

CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, NORTHRIDGE

MPA Graduates and the Measures of Their Satisfaction

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Leadership

By

Sheila Dempsey

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The graduate project of Sheila Dempsey is approved:

H. Eric Schockman

Date

Dr. Rhonda Franklin

Date

Dr. Henrik Palasani-Minassians, Chair

Date

California State University, Northridge

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Abstract

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Master of Public Administration in Public Sector Management and Leadership

The public sector has managed to become a dominate power player when it comes to the qualities that job seekers come to expect. Transitions have also evolved over the years which caused many to take refuge in seeking public sector employment. This employment has been the uniform standard of stability over the years. Some may say if you search for stability, then an occupation in the public sector can be the answer. Since factors such as stability, decent pay, and the desire to help people are considered the backbone of public sector employment, discovery is needed to determine if these are the reasons people opt for work in the public sector. To understand these factors, further examination of literature on the public sector is needed to determine if these aspects are the defining elements that people rely on when choosing public sector employment. This study will focus on MPA graduates. The purpose of this study is to gain a better understanding of the reasons MPA students choose public sector employment. A survey will gather information concerning appraisal of career measurements of MPA graduates. A quasi-experimental research design with a pre-survey and a post-survey comparison group will be gathered for interpretation. Collection of the data will be gathered anonymously. The goal of

the survey interpretation will be to understand the variable appraisal of public sector career measures of job security, salary, and job satisfaction.

Introduction

The public sector refers to many diverse entities that branch into different levels of the government. The public sector has evolved and changed throughout the course of time and has also been an avenue for many to expand their career. President Obama introduced the 2009 American Graduation Initiative and it familiarized many to higher education and the vital part it plays in safeguarding the nation's financial future (Bensimon et al., 2012). The value of an MPA degree is debatably a topic of interest because it is the most common public administration degree (Holzer & Lin, 2007). Since an MPA degree is concerned with higher education, the value of the degree is needed to be measured for one to validate its worth. A possible vessel in exploration for the value of an MPA degree may be through the exploratory benefits the public sector has to offer. A job in the public sector offers incentives due to its grounding stability of influences, such as a stable salary, health benefits, retirement compensation and job security. The public sector uses benefits to entice employees and this enticement will be the connecting effort of retaining clever employees due to the benefits (Reddick, 2009).

Employment with the public sector may be viewed as positive, due to inducements that entice incentives. Most public pension plans give retirees compensation, such as a fixed income for the remainder of their life (Reilly, 2013). Benefits are desirable remunerations for a public sector career. Public sector employment bundles are the attraction many seek when looking for a job within the public sector. Pay is one factor many want as a stabilizer in their life. An employee is satisfied with their pay if it aligns with what they believe they are worth to do the job (Saleem & Gul, 2013).

Literature Review

Introduction

This literature review will discuss the idea of “Public Service” and motivation and what factors play a role when it comes to the idea of public service. The public sector is composed of public service and public enterprises. This includes governmental services health care, elected officials, the military, law enforcement, public education, public transportation, and infrastructures; including public roads, bridges, tunnels, water supply, sewers, electrical grids, and telecommunications. This is not a complete listing, but it gives a general idea why there is a need for public sector workers. There will also be a review of public sector history. One of the big questions that managers in public administration have been asking is, “How can we motivate public employees to do their job intelligently and energetically?” According to Perry and Wise (1990), public service motivation is an attribute of government and non-government organization employment that explains why people have a desire to serve the public and devote their actions in favor of public interest. It can be understood as a predisposition to respond to motives grounded in public institutions and organizations.

Theoretical Framework

Work motivation in the public sector includes research with attention on theoretical expectations and empirical evidence however, it is not a popular topic in the public sector. The little research there is includes data that is conducted by theories that do not include current research. For a public sector entity to encompass motivation and the aspects it incorporates, motivation should incorporate procedural constraints, goal content, and goal commitment (Wright, 2001). Therefore, considerations of motivation are limited to what has been examined thus far and prospective new motivation structures must be considered for approval also.

Although there has not been an emphasis on attention to work motivation within the public sector, there is clear research. In order to guide understanding of the existing work motivation literature, some the author Wright has made attempts to place these studies with in a theoretical framework. One such framework that has been identified by the literature and exhibited by Wright is his evaluation of public sector motivation theories.

Public-Sector Model of Work Motivation

Under this model, the framework contains five sets of variables that are alleged to determine the extent of work motivation in the public sector: sector employment choice, employee motives, job satisfaction, job characteristics, and work context. These variables are the additional factors of the principal concept of work motivation (Wright, 2001). This framework establishes the relations and associations that are connecting factors in public sector organizations. It is important to understand current public sector literature on work motivation because the motivational perspective of one sector is different from the other (Wright, 2001). Moreover, public service motivation may play an important role in person-job fit than person-organization fit (Christensen & Wright, 2011).

Goal Theory and Public Service Motivation

Goal Theory refers to a motivational approach that highlights the requirement to create goals as intrinsic motivation. Goal theory is connected to public service motivation because it suggests the importance employees place on tasks that develop their perceived significance of organizational tasks and employees work motivation. It is that it is often emphasized in public administration literature (Wright, 2007). Furthermore, public sector organizations must find the motivational interest for their own organization, as public service motivation differs from county to country (Vandenabeele et al., 2012).

Motivation

The foundations of public service and administration are defined by the belief that public employees are different from those of the private sector. Understanding the motives of public servants and the way to enhance public service is a step is understanding and linking motivational strategies (Perry & Wise, 1990). There are many factors that play a role in the idea of public service. Public service motivation (PSM) has the suggesting features of three types of motives- rational, normative, and affective, however, other scopes are desirability to public policy making, obligation to civil service and concern for others, and altruism (Perry, 1997). One idea is that public servants want to make a difference. Public servants need to gain insight about their work and develop skills in order to create effective and accountable change that communicates and leads in their sector. Even educating faculty of public administrative education creates their own interests in academic insights and mentoring other faculty, due to the concentration of serving the needs of future public sector employees (Denhardt, 2001). According to Behn (1995), public service managers are having difficulty motivating their employees to do their job intelligently and energetically. One way that public service managers can motivate their employees is by using performance measures. When goals are implemented, they grab people's attention. Employees strive to reach these goals which in turn gives one a sense of accomplishment (Behn, 2003)

Public sector employees are depicted as those who serve others due to their want of the responsibility or duty. This duty is a motive for many to attain positions within the public sector. Public service workers are driven by their sense of responsibility to help the community and their internal desire to serve the public. These features are reasons public service employees different from private sector employees (Houston, 2000). Public service motivation is a valuable tool in

distributing public services because it improves employees' performance and willingness to apply effort (Kjeldsen & Jacobsen, 2013).

There is conflicting information about public service motivation, job satisfaction and turnover. Some researchers believe people with high levels of public service motivation will in turn also have high levels of job satisfaction. However, there has not been a link to prove this connection (Bright, 2008). Public sector managers with private sector experience are less satisfied with their job as compared to public sector colleagues that have had no private sector experience. However, public sector managers with private sector experiences are more involved with their jobs than private sectors managers (Boardman et al., 2010). Further research is needed on whether public service motivation is demonstrated differently in public, non-profit and private sector organizations, however it is found that self-interest is an inadequate motive to perform public service (Brewer et al., 2000).

Public Sector Trials and Tribulations

History plays a major role in understanding the American economy and how America has contributed to the labor market. To appreciate and relate to the history, a brief background will be presented. The American economy has fluctuated over time; however, the actual history is not very extensive due to the establishment of America being young itself. A major failure America experienced was in 1929. America encountered financial troubles and a huge catastrophe with the crash of the stock market. In John Maynard Keynes's *General Theory of Employment, Interest and Money* (1936) he electively explains and analyses of the stock exchange to the particulars of the American Market and it's unusual experience because of its predisposition to weakening and irrational assumption, which followed from the mania of market contributor's, with psychological, not economic opportunities (James, 2010). America was a country that,

although young, withstood the testaments over time, however it was now trapped in economic dismay.

The Great Depression of 1930 engulfed almost every manufacturing company and all food and raw producers. Soon after the depression started, millions of Americans were unemployed. Many who were fortunate to still be employed suffered through the loss of salary cuts, and work hours (Crafts & Fearon, 2010). Due to the increasingly organized and politicized labor market of the 1920's and 1930's, incomes lacked the flexibility one relied on. The uncertainty of labor costs was limited by the spread of unionism, the growth of labor markets, and one's worry about their wages. The Great Depression was a multifaceted event that occurred worldwide (Eichengreen & Temin, 2000). It lasted for more than a decade and was perhaps the major influence in the collapse of the world economy.

In America, the downfall also impacted the government because it caused destruction to the economy that took years to rebuild. To help the economy along, President Franklin D. Roosevelt implemented the "New Deal" between 1933 and 1939 (History.com). It included a series of programs that helped to stabilize the economy and provided jobs. These programs included financial reforms and public work projects. United States Congress created the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) in order to employ men, the Agricultural Adjustment Administration to keep farm prices steady, the National Recovery Administration to recuperate businesses by adjusting prices and wages, and the Public Works Administration (PWA) to lead the economy by spending billions on public works. To provide emergency relief, the Federal Emergency Relief Administration (FERA) was also recognized to give states grants. PWA eventually became the largest employer in Colorado; the federal work programs employed thousands (Abbott et al., 2013).

However, America's share of troubles did not diminish after the Great Depression or the New Deal. World War II left many devastated and unemployed also. Soon after, the Korean War followed suit. Both are just two examples of events that evoked more unemployment. America took time to recover from these catastrophic events as well. World War II and the Korean War also left labor to fall and capital stock to decline (Ohanian, 1997).

In 1963 - 1965 a series of programs, known as the Great Society programs, were formed. These programs included Medicare, Medicaid, the Older Americans Act, and the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. These large social reform plans were created to end poverty, crime reduction, civil rights, and environment improvement. In 1964, President Johnson introduced the War on Poverty, with the Office of Economic Opportunity and the Economic Opportunity Act in order to create Job Corps and address poverty. From 1965 to the 1980's, there was a turnaround of the economy that caused the Great Inflation, which was rumored to be set from a spike in oil prices, questionable business transactions and a result of "honest mistakes" due to technical errors from the United States Federal Reserve (History.com).

Unemployment soared with the Great Inflation however, public sector jobs rose due to an increase in public service jobs. The 1980's had three recessions in two years, although the service sector added large numbers of jobs. Unemployment rose and a recession started in the 1990's, however, millions of jobs were created after. Public sector jobs remained stable, only changing minimally due to the economy. Federally, the hiring of temporary employees to assist in conducting the 1990 census added roughly 380,000 workers in 1990. The federal Government experienced little job growth and the 3.0 million job total did not fluctuate much. Public employment then stabilized but retained slight variants in the economy (Plunkert, 1990).

The Public Sector's Stance

The current workforce is comprised of many generations; Traditionalists (1925-1945), Baby-Boomers (1946-1964), Generation Xers (1965-1981), and Millennials (1982-1999). Traditionalist and Baby Boomers make up a large portion of working Americans and there are many reasons these baby boomers remain in the labor force. Experts anticipated more baby boomers will work after retirement due to monetary needs and a longing to stay active, however, the supply of workers may exceed the demand of the positions available (Kleinhans et al., 2015). Moreover, financial reasons are not always the main purpose of retirement and other motivations could be self-esteem, social status, or the passion to pass knowledge on to others (Applebaum & Cummins, 2017). This translates to meaning many baby boomers are retiring, but not all. Most Baby Boomers are not close to retirement, and many are delaying their retirement due to the deteriorating value of investment funds. It is noted, however, that the departure is inevitable (Svara, 2010).

Government agencies at all levels face an impending crisis as a large percentage of Baby Boomer managers and professionals approach retirement. The slow pace of Baby Boomers moving out and Generation X and Millennials moving up may cause tension in the workplace. “Generation X professionals may come to feel squeezed between late Boomers who have not yet retired, and millennial colleagues who start leapfrogging them into higher positions. At the same time, millennial professionals may seek opportunities outside local government rather than wait for promotions to come (and leave to seek variety in their careers, as we shall see)” (Svara, 2010, p.364). Professional occupations have a disproportionate number of older workers, mainly those requiring postgraduate degrees. Generation Xers and Millennials are the next wave to take over in the work environment. Due to concerns about retirement and hiring limitations, all levels of

government have continued reform, including approving special exigencies in hiring and pay (Dohm, 2002). Some state governments have also been reforming or eliminating civil service.

Public sector employees in America today are older than other employees in the country. Generation Xers are the cohort born roughly in the 1960s and 1970s (Feeney, 2008). They comprise 38 percent of the American workforce and are rising into leadership positions as Baby Boomers come closer to retirement. With the last of the Traditionalist, Baby Boomers, Generation Xer's, and Millennials all combined into one work environment, one may find it difficult to navigate through their workday due to conflict between generations (Yang & Guy, 2006). "Boomers may face growing opposition to entitlements by younger workers who feel burdened by the seemingly privileged lifestyles of boomers. They stand divided by the great gap in wealth within their own rank" (Vian, 2010, p.18). Some Generation-X employees believe that if an organization cannot back their needs and sustain a decent size in staff, they should think about looking elsewhere for employment (Santos & Cox, 2002).

Many feel that if boomers would create a supportive environment, then there would be less retention problems because they would work more harmoniously. Boomers, however, have been steadfast and made long-term commitments to their jobs and their work habits and may interpret the Generation-Xer's actions as a lack of commitments. These different ideas and points of view, although unique and transparent, may cause tension in the workplace. Millennials portray different avenues of thinking concerning work. They are selfish, have less loyalty to their careers, crave a casual work atmosphere, and have a strong sense of privilege.

Millennials are again focusing on education to advance their career and many new graduates are taking jobs they are overqualified for to survive in this economy and not drown with their debts. All these generations compiled into a work environment can be challenging, for

all involved. Some may wonder what environment may be conducive to their work production and envision a workplace that will encompass all their ideals for the path for their career (Henstra & McGowan, 2016). “During times of recession, Millennials lowered their expectations regarding the work like balance and social atmosphere. However, their expectations regarding job content, career development, and financial rewards remain high, suggesting that their expectations are largely embedded within the generation. Moreover, Millennials’ expectations are significantly influenced by individual variables, careerism, and optimism” (De Hauw & De Vos, 2010, p.293).

Importance of Public Sector Employment

Having a college degree may leave one to ask themselves ‘How can I extend the worth of my degree by having it work for me?’ Public sector employment offers grounding stability of influences, such as a stable salary, health benefits, retirement compensation and job security. The public sector uses benefits to entice employees and this enticement will be the connecting effort of retaining clever employees due to the benefits (Reddick, 2009). Most public pension plans give retirees compensation, such as a fixed income for the remainder of their life (Reilly, 2013). Benefits are desirable remunerations for a public sector career. Public sector employment bundles are the attraction many seek when looking for a job within the public sector. Pay is one factor many want as a stabilizer in their life. An employee is satisfied with their pay if it aligns with what they believe they are worth to do the job (Saleem & Gul, 2013).

Effects Today

Today, there are many components that have direct influences on the public sector. These influences can be constructive or adverse on the efficiency and success of competent new employees. For many Federal employees, the government workplace is still desirable, despite

recent impediments. Many are still dedicated and motivated by the desire to help others because they value their work and want to serve the public. They highly regard effort and they want others to understand the importance of their work. They understand their duty to service and incorporate a balance of focused plans in their daily work (Feeney, 2008).

Job Security

Views of the public sector play a serious role in attracting and keeping exceptional people. Likewise, these talented people are also aware that higher education has become the “new norm” of securing a job in the public sector (Feeney, 2008). If one does not have the education to secure their job, they may not gain the stability and rewards of a public sector job. In a study that observes “sector switching” (between the public and private sector) in levels of government and in economic conditions, it found that during stable economic times, government and nonprofit employees validate public sector obligation. They are not either less likely or more likely to switch sectors, as compared to their for-profit sector equals. Though, Federal, and nonprofit employees are more likely to change sectors during an economic crisis; as compared to for-profit employees (Piatak, 2017). Public sector employment is more secured than the private sector and the public sector employee is less likely to become unemployed than those in the private sector (Bellante & Link, 1981).

Salary

Another factor that has an influence on the public sector is promotions or salary. Without a higher education, one will either have a difficult time promoting to a higher job status or are not likely promote at all. Without looking to diminish the differences in conclusions and elucidations (promotion can be viewed as an effect of higher education or job matches), there is understanding that promotion plays an extensive role in influencing salaries (Addison et al.,

2014). Pay inflexibilities hinder the public sector from rewarding for performance or attracting highly skilled employees. Therefore, less skilled workers may enter the public sector out of necessity. This ultimately effects negative selection of those entering the public sector. Recent studies of public-sector payment use wage breaks, controlling for evident worker factors, such as education and age. State and local governments have therefore hired incompetent employees to fulfill a job (Schanzenbach, 2015). However, one might strongly favor pursuing higher education because “Recent empirical evidence strongly suggests that, on average, combined wages and benefits for public sector workers now outstrip compensation for comparable private sector workers” (Biggs & Richwine, 2012, p.780). When comparing public and private pay, there is little difference, however, benefit compensation is higher in the public sector. Public sector retirement benefits create an inequality (Biggs & Richwine, 2012).

Job Satisfaction

Job satisfaction is also a major factor in motivation for public service and one of the most researched topics in organizational behavior. Job satisfaction may be defined as a positive emotional response to a job situation. The result frames what the employee wants and what their standard of gratification is from the job (Katuwal & Randhawa, 2007). Intrinsic and extrinsic rewards also contribute to job satisfaction, therefore the definition that will be used for job satisfaction is a positive emotional response to a job situation that may include intrinsic and extrinsic rewards. Intrinsic and extrinsic rewards are contributing factors in job satisfaction, and job satisfaction literature has found that employees need to be motivated, productive and satisfied with their jobs in order to achieve goal attainment in their positions (Jung, 2014).

A study that examined job satisfaction for MPA graduates employed in the public, private, and non-profit sectors, resulted in no basic differences regarding work satisfaction,

however it seems MPA graduates employed in the public sector are equally satisfied as the private sector in regards to the same values. The study also observed that in previous research, MPA graduates were more satisfied with pay and promotion opportunities in the private sector (Blunt & Spring, 1991).

There are contrasting views as to why one would rather work in the public sector job as opposed to the private sector. These views involve many outlooks, including the adage that “a job is a job” regardless of its division, within the public or private sector. Another contributory reason could be that one job will pay more than the other. There are some public sector jobs that are very demanding, such as in the social work profession. Social workers often have unmanageable caseloads and often deal with difficult clients.

Demanding jobs can cause worker burnout. Burnout can cause an employee to be less productive and have negative feelings about their work. Workers that deal with burnout can also express frustration with their jobs. This can cause a high higher turnover rate than workers who are satisfied with their job. Jobs that have high demand levels can have negative effects on an employee’s health also. When an organization has a high turnover rate, this causes distress among the remaining staff members (Kim & Stoner, 2008). However, there are people who seek public sector jobs because they want to serve the public, and in different capacities, such as a job that involves public policy because they want to fulfill their prophecy of helping others. Their goal in life is to effect social change and make a difference (Lyons, Duxbury, & Higgins, 2006).

Research shows that social support and social community at work generates positive attitudes with a higher level of emotional well-being and better health. Even though there is work stress, it helps to be in an environment where employees receive support from their organization (Geisler, Berthelsen, & Muhonen, 2019). Many employees seek rewards for their work as well,

as it helps maintain job satisfaction. There are two types of rewards. There are extrinsic and intrinsic rewards.

Extrinsic rewards are tangible rewards (usually financial) that are given to employees by managers. These rewards can include pay raises, bonuses, and benefits. These rewards are usually considered “fringe benefits” because the rewards are of outside the job and others control the size of the reward and the likely-hood the reward will be granted (Ozutku, 2012). Younger generations, and Generation X specifically, are thought to work more for intrinsic rewards, demand more input on decision making, and change jobs more commonly than preceding generations (Yang & Guy, 2006).

Intrinsic rewards are psychological rewards that are related to job performance. It is the satisfaction that employees get from doing a job that is meaningful. These rewards come in the form different forms, such as feeling of achievement, responsibility, or personal and professional growth (Ozutku, 2012). Public service employees are motivated by intrinsic rewards, rather than extrinsic rewards. A sense of accomplishment and self-worth is felt from a job well done, knowing that people in need were helped. Research has concluded that public employees tend to concentrate more on intrinsic rewards (Houston, 2000).

Looking Back at Recent Financial Impacts

The Great Recession signifies the economic downward spiral that occurred between 2007 and 2009. During this recession, many job seekers partook in federal workforce programs (Wandner & Eberts, (2014). Over 30 million individuals lost their jobs and unemployment doubled from the peak of its historical high. Household net worth dropped by more than \$10 trillion, the largest loss of wealth in the fifty years since that the federal government has collected data on wealth growth (Arne et al., 2017).

The Great Recession had a devastating impact on the U.S. since the Great Depression. The Great Recession also had a harsh drop in the labor force and participation rate, which was not an improvement in the labor market (Christiano et al., 2015). The Great Recession Crises and sharp economic downturns, while undesirable, provided economists with a unique opportunity to test and hone economic theory (Mian & Sufi, 2010). The unemployment rate for those with a high school diploma was 15.8 percent in February 2010, and for those with a bachelor's degree or higher reached the highest point of 5.0 in 2009 and 2010. In contrast, by 2017 for those with a high school diploma the rate was 4.2 percent. The rate was 3.6 percent for those with a bachelor's degree or higher. This particular recession made an impact not only in the U.S., but all over the world, due to it creating an impact that took years to salvage (Cunningham, 2018). The financial crisis did not end because the market for securitized lending had not yet recovered. The recession began in 2007, after the mortgage foreclosure catastrophe and before the financial disaster. The recession ended 2009, after the financial crisis, but before the mortgage foreclosure crisis ended (Tatom, 2013). During the economic crisis, and through the strengthening of attacks on unions (on both sides; employers and governments), the public sector and private sector workers were caught in the same situation and they needed each other. There was an obvious need to rebuild active solidarity between public and private sector unions. The labor movement confronted the effects of the crisis and fought to preserve past gains and strives to advance its organizational and political power (Levine, 2009).

Program Recommendations

MPA professional degree programs were established in the United States during the 1950's and 1960's. The primary professional associations that represent public administration are the National Association of Schools of Public Affairs and Administration (NASPAA) and the

American Society for Public Administration (ASPA). The success of an MPA program highly depends on if the MPA alumni will recommend it to their family, friends, or colleagues. Their satisfaction is reflected in their attitudes, and the environment in which they work (Infeld & Adams, 2011). The likelihood of those not satisfied with the program have not secured a job that significantly has changed their lifestyle in salary or rank. Their positions have the probability of routine work and they are typically not satisfied with the overall job (Yeager et al., 2007).

Conquering Obstacles

America has advanced through many economic hardships, as mentioned above, however, if one obtains a master's degree, they may be able to advance in their career. Individuals who are interested in government often view other professional degrees as more useful to them in pursuing career goals in the public service. Moreover, public affairs, administration faculty and administrators must develop more accommodating relationships with these higher education programs (Dunn, 2004). Higher education is an environment that thrives on competition and unlikely properties (Barth, 2002).

MPA Significance

Earning an MPA degree will prepare one for a path to serve in positions of the government, including, but not limited to, county, state, and federal positions. The emphasis of the program embraces practices and principles of public administration, which includes policy and the factors involved with policy, such as the development, management, and implementation of it. Leadership is also a major concentration, with focus on leadership guidance. The mission is to advance productivity and competence in government.

An MPA degree may be helpful if one is looking to improve their overall profession. Many will choose the path of least resistance and choose the Master of Business Administration

degree (MBA) over the MPA because the MPA degree is very broad and many want a career with a specific concentration. However, the MPA should not be discounted because it serves many positive aspects. It holds a great significance because is a professional degree. It is not an academic degree, so the value is immense. There are many career options with an MPA, such as government agencies, non-profit agencies, private sector businesses, etc. With an MPA, many times there can be specializations as well, such as education, finance, management, etc. The MPA program teaches many disciplines in the mist of teaching government aspects. “MPA students derive a variety of skills, knowledge, and values from their MPA programs” (Yeager et al., 2007, p.147). The average person with an MPA degree in public administration in 1982 earned \$35,000 more than one without a degree and there was a 35 percent change if he was a manager or supervisor. MPA degrees holders tend to hold higher positions and earn a few thousand more than the average graduate degree holders (Yeager et al., 2007). MPA students develop a variety of skills, knowledge, and values from their MPA program and seek a degree for its expected benefits. They want to contribute to the world or have job security. A study found that MPA alumni believed that their education prepared them for their career, which allowed them to advance in their career (Yeager et al., 2007).

Previous Research

Concerns of lack of public service motivation in the public sector have been factors in other research studies that were conducted worldwide. For example, the research studies incorporated for this literature review have been studies that were conducted in other countries, such as Britain. These research studies involved attention to extrinsic rewards and intrinsic motivation.

Using longitudinal research, it was learned that individuals are drawn to the public sector with intrinsic rewards, the sector offered, not extrinsic rewards. It was also found that higher extrinsic rewards decrease the likelihood that intrinsically motivated individuals will accept public sector employment in the higher educational sector and the National Health Service sectors. The study also found that people that are intrinsically motivated demonstrate commitment, productivity, and performance (Georgellis, et al., 2011).

Knowledge Gaps

The knowledge gaps that are known to influence the diverse entities of the public sector in job satisfaction include the wide range of what individuals consider to be factors in job satisfaction. Understanding of job satisfaction is an abstract concept. One may be able to sense what another is experiencing in job satisfaction, however, it can be difficult to measure (Frampton, 2014). Consequently, there is a need to close the knowledge gap, however, doing so may be a difficult task since the factors can be subjective. Furthermore, data collected may be also be skewed since the factors evaluated can be objective. Therefore, new research is needed to conduct proper analysis.

Methodology

About the Study and the Research Question

This quantitative research will identify if ascertaining an MPA degree is helpful in attaining a job in the public sector, while considering job stability. An MPA degree importance is the focus because it accounts for the ability to recognize the job is obtainable. The research will be gathered from a random feedback pool of MPA graduates. The research question will be: Is obtaining an MPA degree supportive in attaining a job in the public sector, while accounting for job stability?

Independent variables

The independent variable for this research project that can be operationalized is an MPA degree. Since an MPA degree can be ambiguous in nature, it will be defined simply as a public sector of non-profit degree in management or administration.

Dependent Variables

The dependent variables for this research project need to be further operationalized. They are job stability, salary, and job satisfaction. Job stability refers to gathered measures of job stability and job decline, such as workforce changes of those who continue their jobs, leave their jobs, are re-employed, or remain unemployed (Bratberg et al., 2010). Salary refers to a (monetary) feature in an organization that is subject from control from the managerial perspective (Parrillo, 2013). Lastly, job satisfaction will be defined by linking job gratification and retention levels (DeSantis & Durst, 1996).

Participants and Research Time

In August, a voluntary survey was developed by research that consisted of 15 multiple choice questions. The participants chosen will be 100 randomly selected recent graduates of the

MPA program. Students who have recently graduated will be contacted via the list of alumni that will be provided by the alumni department. The respondents will have three weeks to mail their survey back. The survey will be open and read for completeness and interpretation one week after all the surveys are returned. The project closure will be exactly two weeks after the interpretation is read. The extent of the whole project will be six weeks.

Research Design and Data Collection

The research design is projected to be quantitative quasi-experimental, with a pre and post comparison group. This experimentation will involve a two-group comparison and randomness. The focus of this design will be to compare MPA graduates' scales of degree viewpoints. This was done to see if there is a cause and effect factor of receiving an MPA degree. The two-group comparison are those whose answers reflect negatively on the scale of multiple-choice answers. It is expected that those who answer negative receive a low income after the MPA program and do not believe their MPA degree has great satisfaction on the impact of their life. Randomness will also be a factor because 100 surveys will be mailed to 100 random, recent MPA Graduate students at Cal State University Northridge alumni of the MPA program. There can be more MPA graduate students the survey can be mailed to; however, the participants will be randomly chosen to receive the survey. The questions consisted of multiple-choice questions only. The questions were purposely chosen as multiple choice to strengthen the validity of the answer. Open-ended questions were not an option. The survey consisted of two demographic questions, age, and gender since the weights of sex and age were practical to use as demographic markers. The three proceeding questions consisted of field of work before, during and after the program. The next question asks about current field of work and career preferences after graduation. The next question involves salary and employment position. The next two

questions asked about the salary during the MPA program and after the MPA program. The next two questions referenced job stability. The next question asked if it is believed the MPA program afforded job satisfaction. The last question asked if one believes their MPA degree has had a great impact on their lifestyle.

The survey questions will be asked in a logical format for the surveyor to recognize if there is a linkage of obtaining an MPA degree as a result of factors, such as job stability, decent pay, and job satisfaction. This pattern will be a decisive element in deciphering the answers. However, the limitation of the survey is that the measurement of the variable of job satisfaction may be subjective. Everyone has different measurements of satisfaction and in this multiple-choice survey, satisfaction will be based on the multiple-choice answers, which may limit some perspectives. Data will be analyzed from the answers received from the completed surveys. The study sample is not a representation of the entire population of MPA Graduates, however, the purpose is to gather a controlled example of answers in order to determine if the MPA Graduate program is an option for those looking to expand their career through the vessel of education, while gaining benefits such as stability, decent pay, and job satisfaction. The sample is projected to deliver evidence that MPA Graduates are in demand for available jobs in the city of Los Angeles, centered on the fact that they are either currently working for the public sector or are waiting to be hired.

Reliability and Validity

The research project design was established to accept reliability failures. One such failure can include dependence upon truthful answers. Research bears the risk of competency failures. Surveyors may answer untruthfully, either consciously or unconsciously. However, since the questions asked are multiple choice, the answers have less room for ambiguous responses, and

are easier to interpret by the researcher. The perspective of each MPA graduate is likely to be different, which can account for answers that are viewed as unbiased.

Additionally, the responding surveyors may affect the concluding consequence of answers leading to the outcome. This may be for different reasons, such as the MPA respondents have become successful in their work life and this may lead to “positive” answers on the conclusion. Likewise, the respondents may not be successful and respond “negatively”. Both situations may not reflect truthful positions.

Conclusion

The public sector and the private sector are both enhancing places of employment and both have their incentives and drawbacks. However, the public sector may draw more MPA students due to their perks and may attract many people for all the enhancements the job offers as well. As previously stated, some of those reasons include stability, benefits (such as medical, dental, retirement savings, etc.), and the desire to help people. All these factors are considered the backbone of public sector employment, and discovery is needed to reconnoiter if these aspects balance out. However, the public sector has not always been regarded in a positive light. America's financial distresses throughout history have impacted the public, foundations, businesses, and organizations. Further research is needed to conduct an accurate representation for the measures of satisfaction of MPA graduates.

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Appendix A - Survey

1. What is your age?

18-24	25-34
35-44	45-54
55-64	Above 64

2. What is your gender?

Male Female Other (specify)

3. What kind of field were you working in **before** the MPA Program?

Private Sector	Public Sector
Not employed	Other (specify)

4. What kind of field were you working in **during** the MPA Program?

Private Sector	Public Sector
Not employed	Other (specify)

5. What kind of field did you plan on working in **after** the MPA program concluded?

Private Sector	Public Sector
Not employed	Other (specify)

6. What kind of field were you working in **now**?

Private Sector	Public Sector
Not employed	Other (specify)

7. What was your career **preference after** graduation?

Private Sector	Public Sector
Not employed	Other (specify)

8. Did you receive a salary increase **in your current position** after graduation?

Yes

No

9. What was your salary **before the MPA program**?

Not employed

\$10,000 \$50,000

\$20,000 \$60,000

\$30,000 \$70,000

\$40,000 \$80,000

Any amount higher than \$80,000

10. What is your salary **since the MPA program**?

Not employed

\$10,000 \$50,000

\$20,000 \$60,000

\$30,000 \$70,000

\$40,000 \$80,000

Any amount higher than \$80,000

11. Did you have job stability (the ability to keep the same job) in your previous job?

Yes

No

12. Did you have job stability in your current job?

Yes

No

13. Do you believe you were **satisfied** in your work position **before** you earned your MPA degree?

Yes

No

14. Has the MPA program afforded you to feel **satisfied** in your **current** job?

Yes

No

15. Do you think your MPA degree has had a great impact on the **satisfaction** of your lifestyle, such as being able to afford luxury items (cars, vacations, etc.)?

Yes

No