analysis

Based on the collected data, the analysis was done using the statistical tools as previously mentioned. The order of analysis is presented hereunder.

*Table 1*

### **Distribution of Respondents According to Group**

<b>Respondents</b>	<b>Population</b>	<b>Those who responded</b>	<b>%</b>
Administrators	132	69	52
Faculty	198	112	56.5
Practitioners	76	76	100
Students	330	188	56.9
<b>Total</b>	<b>736</b>	<b>445</b>	<b>60.4</b>

**Sources:** Compiled by the author based on his own research.

Four groups of respondents were taken, consisting of administrators (n=69), faculty (n=112), practitioners (n=76), and students (76). Out of 736, only 445 participants responded and were considered as final respondents.



Table 2

**Distribution of Respondents by Age, Gender, Education,  
Position, and Years of Service**

Variable	Administrators	Faculty	Practitioners	Students	Total
<b>1. Age Range</b>	<i>F %</i>	<i>F %</i>	<i>F %</i>	<i>F %</i>	<i>F %</i>
0≤25				30 15.96	30 6.74
26–35	7 10.14	9 8.04		115 61.17	131 29.44
36–45	5 7.25	22 19.64	62 81.58	30 15.96	119 26.74
≥46	57 82.61	81 72.32	14 18.42	13 6.91	165 37.08
<i>Total</i>	<i>69 100.00</i>	<i>112 100.00</i>	<i>76 100.00</i>	<i>188 100.00</i>	<i>445 100.00</i>
<b>2. Gender</b>					
Male	22 31.88	89 79.46	41 53.95	92 48.94	244 54.83
Female	47 68.12	23 20.54	35 46.05	96 51.06	201 45.17
<i>Total</i>	<i>69 100.00</i>	<i>112 100.00</i>	<i>76 100.00</i>	<i>188 100.00</i>	<i>445 100.00</i>
<b>3. Education</b>					
Master-Units	2 2.90	12 10.71	30 39.47	188 100.00	218 48.99
Masters	2 2.90	70 62.50	30 39.47		44 9.89
PhD-Units	65 94.20	30 26.79	16 21.06		88 19.78
PhD					95 21.34
<i>Total</i>	<i>69 100.00</i>	<i>112 100.00</i>	<i>76 100.00</i>	<i>188 100.00</i>	<i>445 100.00</i>
<b>4. Position</b>					
Teacher	1 1.40	3 2.70	16 21.05	6 3.20	9 2.02
Principal			31 40.79	1 .50	2 .45
Director	1 1.40				16 3.60
Supervisor		10 8.90		80 42.60	122 27.41
Instructor	34 49.30	25 22.30	29 38.16	48 25.50	73 16.40
Dean					34 7.64
Manager		56 50.00		16 8.50	101 22.70
Heads	33 47.90	12		7 3.70	19 4.27
PAA					33 7.42
Others		6 5.40		30 16.00	36 8.09
<i>Total</i>	<i>69 100.00</i>	<i>112 100.00</i>	<i>76 100.00</i>	<i>188 100.00</i>	<i>445 100.00</i>
<b>5. Yrs-Service</b>					
0≤5	1 1.45	8 7.14	50 65.79	50 26.60	59 13.26
6–10	4 5.80	9 8.04	20 26.32	75 39.89	138 31.01
11–15	10 14.49	14 12.50	6 7.89	34 18.09	78 17.53
16–20	10 14.49	42 37.50		17 9.04	75 16.85
≥21	44 63.77	39 34.82		12 6.38	95 21.35
<i>Total</i>	<i>69 100.00</i>	<i>112 100.00</i>	<i>76 100.00</i>	<i>188 100.00</i>	<i>445 100.00</i>

**Sources:** Compiled by the author based on his own research.

Based on the distribution of the respondents' profiles in the four groups in Table 2, it can be summarized that based on age, most of the administrators are over 46 years

old (82.61%) as were most faculty (72.36%), while most of the practitioners (81.58%) belong to the 36–45 age bracket and the majority of the students (61.17%) were within the 26–35 age bracket. When classified according to gender, 68% of the administrators were female but 79.46 of the faculty were male; 53.95% of practitioners were male and 51.06% of the students were female. Based on education, most administrators were PhD holders (94.20%) while most faculty possessed PhD units (62.50%); practitioners were both masters and Master’s levels; and students had Master’s units (100%). However, in terms of position, the highest respondents for administrators were deans (49.30%); 50% for managers; supervisor for practitioners with 40.79%; and, also supervisor for student respondents (42.60%). And, with regards to the years of service, most of the administrators served the company for more than 21 years (63.77%) while for faculty most have served for 16–20 years (37.50%); practitioners have 6–10 years (65.79%); and students with also 6–10 years in service (39.89%).

Table 3

**Respondents’ Perception of the Present MPA/PSME Curriculum in Terms of Knowledge Objectives**

Knowledge Objectives	Administrator		Faculty		Practitioners		Students		Overall		
	WM	R	WM	R	WM	R	WM	R	WM	VI	R
1. Provide administrators, supervisors, researchers and faculty with a broad theoretical / technical background in planning implementation and evaluation of both the public and private organization	4.89	2	4.82	1	4.81	3	4.70	2	4.80	SA	1
2. Sharpens students’ grasp of current trends and issues/problems in national local government	4.90	1	4.78	3	4.80	4.5	4.68	4.5	4.79	SA	2.5
3. Intensify students’ awareness of the changing social economics, political and cultural perspective	4.83	3.5	4.81	2	4.82	2	4.70	2	4.79	SA	2.5
4. Hasten future executives’ knowledge on research and policy making	4.78	3.5	4.75	4.5	4.83	1	4.68	6	4.76	SA	5
5. Provide students with an overall view of managing a public sectors concern	4.83	3.5	4.75	4.5	4.80	4.5	4.68	4.5	4.77	SA	4
6. Introduce the students to quality and innovative management of government agencies and educational institution	4.78	5.5	4.74	6	4.71	6	4.70	2	4.73	SA	6
<b>WEIGHTED MEAN (WM)</b>	<b>4.83</b>		<b>4.78</b>		<b>4.79</b>		<b>4.89</b>		<b>4.77 (SA)</b>		

Sources: Compiled by the author based on his own research.

Table 3 displays the respondents' feedback on the questions on knowledge objectives and results depict that most of the responses in general strongly agree (SA) on the present curriculum in terms of knowledge. The highest 'strongly agree' responses from administrators dealt with the question regarding "Sharpens the students grasp of current trends and issues/problems in national local government", which would likely entail that the present MPA/MPSE addresses the issues and problems that reflect the national local government and thus, are tailored to the students' needs. On the other hand, the highest 'strong agreement' for faculty was observed in the statement "Provide administrators, supervisors, researchers, and faculty with a broad theoretical/technical background in planning implementation and evaluation of both the public and private organization".

Practitioners strongly agree that the MPA/MPSE curriculum "Hasten the future executive's knowledge on research and policymaking" and, for the students also "Provide administrators, supervisors, researchers, and faculty with a broad theoretical/technical background in planning implementation and evaluation of both the public and private organization". These findings only showed that the implementation of MPA/MPSE at the national level are competitive in terms of knowledge as well as providing the necessary ingredients to ensure that the knowledge objectives are tackled at all levels of learning for the students.

Table 4

### Respondents' Perception of the present MPA/PSME Curriculum in Terms of Development of Skills

Development Skills	Admini- strator		Faculty		Practitio- ners		Students		OVERALL		
	WM	R	WM	R	WM	R	WM	R	WM	VI	R
1. Strengthen leadership skills of managers/ administrators.	4.84	3	4.81	1	4.80	7.5	4.71	3	4.79	SA	1.5
2. Raise the standard and administrative performance of leader and administrators	4.86	1	4.79	2.5	4.75	8	4.74	1	4.79	SA	1.5
3. Harness students' technical and research skills	4.85	2	4.77	2.5	4.82	2.5	4.58	5	4.76	SA	4
4. Develop the students' skills in formulating, implementing and evaluating policies, and development plans to arrive at a sound decision/judgment	4.82	5.5	4.79	2.5	4.81	4.5	4.72	2	4.78	SA	3

Development Skills	Admini- strator		Faculty		Practitio- ners		Students		OVERALL		
	WM	R	WM	R	WM	R	WM	R	WM	VI	R
5. Develop students' capabilities to acquire skills necessary to build up area of public policy, public entrepreneurship, information technology finance and international relations	4.83	4	4.77	5.5	4.82	2.5	4.52	7	4.73	SA	6.5
6. Equip the students' critical thinking and communication skills for high level decision making in business management	4.79	7.5	4.78	4	4.80	7.5	4.63	4	4.75	SA	5
7. Develop the students' critical thinking and communication skills for high level decision making in business management	4.79	7.5	4.76	7.5	4.81	4.5	4.54	6	4.72	SA	8
8. Hone their skills in human/ interpersonal relations	4.82	5.5	4.76	7.5	4.83	1	4.49	8	4.73	SA	6.5
9. Develop the academic and professional and non-teaching personal and assistant officer	4.76	9	4.69	9	4.75	9	4.47	9	4.67	SA	9
<b>WEIGHTED MEAN (WM)</b>	<b>4.82</b>		<b>4.77</b>		<b>4.80</b>		<b>4.60</b>		<b>4.75 (SA)</b>		

**Sources:** Compiled by the author based on his own research.

Further evaluation was done to assess the respondents' perceptions of the present MPA/MPSE curriculum in terms of developing the skills in Table 4. Key results reflect that all four groups (Administrator, Faculty, Practitioners, Students) strongly agree that the present curriculum possesses development skills for the students. Specifically, the highest 'strong agreement' by the administrators was observed on the statement that the present curriculum "Raise the standard and administrative performance of leaders and administrators" while faculty unanimously expressed the highest 'strong agreement' on the statement "Strengthen leadership skills of managers/ administrators". These responses only proved that the present MPA/MPSE curriculum in the Philippines contributes greatly to the development of the students' skills as perceived by administrators and faculties. Furthermore, practitioners' responses provide 'strong agreement' on the statement that the present curriculum "Hone their skills in human/ interpersonal relations". Lastly, students perceived the present curriculum with their highest 'strong agreement' on "Raise the standard and administrative performance of leaders and administrators".

Table 5

### Respondents' Perception of the Present MPA/PSME Curriculum in Terms of Values/Attitudes

Values/Attitudes	Admini- strator		Faculty		Practitio- ners		Students		Overall		
	WM	R	WM	R	WM	R	WM	R	WM	VI	R
1. Inculcate a high degree of professionalism and scholastic traits, nurtured with moral principles. Love of God and fellow men	4.18	1	4.79	4	4.71	6	4.60	4	4.02	SA	3
2. Develop the students' ability to propel the development of rural and urban workers sectors in a determined spirit of self-reliance	4.12	4	4.75	5.5	4.59	1.5	4.71	5	4.63	SA	4
3. Help the students appreciate the necessary values in professionalizing the bureaucracy	4.12	4	4.50	3	4.76	4.5	4.48	4	4.61	SA	5
4. Develop moral character, personal discipline, and nationalism for aesthetic and cultural heritage	4.13	2	4.31	2	4.81	3	4.84	2	4.65	SA	1
5. Develop social consciousness thru participation in extension services	3.95	6	4.75	5.5	4.89	1.5	4.80	1	4.62	SA	3
6. Heightens students' ethical standards in work performance	4.12	4	4.32	1	4.76	4.5	4.61		4.59	SA	6
<b>WEIGHTED MEAN (WM)</b>	<b>4.11</b>		<b>4.79</b>		<b>4.80</b>		<b>4.30</b>		<b>4.63</b>	<b>(SA)</b>	

**Sources:** Compiled by the author based on his own research.

Table 5 depicts the respondents' perception of the present MPA/MPSE curriculum in terms of values and attitudes. Likewise, in general, the rating is strongly disagreed with by the four groups which basically indicates that the present curriculum contributes and addresses concerns regarding values and attitudes. The highest 'strong agreement' of administrators and faculty dwelt on the statement "Inculcate a high degree of professionalism and scholastic traits, nurtured with moral principles.

Love of God and fellow men" while practitioners consider the highest 'strong agreement' on "Develop social consciousness through participation in extension services". Finally, the students' highest 'strong agreement' is on "Develop moral character, personal discipline and nationalism for aesthetic and cultural heritage".

Table 6

### Extent of the Gap Between Theory and Practice as Perceived by the Administrators, Faculty, Practitioners, and Students

Extent of Gap	Administrators		Faculty		Practitioners		Students		Total
	F	VE	F	VE	F	VE	F	VE	
VME (>4.51)	4	Some Extent	14	Some Extent	18	Some Extent	31	Some Extent	67
ME (3.51- 4.50)	12		22		20		60		131
SE (2.51-3.50)	0		3		10		4		17
LE (1.51-2.50)	55		81		26		80		242
VLE (0.51-1.50)	0		1		2		2		5
Total	71		121		76		177		445

**Sources:** Compiled by the author based on his own research.

On the objective that measures the extent of the gap between theory and practice as perceived by the four groups of respondents, Table 6 revealed that all the four groups generally responded that the gap experienced is only to some extent. This may mean that there is no major gap or differences in what has been stated in the curriculum against what is happening in the actual workplace. The curriculum is tailored to the needs and job requirements in businesses in the national setting. If there are variations, this can be considered minimal and can be appropriately addressed.

Table 7

### Problems encountered by schools offering the program and the program faculties in public management education

Indicators	Admin		Faculty		Practitioners		Students	
	F	Rank	F	Rank	F	Rank	F	Rank
1. Limited Budget	63	1	110	1	27	1	162	1
2. Unavailability of professors	21	3	33	4	10	3.5	82	3
3. Inadequacy of updated materials	57	2	105	2	10	3.5	149	2
4. Poor Enrollment	18	4	35	3	11	2	59	6
5. Schedule of classes	7	8	25	6	3	8	67	4
6. Professor without professional training	14	6	21	7	1	9	60	5
7. Limited Course Offering	16	5	29	5	5	6	49	7
8. Merging courses of doctoral and masters	8	7	22	8	5	6	42	8
9. Others	0	9	3	9	5	6	6	9

**Sources:** Compiled by the author based on his own research.

Table 7 depicts the problems commonly encountered by the schools offering the MPA/MPSE program and the faculties in public management education. In order of priority, the four groups acknowledged that the top problem on their priority list focused on a limited budget, followed by the inadequacy of updated materials. The third challenge is focused on the unavailability of professors. The limited budget of colleges and universities which can be attributed to small colleges is likely to hamper the operation of the program and facilities that may also reflect limited resources in terms of inadequacy of updated materials. Moreover, for large colleges and universities, looking for professors specializing in the program does not pose a challenge, however, for small colleges and universities, the program requires quite a few professors, who in most cases are usually hard to find. All other challenges as mentioned entail the need for the institutions offering the program to be apprehensive about the incurrence of these problems so that time actions and plans shall be put into place for addressing these needs.

Table 8

### Regression analysis on relationships between the perceptions of the respondents on the present curriculum and their profile

Demographic Variables	B	SE B	$\beta$	t	p
Constant	0.369	0.188		3.312	0.026
Educational Attainment	1.122	0.221	0.864	5.662	0.000
Age	0.423	0.195	0.403	2.996	0.023
Gender	0.130	0.141	0.124	0.436	0.282
Position	0.524	0.203	0.506	4.221	0.001
Service in Years	0.085	0.182	0.103	0.265	0.633

**Sources:** Compiled by the author based on his own research.

**Comments:**  $R^2 = .628$  ( $n = 445$ ),  $F = 75.132$ ,  $\text{Sig.} = .000$

\*\*Significant at  $p < .01$  level; \*Significant at  $p < .05$  level

Table 8 depicts the testing of the relationship between demographic variables of the respondents' and the present MPA/MPSE curriculum. The  $R^2$  showed that 62.8% of the variation in the dependent variable, which is the present curriculum, can be explained by independent variables such as educational attainment, age, gender, position, and years in service. The F value is 75.132 and the p-value of the statistical model is 0.000 which indicates that the model is statistically significant.

Moreover, the outcome of the regression coefficient prevailed three variables that significantly impact the present curriculum with standardized betas values of educational attainment ( $\beta=0.864$ ,  $p=0.000$ ); age ( $\beta=0.403$ ,  $p=0.023$ ); and position ( $\beta=0.524$ ,  $p=0.001$ ). On the other hand, gender ( $\beta=0.130$ ,  $p=0.282$ ) and years in ( $\beta=0.085$ ,  $p=0.633$ ) have no significant impact on the present curriculum.

Table 9

### Significant Difference in the Perceptions of the Gap Between Theory and Practice by the School Administrators, Faculty, Practitioners, and Students

Extent of Gap	Administrators		Faculty		Practitioners		Students		Total
	F	p-value	F	p-value	F	p-value	F	p-value	
VME ( $\geq 4.51$ )	4	0.031	14	0.045	18	0.012	31	0.613	67
ME (3.51- 4.50)	12		22		20		60		131
SE (2.51-3.50)	0		3		10		4		17
LE (1.51-2.50)	55		81		26		80		242
VLE (0.51-1.50)	0		1		2		2		5
<b>Total</b>	<b>71</b>		<b>121</b>		<b>76</b>		<b>177</b>		<b>445</b>

**Sources:** Compiled by the author based on his own research.

When testing the significant difference in the perceptions of the four groups on the gap between the theory and practice of public administration education, the data displayed, using the One-Way ANOVA, that administrators ( $p=0.031$ ) faculty ( $p=0.045$ ), and practitioners ( $p=0.012$ ) differ in their perceptions towards theory and practice while the students ( $p=0.613$ ) did not find a significant difference between theory and practice in education. In other words, the administrators, faculty, and practitioners recognize that the gap that exists between the theory and practice can be attributed to many factors and causes and that aside from the fact that there is a gap between the theory and practice, they express different perceptions on the causes of such differing opinions.

## Findings and Conclusion

This study aimed at investigating the present curriculum of the MPA/MPSE curriculum in regard to 21st century needs. Based on the responses and the statistical analysis findings from the data generated from four groups of respondents, the findings revealed that the extent of responsibility of the school administrators, faculty, practitioners, and students is very high thereby indicating 'strongly agree' responses. The results also expressed the readiness of the colleges and universities offering MPA/MPSE throughout the Philippines to face the challenges of 21st century needs in terms of public administration education. However, in the aspect of assessing the extent of the gap between the theory and practice of public administration as perceived by school administrators, faculty, practitioners, and students, all the responses declared the extent of the gap to some extent. However, when examined using appropriate statistical tools to test the significant difference of the perceptions of the four group respondents on the gap between the theory and practice of public administration, the findings displayed significant differences in the perceptions of school administra-



tors, faculty, and practitioners, while no significant difference in perception was experienced by master students.

Although the extent of the gap is identified to some extent, that extent is represented by a significant difference in the three groups of respondents as mentioned above. The non-significant difference in the perceptions of the Master Students' who responded is attributable to the non-realization of applying the theories learned in education into actual situations in the workplace. This could pose a problem to the students considering that based on the findings, many of the students possess a supervisory role in their respective jobs and thus, are involved in making decisions from time to time. Knowledge of the theories help greatly in devising ways to solve work-related problems and in dealing with subordinates. For instance, leadership roles in managing employees under supervision.

Hence, the gap, if left unattended, will potentially develop a barrier in the successful implementation and sustainability of the MPA/MPSE program. Such differing opinions may create complexity in managing the public administration program. Furthermore, problems are identified clearly by colleges and universities offering the public administration programs and program faculties and these include the top three challenges namely: limited budget, the inadequacy of updated materials, and unavailability of professors. Other challenges, in no particular order, include poor enrollment, schedule of classes, limited course offerings, professor without professional training, and the merging of doctoral and Master's courses. To meet the needs of the 21st century, these challenges needed to be addressed, especially the limited budget which affects almost entirely the larger part of colleges and the university's operations, and as it relates to the other problems faced. This entails the concerned colleges and universities allocating sufficient budgets which correspond to the change initiatives and program plans directed towards the 21st-century teaching and learning environment. Less emphasis on these areas would generally hamper any initiatives to improve and become relative to 21st-century learning.

In testing the relationship between the respondents' demographic variables and the present MPA/MPSE curriculum, the outcome demonstrated the significant relationship of educational attainment, age, and position on the utilization of the present curriculum. These imply that the increase in educational attainment of respondents allows them to internalize the importance and relevance of MPA/MPSE towards the needs of the 21st century and, likewise. Older respondents are likely to understand the relationship of the present curriculum towards the 21st century. Natural tendencies often dictate that older individuals possess emotional maturity and are more capable of making decisions. Also, this position relates significantly with the present curriculum primarily because of the need to learn the theories and curricular offerings that best suit the needs of workplace decision making. Conversely, gender and years of service have no significant bearing on the utilization of the present curriculum.

Lastly, owing to the mandate of the Commission on Higher Education standards towards continuous updating of the curriculum that suits the demands of the 21st century and based on the findings of the study, the researchers devel-

oped the proposed curriculum. This curriculum in conformity with the Commission on Higher Education standards consists of the following: 1. Core/Professional Orientation (12 units), Theory and Practice of Governance (3 units), Human Behavior in Organization (3 units), Leadership and Organization change (3 units), Administrative Laws (3 units); 2. Research and Evaluation (6 units), Quantitative Methods of Management and Statistics (3 units), Research Techniques (3 units); 3. Major Subjects (15 units), any of the following: Economic Development (3 units), Development Administration (3 units), Communication and Information Management (3 units), Public Management Issues (3 units), Ethics and Accountability in the Public Service (3 units), Environmental Management (3 units), 4. Thesis Writing (6 units). To date, the researchers have found it difficult to find related literature that neither affirms, confirms, nor contradicts these findings. Hence, the researchers conclude that these findings are unique and can be subjected to further studies and investigations.

Given this mandate, the MPA/PSME curriculum must properly the conditions posed by the changes in the Third Millennium and effect a paradigm shift that will find articulation in a new philosophy mission/vision as well as the programs that will operationalize the mission/vision. The development of the curriculum specific to the challenges of the 21st century will provide a common ground for mutual learning and networking among schools offering public sector management education, as well as opportunities for networking between scholars, practitioners, and students in public administration.

## REFERENCES

---

Care, E., Anderson, K. and Kim, H. (2016) *Visualizing the breadth of skills movement across education systems. Skills for a Changing World*. Washington D.C.: The Brookings Institution.

Care, E. and Luo, R. (2016) *Assessment of transversal competencies: Policy and practice in the Asia-Pacific region*. Bangkok, Thailand: UNESCO.

Eccles, J.S. and Wigfield, A. (2002) 'Motivational beliefs, values, and goals', *Annual Review of Psychology*, 53, pp. 109–132.

Elias, M.V. (2020) 'Phenomenology in public administration: Bridging the theory-practice gap', *Administration and Society*, 52(10), pp. 1516–1537.

Ercikan, K. and Oliveri, M.E. (2016) 'In search of validity evidence in support of the interpretation and use of assessments of complex constructs: Discussion of research on assessing 21st century skills', *Applied Measurement in Education*, 29(4), pp. 310–318.

European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (CEDEFOP) (2012) *Curriculum Reform in Europe: The Impact of Learning Outcomes*. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union.

Farmer, R. (2010) 'How to influence government policy with your research: Tips from practicing political scientists in government', *Political Science and Politics*, 43(4), pp. 717–719.

García-Durán, R., Morales-López, S., Durante-Montiel, I., Jiménez, M. and Sánchez-Mendiola, M. (2011) *Type of research papers in medical education meetings in Mexico: an observational study*. Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Association for Medical Education in Europe, Vienna, Austria.

Harmon, M.M. (2006) 'Business research and Chinese patriotic poetry: How competition for status distorts the priority between research and teaching in U.S. Business Schools', *Academy of Management Learning and Education*, 5(2), pp. 234–243.

Hou Y., Ni, A.Y., Poocharoen, O-O., et al. (2011) 'The case for public administration with a global perspective', *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory*, 21(Supplement1), pp. i45–i51.

Jreisat, J.E. (2005) 'Comparative public administration is back in, prudently', *Public Administration Review*, 65(2), pp. 231–242.

Kearns, K.P. (2014) 'The nonprofit clinic at the University of Pittsburgh: preparing students for transition to professional settings', *Teaching Public Administration*, 32(1), pp. 21–38.

Majgaard, K., Nielsen, J.C.R., Quinn, B. and Raine, J. (eds) (2016) *Critical perspectives on international public sector management: Developing public managers for a changing world*. Bingley, UK: Emerald.

Manoharan, A.P., Mirbel, W. and Carrizales, T.J. (2018) 'Global comparative public administration: Are graduate programs responding to the call?', *Teaching Public Administration*, 36(1), pp. 34–49.

Pedersen, L.H. and Jensen, H.N. (2007) *Knowledge production on public sector reform in the interface between practice and research*. EGPA-Conference, Madrid.

Piccorelli, J. T. and Zingale, N. (2018) 'Dementors circling higher education: Countering the administrative mood (Stimmung) of empirical science', *Administrative Theory and Praxis*, 40(3), pp. 250–266.

Profiroiu, M.C. and Britcariu, M.R. (2021) 'Universities as 'Drivers' of Local and Regional Development', *Transylvanian Review of Administrative Sciences*, 62, pp. 134–152.

Reichard, C. and Schroter, E. (2018) 'Education and training in public administration and management in Europe', in: Ongara E. and Van Thiel S. (eds). *The Palgrave handbook of public administration and management in Europe*. London, UK: Palgrave Macmillan.

SICA (2015) *Section on International and Comparative Administration, Section of American Society for Public Administration*. Available at: <https://aspasica.wordpress.com/> (downloaded 20 February 2020).

Stivers, C. (2018) 'Beyond calculation: Experience and language in administrative situations', *Administrative Theory and Praxis*, 40(3), pp. 200–210.

UNESCO (2012) *Shaping the Education of Tomorrow: 2012 Report on the UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development, abridged*. France: United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization.

United Nations (2016). *The Sustainable Development Goals Report*. Available at: <http://unstats.un.org/sdgs/report/2016/The%20Sustainable%20Development%20Goals%20Report%202016.pdf> (downloaded 1 March 2020).

Van der Meer, F.B. and Marks, P. (2016) 'Academic PA education and professional practice: innovative methods for linking theory and practice', in: Majgaard K., et al. (eds) *Critical perspectives in international public sector management*. Developing public managers for a changing world. Bingley, UK: Emerald.

Van den Meer, F. and Marks, P. (2018) 'An agenda for rethinking mid-career master programs in public administration', *Teaching Public Administration*, 36(2), pp. 126–142.

Van der Meer, F.B. and Ringeling, A.B. (2009) 'Study and work experience: Delinking and relinking', in: Bonser C.F. (ed.) *Adapting universities to the global society – a Trans-Atlantic perspective*. Berlin: LIT.

The article was submitted 22.04.2021; approved after reviewing 25.09.2021; accepted for publication 28.11.2021.