Curriculum Gaps in Public Administration: Perceptions of Academicians and other Stakeholders in the Philippines

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Abstract

This paper aims to examine the limited area of public management education program of more than 70 institutions of higher education learning in the Philippines. The examination focused on distinguishing the variations of experts, college/university administrators, teachers, and students towards developing the public sector/administration management curriculum. To achieve the research objectives, it applies a survey in three phases. The first and second phase deals with questionnaire distribution to Master of Public Administration students, teachers, college administrators, and experts. The third phase was the distribution of questionnaires to all participants who have given their opinion on the proposed curriculum, their objectives, and the subjects/courses. The findings disclosed that the established curriculum confirmed with the Commission on Higher Education standards consisting of the core or professional subjects, research and evaluation, major subjects, and thesis writing. This study is helpful by universities in offering the public sector management curriculum at the master's level.

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Brechas curriculares en la administración pública: percepciones de académicos y otras partes interesadas en Filipinas

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Resumen

Este documento tiene como objetivo examinar el área limitada del programa de educación en gestión pública de más de 70 instituciones de educación superior en Filipinas. El examen se centró en distinguir las variaciones de expertos, administradores de colegios/universidades, profesores y estudiantes hacia el desarrollo del plan de estudios de gestión del sector público/administración. Para lograr los objetivos de la investigación, se aplica una encuesta en tres fases. La primera y la segunda fase se ocupan de la distribución de cuestionarios a estudiantes, profesores, administradores universitarios y expertos de la Maestría en Administración Pública. La tercera fase fue la distribución de cuestionarios a todos los participantes que han dado su opinión sobre el plan de estudios propuesto, sus objetivos y las materias/cursos. Los hallazgos revelaron que el plan de estudios establecido confirmó con la Comisión de Educación Superior los estándares que consisten en materias básicas o profesionales, investigación y evaluación, materias principales y redacción de tesis. Este estudio es útil para las universidades al ofrecer el plan de estudios de gestión del sector público a nivel de maestría.

Palabras clave: Maestría en Administración Pública/Maestría en Educación de Servicio Público, Currículo, Tercer Milenio, Comisión de Educación Superior, Filipinas

Countless efforts had already been made to advance higher education in public management, emphasizing the globalized education policy of new public administration (Verger & Curran, 2014). This effort can be recalled in 1998 when UNESCO had launched the "World Declaration on Higher Education for the 21st Century: Vision and Action in Paris, France headquarters. The statement highlights the globally acknowledged "A New Vision and Paradigm" of higher education and the answers that must be done to address the problems of change and revitalization needed to enable an improved higher education and stimulate change and development in the society at large. Moreover, the declaration incorporates all areas of higher education in the international arena, however; more concentrated on the public sector management, also called public management. Manoharan et al. (2018) also recognized in their study titled, "Global comparative public administration: Are graduate programs responding to the call?" that there should be a common baseline on public administration framework to address the unification of public administration worldwide.

On the same note, the Philippines has also undertaken numerous changes comparably with other countries like the United States, United Kingdom, Australia, and other Asian countries. The country's curriculum in public administration education stemmed from the United States and wherein specializing in public sector management education has achieved higher recognition.

Over the years, the Philippine system of the governance system in the public sector faced varieties of challenges and changes that comprise the education sector thus, leading to the call for doctorate and master degrees who will serve in the governments' executive and managerial level, quality service provisions, meeting stakeholders' expectations, financial and fiscal management, and budgeting government expenditures. Following the changes, the University of the Philippines created the College of Public Administration in the 50s as a different specialization. It was adopted by the mass of public and private Colleges and universities. As a new discipline, the College of Public Administration by UP was entirely approved and derived from the United States Public Administration Curriculum that

consists of staff functions such as planning, organizing, personnel, budgeting, public finance, and others.

Recently, quite many colleges and universities offered degrees in public administration, and its Master in Public Administration (MPA) program contains thirty-six (36) units while some universities offer the Ph.D. in Public Administration, Ph.D. in Public Policies and Business Management. Some institutions regard its Masteral and Doctoral programs in Educational Administration as a component of the Public Administration programs and the Master's program in Health Administration. Based on the statistical report in 2019, the Master of Public Administration programs in the Philippines has been participated by 277 colleges and universities.

This paper seeks to investigate the present offering of the country Philippines in their MPA programs and, from there, design an integrated curriculum that showcases the achievement of the 21st demand for public administration/public sector management education. It also tries to address the following research objectives:

1. To assess the responsiveness of the current public administration curriculum as perceived by the college/university administrators, teaching staff, experts, and graduate students in public administration towards the needs of 21st-century education.
2. To determine the extent of the gap between the public administration's theory and practice as perceived by the college/university administrators, teaching staff, experts, and graduate students in public administration.
3. To evaluate the colleges/universities' challenges that offer the public administration curriculum and their program faculties.
4. To investigate how the respondent's perceptions towards the public administration curriculum are influenced by their age, gender, educational attainment, position, and number of years of service.
5. To device suitable public administration/public sector management curriculum for the 21st century.

This paper also provides benefits and advantages. Firstly, it aids the colleges and universities nationwide redesign their public administration curriculum anchored on the 21st-century model and framework. It helps government agencies and organizations bridge the gap between what is learned in theory matching with the actual requirements or practices in the workplace. Thirdly, it enables the university administrators, teaching staff, and students to be updated with the recent trends in the conduct of public administration in the 21st century. Lastly, it provides input to practitioners in public administration to design and upgrade its present service offerings.

Literature Review

Educational System Towards 21st Century and Beyond

Globalizing education has been at the forefront of different countries to universalize learning and bridge the gap and barriers to learning. According to the United Nations (2016), the world is suffering from providing quality and equality or fairness of educational system and sustainability of these practices in the 21st century. Children and the youth were most affected in the access and the quality of education. In addition, the study of Care et al. (2016) demonstrated how the national education system could be moved to an international setting and in conformity with the national, regional, and global changes brought by educational reforms. They also stressed the importance of overcoming the problems and challenges of curriculum alignment, curriculum assessment, and teaching pedagogy to answer the educational reforms needed for the 21st century. Based on this premise, this paper evaluates the Philippine's readiness to provide a quality public administration curriculum designed for the 21st century.

As the educational system changed, the so-called "21st-century skills" emerged. This focuses on the combination of essential skills to the modern workforce and modern society due to many interpretations (Ercikan and Oliveri, 2016). Care & Luo (2016) and UNESCO (2012) define 21st-century skills as transferrable skills competencies fitting to different circumstances and contrary to the technical-vocational skills limited to specific jobs. Furthermore, this new learning system emphasized aligning the educational

system into the three delivery mechanisms: pedagogy, curriculum, and assessment.

Various studies have been performed about educational system reforms towards the 21st century; however, limited studies focused on determining the relationship between the pedagogy, curriculum, and assessment (Care et al., 2018; Wyse et al., 2016). The shift from the teacher-centered curriculum into a student-centered and outcome-based curriculum has become the primary emphasis (Wyse et al., 2016). The European Center for the Development of Vocational Training (CEDEFOP, 2012) also emphasized the delivery of an outcome-oriented curriculum that significantly impacts the teaching and learning processes as it was found out that it promotes learner-centered pedagogies where outcomes were measured by student learning. In other words, the outcome-based curricula relate with the teaching pedagogy that enhanced the learner-centered pedagogy. According to Eccles and Wigfield (2002), teaching and learning have transformed from structured, content-wise, and information acquisition into new models and approaches wherein the students took charge of the learning processes, the learner-centered approach.

Similarly, 21st-century learning calls for the transformation from the traditional educational assessments into a more integrated method with a blend of learner-centered curriculum and pedagogy. Nevertheless, achieving prescribed education courses towards the 21st century needs a big reckoning after considering the practices and approaches of the past concerning the widely used teacher-centered curricula and the different expectations of the various academic institutions on student-centered learning. Hence, this paper tried to structure a curriculum that centers on the learner/student and outcome-based approach to overcome the challenges educational institutions offer public administration in the Philippine setting.

Development of Public Administration Education

Vigoda (2003) stressed that public administration is directly associated with general management and shares almost the same elements on complex societies and administrations. Accordingly, government agencies derive practices and concepts from private organizations with or without

modifications (Ahmad & Hossain, 2015; Hossain, 2018). Likewise, public administration relies on the principles and theoretical knowledge built from the research made in the private sector and organizations by specialists and scholars. As an example, numerous renowned concepts and ideas, study outcomes, and experimentations are held in private management and factories and these were stemmed from motivation theories, Hawthorne studies, Harvard Business School studies (Liebman, 1963). However, management styles and organizational goals in maximizing profit differ between the public and private sectors although both encountered similar challenges and problems that entail identical approaches to address (Peters, 1996). For example, government organizations and agencies consider complex situations where the concern dwelt on the challenges of integrity, transparency, honesty, corruption, and accountability in contrast with the difficulties in the private sector (Hossain, 2018). Due to this variation, colleges and universities have designed curricula that emphasize the utilization of public administration education rather than following the private organization studies (Liebman, 1963).

According to Greenwood & Eggins (1995), the close link of the public administration curriculum to the management program has led to various unavoidable and unfavorable outcomes in public administration education. However, Christensen & Laegreid (2012) mechanized several remedies and approaches with varied concepts and terminologies. They have noted some side effects of new public management (NPM) while developing the post-NPM models with many curative remedies that included whole-of-government, joined-up government, quality of government, networks, partnerships, etc. These changing development in public administration necessitates stakeholders, specifically the education sector, to respond to the changes in public management practice. However, based on the researchers' knowledge and searches, limited studies still tackle the application of public administration theory to practice from the education perspective.

On the same note, Peter & Pierre (1998) emphasized that governance is a political theory that focuses on state-society relations rather than the management and administration approach. Furthermore, they stressed that the political science embedded structure has gradually integrated into business and management in a multi-disciplinary approach. Azizuddin

(2018) and Vigoda (2003) pointed out that considering the evidence of the different theoretical perspectives in public administration, the necessity of adopting a multi-disciplinary approach is apparent since public administration deals with various human constructs such as citizens, people, customers or clients, etc. They further stressed that public administration must consist of a multi-disciplinary political, social, and managerial discipline. This means that while public administration exists as a specialized field, it must have interdependencies with other social sciences disciplines to achieve mutual contributions. Vigoda (2003), for instance, observed that, while several colleges and universities have independent public administration units, other universities have placed public administration units as larger units in business and management, political science, public affairs, and others. Moreover, Vigoda's observation in twenty years revealed a great improvement in public administration concerning the number of units in universities. However, slight improvement and advancement had been seen in the development of theories and understanding in actual practice.

How the Public Sector Management/Public Administration Curriculum Meet the Third Millenium Needs?

Anchored on The World Declaration on Higher Education for the 21st Century, Goals and Achievement Framework for Priority Action towards the Higher Education's Change and Development should be developed into the concept of integrating the current curriculum into globalized standard curricula in the tertial level. In the study conducted by Hou et al. (2011), they found that programs curricula in public administration should be incorporated with the worldwide curriculum of the educational system to earn global acquaintance and knowhow for self-improvement. However, for Jreisat (2005), public administrators need to timely respond to the skills development of the students in the aspect of negotiations, mediation, sensitivity to human rights and diversity, which are far beyond the conventional public service endeavors.

For comparability, a study conducted by the American Society for Public Administration (ASPA) in 1973 about the "The Section on International and

Comparative Administration" (SICA) highlights the participation of the experts and academicians whose focus is on the promotion of international studies and public service undertakings and the delivery of such activities through communication (SICA, 2015). This relates to the Philippine educational system wherein in the field of public sector management/public administration, and the main issue is how to fit the current curriculum of public administration programs to the demands of the industry, nationally and globally. Because of this, the researchers acknowledged the necessity for reassessment and reevaluation of the colleges and universities' latest curricula to make sure its readiness to the challenges brought by 21st-century education and to adhere to the requirements set by a regulatory government agency such as the Commission on Higher Education.

Is there Urgency in Meeting the Educational Needs of the 21st Century?

Several studies acknowledged the need to associate learned theories in education to practice (Kearns, 2014; Majgaard et al., 2016; Pedersen and Jensen, 2007; Van der Meer and Marks, 2016; Van der Meer and Ringeling, 2010). The changing business environment, the teaching and learning processes, public sector regulations and procedures have urged educational institutions to respond to these changes as needed. Students, for instance, learned theories during their studies but acquired practical applications in the workplace through experience, thus realizing the significance of applying the theories into practice. This gap between theory and practice in education was evaluated by Reichard and Schroter (2018) who stressed that the ability of the students for long-long learning is needed and educational institutions should continuously upgrade their curriculum designs, programs, curriculum content and approaches, and linking theory into practice which require long-term actions.

Though a change in the teaching system requires approval from the higher education and accrediting bodies, devising new ways and approaches remains necessary to upgrade the current public administration curriculum and, particularly, match the theory and practice in learning. Moreover, Van der Meer and Marks (2018) highlighted the need for a changed curriculum in Public Administration and emphasized three aims: social development,

matching outdated programs to changing workplace requirements, and the general structure of academic teaching programs, which should be shifted to specialized design. Concerning this study, the current public administration curricula are evaluated to formulate the MPA and the Master in Public Sector Education (MPSE) program in the 21st century.

Methodology

This study utilized the quantitative research design with a questionnaire survey as its main instrument. Patterned in the study of García et al. (2011), the method defines and discloses the relationship that occurs or does not occur, a training that exists or does not exist, opinions or viewpoints, or conducts assumed or not assumed, or developments. This paper started with the analysis and evaluation of the existing MPA curriculum in the aspect of objectives, purposes, offered subjects, required units, and the nature of the study in colleges and universities, suggesting the topic. The survey questionnaire is divided into two parts distributed to the college and university administrators, teaching staff, and students in the Graduate School. Specifically, sampled respondents filled out questionnaires: VPAA, Graduate School Dean, five Senior Graduate Teaching Staff, and ten students in the MPA program. Using the purposive sampling, the colleges and universities were pre-identified and questionnaires were sent through email upon prior approval and the three-phase questionnaire was employed. The first set of questionnaires was sent to the respondents identified. Only those retrieved were given the second set of questionnaires then proceeded with the third set of questions after retrieval of the second set.

Furthermore, of more than seventy colleges and universities offering the MPA in the Philippines, fifty-five responded on the first questionnaire distributed from Luzon, Visayas, and Mindanao. The second set of questionnaires was sent to fifty-five respondents, and 40 responded. Finally, the third set of questionnaires was sent to the 40 respondents, included in the instrument questions that pertain to the various challenges in public administration education, specifically on the variation between the theory and practice and the link between the receptiveness of the curricula and the

functions of the educators in public administration, experts, and the graduate students. Considering the three-phase survey, written consent was obtained to the Deans and Vice President for Academic Affairs (VPAA) of each college/university throughout the Philippines. The objectives and purposes of the MPA were collected from them and brochures for the analysis. 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

The analysis was done using the statistical tools as previously mentioned based on the collected data. The order of research is presented.

Table 1: *Distribution of Respondents According to Group*

Respondents	Population	Those who Responded	%
Administrators	150	90	60.0
Teachers	225	146	65.0
Experts	84	78	92.9
Graduate Students	376	263	70.0
Total	**835**	**577**	**69.1**

The table shows the four respondents: administrators, teachers, experts, and graduate students. It further revealed that 60% (n=90) were administrators, 65% (n=146) teachers, 92.9% (n=84), and graduate students 70% (n=263). Five hundred seventy-seven participants were considered final respondents.

Table 2. *Respondents' Distribution by Age, Gender, Education, Position, and Years of Service*

Profile	Administrators		Teachers		Experts		Students		Total	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
1. Age Range										
0≤25							45	17.11	45	7.80
26 – 35	10	11.11	6	4.10	2	2.56	150	57.03	168	29.12
36 – 45	19	21.11	42	28.78	58	74.36	45	17.11	164	28.42
≥46	61	67.78	98	67.12	18	23.08	23	8.75	200	34.66
Total	90	100.00	146	100.00	78	100.00	263	100.00	577	100.00
2. Gender										
Male	25	27.78	99	67.81	44	56.41	105	39.92	273	47.31
Female	65	72.22	47	32.19	34	43.59	158	60.08	304	52.69
Total	90	100.00	146	100.00	78	100.00	263	100.00	577	100.00
3. Education										
Master-Units					32	41.03	263	100.00	295	51.12
Masters	8	8.89	11	7.53	34	43.59			53	9.19
PhD-Units	6	6.67	85	58.22	12	15.38			103	17.85
PhD	76	84.44	50	34.25					126	21.84
Total	90	100.00	146	100.00	78	100.00	263	100.00	577	100.00
4. Position										
Director					18	23.08			16	3.60
Supervisor	2	2.22	18	12.33	32	41.02	110	41.83	122	27.41
Teacher			38	26.03			82	31.18	73	16.40
Dean	45	50.00							34	7.64
Manager			58	39.72	28	35.90	21	7.98	101	22.70
Heads			22	15.07			17	6.46	19	4.27
VPAA	43	47.78							33	7.42
Others			10	6.85			33	12.55	36	8.09
Total	90	100.00	146	100.00	78	100.00	263	100.00	577	100.00
5. Yrs-Service										
0≤5	3	3.33	9	6.16			76	28.90	88	15.25
6-10	6	6.67	11	7.54	45	57.69	98	37.26	160	27.73
11-15	18	20.00	13	8.90	23	29.49	50	19.01	104	18.02
16-20	20	22.22	61	41.78	10	12.82	22	8.37	113	19.58
≥21	43	47.78	52	35.62			17	6.46	112	19.41
Total	90	100.00	146	100.00	78	100.00	263	100.00	577	100.00

Table 2 displays the respondents' profile by age, gender, education, position, and years of service. Highlights of the findings revealed that in terms of age, the majority of administrators are over 46 years old (67.78%), and most are teachers (67.12%), while many of the experts are aged 36-45 years old (74.36%) and, majority of the graduate students are within 26-35

years old (57.03%). In terms of gender, most of the administrators (72.22%) and students (60.08%) are females, while the majority of teachers (67.81%) and experts (56.41) are male respondents. When classified according to the respondents' education, most of the administrators are PhD holders (84.44%), while more than half of the teachers have PhD units (58.22%). Many of the experts have Master's degrees (43.59%). But in terms of position, half of the respondents are Deans (50%), the minority of the teachers are managers (39.72%), experts occupied supervisory positions (41.02%), and most students are supervisors (41.83%). Finally, when assessed according to the years of service, most administrators served more than 21 years (47.78%), most teachers served 16-20 years (41.78%), experts have 6-10 years (57.69%) and, 6-10 years also for the students (37.26%).

Table 3. *Perception of Respondents with the Present MPA/PSME Curriculum-Knowledge Objectives*

Knowledge Objectives	Administrator		Teachers		Experts		Students		Overall		
	WM	R	WM	R	WM	R	WM	R	WM	VI	R
Offer administrators, managers, scholars, and teachers a wide theoretical/technical experience in planning execution and assessing the public and private organization.	4.85	2	4.68	1	4.66	3	4.61	3.5	4.70	SA	1
Enhances the students understanding of recent trends and issues/challenges in local and national government	4.88	1	4.33	3	4.58	4.5	4.48	5.5	4.57	SA	3
Strengthen students' knowledge of the ever-changing social economics, political and cultural perception.	4.81	3.5	4.55	2	4.68	2	4.68	1	4.68	SA	2
Accelerate the upcoming executives' understanding of study and policymaking.	4.75	5.5	4.20	4.5	4.77	1	4.61	3.5	4.50	SA	5
Give students a complete image of supervising a government sector's concern.	4.81	3.5	4.20	4.5	4.58	4.5	4.48	5.5	4.52	SA	4
Present the students to excellence and inventive governance of public agencies and educational institution	4.75	5.5	4.15	6	4.36	6	4.65	2	4.48	SA	6

WEIGHTED MEAN (WM)	4.81	4.35	4.60	4.59	4.58 (SA)

Table 3 displays the respondents' feedback on the questions on knowledge objectives. The results depict that most of the responses strongly agree (SA) on the current curriculum in terms of knowledge. For administrators, their highest strongly agree response is on the statement "Enhances the students understanding of recent trends and issues/challenges in local and national government" while for teachers, their strong agreement was on statement "Offer administrators, managers, scholars, and teachers a wide theoretical/technical experience in planning execution and assessing the public and private organization". On the other hand, experts strongly agree as priority on the statement that says, "Accelerate the upcoming executives' understanding of study and policymaking", and for students, they agree with the administrators with a strong agreement on "Offer administrators, managers, scholars, and teachers a wide theoretical/technical experience in planning execution and assessing the public and private organization". These results proved that MPA/MPSE at the national level is useful in terms of knowledge and delivers the necessary elements to ensure that the knowledge objectives are addressed at all levels of learning for the students.

Table 4. *Perception of Respondents with the present MPA/PSME Curriculum-Development of Skills*

Development Skills	Administrator		Teachers		Experts		Students		OVERALL		
	WM	R	WM	R	WM	R	WM	R	WM	VI	R
Improve leadership abilities of managers/ administrators.	4.34	3	4.69	1	4.59	5	4.71	3	4.58	SA	1
Boost the standard & managerial performance of managers & executives.	4.45	1	4.54	2.5	4.33	7	4.74	1	4.52	SA	4
Use students' technical & research abilities.	4.39	2	4.48	4	4.72	2.5	4.58	5	4.54	SA	2.5
Build the students' skills in devising, executing & assessing strategies and	4.25	5.5	4.54	2.5	4.66	4	4.72	2	4.54	SA	2.5

progress plans to reach a good decision.											
Enhance students' competencies to obtain skills required to develop the area in public policy, public entrepreneurship, information technology, finance, and international relations.	4.30	4	4.30	6	4.72	2.5	4.52	7	4.46	SA	5
Train the students' critical thinking and communication skills for high-level business management decision-making.	4.16	7	4.35	5	4.55	6	4.63	4	4.42	SA	7
Sharpen their abilities in human/ interpersonal relations.	4.25	5.5	4.25	7	4.78	1	4.49	8	4.44	SA	6
Build up the academic, professional, and non-teaching individual capabilities.	4.12	8	4.23	8	4.10	8	4.47	9	4.23	SA	8
WEIGHTED MEAN (WM)	4.28		4.42		4.56		4.60		4.47	(SA)	

Table 4 displays the perception of respondents on the existing MPA/MPSE curriculum based on development skills. Topping the list of responses based on the weighted average mean (4.47) revealed the statement "Improve leadership abilities of managers/ administrators". The four respondents strongly agreed that the current curriculum has development skills for the students. The highest strongly agree response by administrators is on the statement "Boost the standard & managerial performance of managers & executives". For teachers, the top response was "Improve leadership abilities of managers/ administrators," while experts strongly agree with the statement "Sharpen their abilities in human/ interpersonal relations". Finally, students' strong response is on the statement "Boost the standard & managerial performance of managers & executives" and administrators' responses. To sum up, all four responses are in unison with their strongly agreed feedback. These answers only demonstrated that the current MPA/MPSE curriculum in the Philippines promotes developing the

students' skills as understood by administrators, teachers, experts, and
students.

Table 5. *Perception of Respondents with the present MPA/PSME
Curriculum-Values/Attitudes*

Values/Attitudes	Administrator		Faculty		Practitioners		Students		Overall		
	WM	R	WM	R	WM	R	WM	R	WM	VI	R
Instill a high professionalism and academic qualities, nourished with ethical principles.	4.20	1	4..38	4	4.69	1	4.65	3	4.48	SA	2
Increase the students' capability to boost the expansion of rural and urban employees sectors in a defined spirit of self-reliance.	4.11	3	4.25	5	4.64	2	4.46	5	4.36	SA	3
Assist the students in understanding the values of professionalizing the bureaucracy.	4.08	4	4.40	3	4.13	5	4.52	4	4.28	SA	4
Build moral character, personal disciple and nationalism for artistic and cultural tradition.	4.16	2	4.47	2	4.56	3	4.74	2	4.49	SA	1
Establish social awareness thru involvement in extension activities and services	3.89	6	3.98	6	4.45	4	4.76	1	4.27	SA	5
Intensifies students' moral values in work performance.	4.01	5	4.52	1	3.85	4.5	4.38	6	4.19	SA	6
WEIGHTED MEAN (WM)	4.08		4.33		4.39		4.58		4.34	SA	

Table 5 depicts the respondents' perception of the current MPA/MPSE
curriculum regarding values and attitudes. Similarly, the rating is generally
strongly agreed from the four groups, indicating that the present curriculum
promotes and deals with concerns regarding values and attitudes. The
highest strong agreement of administrators and faculty dwelt on the
statement, " Instill a high professionalism and academic qualities, nourished
with ethical principles." Teachers consider the highest strong agreement on
the statement "Intensifies students' moral values in work performance.". For
the experts, their responses duplicates the administrators with strong
agreement on the statement "Instill a high professionalism and academic
qualities, nourished with ethical principles." Finally, students' strongest

agreement is on the statement "Establish social awareness thru involvement in extension activities and services ".

Table 6. *Level of the Gap Between Theory and Practice as Understood by the Administrators, Teachers, Experts, and Students*

Level of Gap	Administrators		Teachers		Experts		Students		Total
	F	VE	F	VE	F	VE	F	VE	
VME (>4.51)	5		18		19		47		89
ME (3.51- 4.50)	16		26		20		89		151
SE (2.51-3.50)	0	Some Extent	3	Some Extent	10	Some Extent	5	Some Extent	18
LE (1.51-2.50)	69		98		27		118		312
VLE (0.51-1.50)	0		1		2		4		7
Total	90		146		78		263		577

Table 6 depicts the level of the gap between theory and practice as observed by the four respondents. Further, it disclosed that all the four groups commonly responded that the gap faced is only to some extent. This may imply no major gap or differences in what has been identified in the curriculum versus what takes place in the actual work. If there are differences, this can be considered minimal and can be appropriately addressed. The curriculum is designed to meet businesses' needs and job conditions in the national setting.

Table 7. Challenges faced by Colleges/Universities in offering the curriculum and program faculties in public administration education

Indicators	Admin		Teachers		Experts		Students	
	F	Rank	F	Rank	F	Rank	F	Rank
Restricted Budget.	70	1	115	1	31	1	175	1
Inaccessibility of Teachers.	25	3	42	4	14	3.5	90	3
Lack of updated resources.	63	2	111	2	14	3.5	161	2
Poor Admission.	22	4	48	3	16	2	63	6
Schedule of lessons	8	8	30	6	3	8	72	4
Lack of Teacher Training.	18	6	23	7	1	9	65	5
Limited Subject Offering.	19	5	36	5	6	5	54	7

| Combined subjects-doctoral/masters. | 10 | 7 | 26 | 8 | 5 | 6 | 51 | 8 |
| Others. | 2 | 9 | 5 | 9 | 4 | 7 | 8 | 9 |

Table 7 shows the problems the colleges and universities generally face with the MPA/MPSE curriculum and the faculties in public administration education. In order of significance, the four respondents admitted that the top challenge on the list centered on a restricted budget, followed by the lack of updated resources. The third problem is the inaccessibility of teachers. The restricted budget of colleges and universities, which can be identified as small colleges, impedes the system's operation and facilities, indicating inadequate sources in terms of the lack of updated resources. Furthermore, for prominent colleges and universities, finding teachers specializing in the program does not pose a challenge; however, for small colleges and universities, the program needs numerous teachers, which are generally challenging to get. All other challenges, as revealed, require the institutions offering the program to be concerned regarding the incurrence of these challenges so that action plans will be put into place in addressing these requirements.

Table 8. *Regression analysis on the impact of respondents' demographics on their perceptions of the current curriculum.*

Demographic Variables	*B*	*SE B*	β	*t*	*p*
Constant	0.412	0.191		3.612	0.006
Educational Attainment	0.952	0.264	0.821	4.965	0.000
Age	0.388	0.194	0.371	2.774	0.035
Gender	0.098	0.122	0.087	0.398	0.356
Position	0.622	0.221	0.612	4.544	0.000
Service in Years	0.068	0.166	0.061	0.301	0.531

R^2 = .589 (n = 577), F = 86.325, Sig. = .000
**Significant at $p < .01$ level; *Significant at $p < .05$ level

Table 8 represents the regression analysis on the impact of demographics on their perceptions of the current MPA/MPSE curriculum. Results revealed that the R^2 is 58.9% of the variation in the dependent variable, the perceptions of the current curriculum are affected by the demographic variables such as age, gender, position, educational attainment, and years of service. The F value is 86.325 and at a significance level of 0.000 which means that the model is appropriate for the analysis. In addition, the regression coefficient of the demographic reflected three variables that significantly impact the present curriculum, namely educational attainment ($\beta=0.821$, $p=0.000$); age ($\beta=0.371$, $p=0.035$); and position ($\beta=0.612$, $p=0.000$). On the other hand, gender ($\beta=0.087$, $p=0.356$) and service in years ($\beta=0.061$, $p=0.531$) have no significant impact on the current curriculum.

Table 9. *Perceived Difference of the Gap Between Theory and Practice by the Administrators, Teachers, Experts, and Students*

Level of Gap	Administrator		Teachers		Experts		Students		Total
	F	p-value	F	p-value	F	p-value	F	p-value	
VME (≥4.51)	5		18		19		47		89
ME (3.51- 4.50)	16		26		20		89		151
SE (2.51-3.50)	0	0.021	3	0.004	10	0.034	5	0.428	18
LE (1.51-2.50)	69		98		27		118		312
VLE (0.51-1.50)	0		1		2		4		7
Total	90		146		78		263		577

When testing the significant difference on the perceptions of the four groups on the gap between the theory and practice of public administration education, the figures showed using the One-Way ANOVA that administrators ($p=0.021$) teachers ($p=0.004$), and experts ($p=0.034$) vary in their insights towards theory and practice while the students ($p=0.428$) did not find a significant difference between theory and practice in education. This means that the administrators, teachers, and experts identify that the gap between the theory and practice can be ascribed to several factors and reasons as they express different perceptions on the causes of such differing opinions.

Findings and Conclusion

This paper aims to evaluate the current MPA/MPSE curriculum in the Philippines to meet the needs of the third millennium. The discussion and analysis dwelt on the following: responsiveness of the public administration curriculum to the needs of the 21st century, bridging the gap between the theory and practice of public administration, assessment in the readiness of the Colleges and Universities towards the delivery of third-millennium education, challenges currently faced with the program, the impact of the respondents' demographics on their perceptions of the existing public administration curriculum, and devising for a suitable curriculum that matched the 21st century needs. Data analysis was performed, including frequencies, percentages, and tables; weighted mean; regression; and ANOVA. Findings revealed that on the first point, the four respondents had shown strong agreement that the current public administration is responsive to the needs of the 21st century. In the recent study of Azizuddin & Hossain (2021), they affirmed these findings by recommending an updated curriculum and pedagogy in all public universities to develop modern public administration in Bangladesh from the evaluation of academics, students, policymakers, professionals, and governments. Meanwhile, in determining the extent of the gap between the theory and practice of public administration based on the perceptions of administrators, teachers, experts, and students, the findings showed that the gap is rated as "Some Extent". This implies an observed gap but considered at a certain extent or with little impact. However, when ANOVA was used to determine the significant difference in their perceptions of the gap between the theory and practice, results demonstrated a significant difference between these two according to the administrators, teachers, and experts while no significant difference as perceived by the graduate students. This can be attributed to the fact that students are more exposed to practice than the theories they have learned.

Moreover, students may face problems in decision-making roles considering that each valuable decision necessitates a solid theoretical foundation, especially in their capacities of having supervisory roles in their workplaces. Adequate knowledge of theories considerably helps them address the critical situation that requires higher-level decisions. This is in line with Godwin & Meek's (2016) study which emphasized the importance of research, theory, and practice to the MPA and DPA programs in the United States. On the question of readiness of the colleges and universities in meeting the curriculum of the 21st century, the most responses strongly agree provided challenges presently faced are appropriately addressed.

The challenges above-mentioned by the colleges and universities include restricted budget, lack of updated resources, and inaccessibility of teachers. Other challenges included poor admission, lessons schedule, lack of teacher training, limited subject offering, combined doctoral/master subjects, etc. These challenges must be tackled in order of priority being restricted budget as the first and followed by lack of resources and inaccessibility of teachers which colleges and universities should allocate sufficient budget that sustainably operational towards the 21st century. If these aspects are given less emphasis, achieving a desirable public administration would be hampered. Further, regarding the statement about testing the significant relationship between the respondents' demographics and the current MPA/MPSE curriculum, the outcome revealed that age, educational attainment, and position are significantly linked with the present curriculum. This further implies that as the ages of the respondents' increase, their appreciation of the current public administration increases, which is also true with educational attainment and position though very limited literature confirms these results.

Finally, in compliance with the requirements of the Commission of Higher Education and in updating the current curriculum with the needs of the 21st century, the researchers suggested subjects that the colleges and universities should take into consideration, and it is up to them the allocation of credit hours or units per recommended subject. These subjects include Core/Professional Orientation (12 Units): Theory and Practice of Governance, Human Behavior in Organization, Leadership and Organizational Change, Administrative Laws. Then, Research and

Evaluation (6 Units): Quantitative Methods of Management and Statistics, Research Techniques. Third Category, Major Subjects (18 Units): Communication and Information Management, Ethics and Accountability in Governance, Economic Development, Development Administration, Public Management Issues, and Environmental Management. And the Thesis Writing (6 Units). The total number of units of the proposed program is 42 units. Until today, the researchers experienced difficulty in searching for related literature that supports or contradicts these results, and thus, they are unique and can be subjected to further studies. The advancement of the program explicit to the specific challenges of the 21st century will offer a common ground for shared knowledge, interacting amongst colleges and universities providing public administration education, and openings for networking between researchers, experts, and students in public administration.

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