

Motivations for Public Service and Community Engagement in the University of the Philippines Open University

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Abstract

The paper identified the motivating factors of the University of the Philippines Open University stakeholders in doing public service and community engagement. The exploratory sequential mixed-method design was used in this study. The study involved two phases of data collection and analyses; qualitative phase and quantitative phase. Interviews were conducted for the qualitative phase, and then, results from the qualitative phase became the basis for the conduct of the survey; which is the quantitative phase of the study. The study was participated by samples from the internal and external stakeholders of the university. The study found that individual advocacies and ideologies and the university's positive public reputation in excellence were the main motivators of its stakeholders to get engaged in its current service programmes. Meanwhile, the social relevance of service initiatives and a strengthened sense of service in the university were factors that can increase their motivation to engage in future endeavours. Altogether, concepts of altruism, spirituality, institutional trust, mutuality of benefits, culture, and organisational arrangements proved to encourage stakeholders to participate in public service initiatives. The study recommended that the identified motivating factors to be institutionalised in the university through appropriate policies and programmes to sustain stakeholders' motivation and address their identified concerns in their participation in the university's service programme.

Keywords: *Community engagement, extension, public service, motivation, higher education, open and distance learning*

1. Introduction

The University of the Philippines Open University (UPOU) is the fifth constituent university (CU) of the University of the Philippines (UP) System. UP is described as a graduate, research, and public service national university mandated by the Philippine law Republic Act 9500, also known as the UP Charter. As the national university in the Philippines, UP aims to be a leading higher education institution (HEI) in the Philippines and beyond in providing graduate academic courses, research and creative work initiatives, and public service programmes. The UP Charter describes public service in UP as voluntary activities; practical or educational, that benefit both the public and government agencies while serving the people in general with consistent standards of quality (University of the Philippines, n.d., p. 1). UPOU, as one of UP's CUs, envisions itself as a leader in teaching and learning during the digital age and in the execution of open learning and distance education in the Philippines, while seeking to provide wider access to quality higher education (University of the Philippines Open University, 2015). This vision is hoped to be

achieved through the provision of degree and non-degree programmes in various disciplines alongside research and service efforts. As a matter of philosophy by its leaders, UPOU considers public service at the core of its mission which cuts across its various functions (University of the Philippines Open University, 2016).

For the extension services, UPOU implemented various non-academic services and community programmes for its constituents, linkages and partners; operating with individuals, groups, and institutions, including massive open online courses. While UPOU's efforts are growing in working for and with various internal and external individuals and organisations, it has yet to ascertain the stimuli for the stakeholders to engage in the public services it organised. As the Public Service Motivation theory suggested, multiple factors push and motivate people, including those in higher education institutions, to act in the public domain aiming in benefiting others and society (Perry et al. 2010); varying across the range from the individual to the organisational and community level. If these motivating factors are identified, appropriate policies in UPOU as an open and distance e-learning institution can be instituted. The revised policies may afterwards provide responsive mechanisms that encourage and sustain the participation and involvement of the university's stakeholders in its public service initiatives. Consequently, the fulfilment of the mutual goals benefiting both the university's stakeholders and the university itself can be achieved. Towards this end, improved societal contributions of the university to national and global development and transformation; as a public service university, are expected as well.

2. Literature Review

As the life force of any organisation, the missions of higher education institutions (HEIs) are multi-layered and described as dynamic and fluid to enable the HEIs to respond to changes in society while achieving their targets. Through the elements of philosophies, education policies, and societal and institutional cultures, HEIs have a multiplicity of missions which have evolved across time (Scott, 2006). HEI's missions were characterised as threefold: to provide teaching, research, and service.

The service provision, specifically, has been referred to under various terms; including outreach, extension, service, service learning, third mission, engagement, and public service. The University of the Philippines (UP) uses the term 'public service' to generally refer to its service missions and programmes, as stipulated in the UP Charter and university official documents. Public service was described as a significant contributor to the achievement of the HEI missions (Aquiling-Dalisay, 2007; Boyer, 1990) and the liaison of university functions such as teaching, research and service (Cronin & Sjogren, 1998; Lynton, 1995; Scott, 2006; Srisa-an, 2014). It also necessitates the utilisation of the faculty's professional expertise and is considered a professional activity (Lynton, as cited in Cronin & Sjogren, 1998; Lynton, 1995), that responds to societal realities and problems (Lynton, 1995; Moore, 2014; Wagner, 1993). With the evolution of higher education across eras, twenty-first-century universities were depicted as adopting one general mission: service to the public supported by teaching, learning, and new research discoveries (Scott, 2006).

Unfortunately, HEI's efforts to serve the public shall be in vain if only a few of the internal and external stakeholders operationalise the vision to create value in the community through public service. The HEIs need an adequate amount of participants who will continue supporting the cause individually with a public service motivation (PSM). The PSM is a trait whereby one would act to help other people for the sake of good instead of self-interest (Perry et al., 2010, p. 687). Identifying the push factors of PSM from existing volunteers is crucial to increase the desirability of participating in public service. Existing literatures were used to determine factors of PSM. The Prosocial behaviour theory suggested that helping others tends to improve oneself in the process without needing any extrinsic reward; whereby most often, the one helping benefits more from the helping process (Schroeder & Graziano, 2014). They also implied that this behaviour, especially when applied and demonstrated more often, increases the helper's sense of self-worth, social acceptance, and social connection with others.

The Social Exchange theory conversely justified that the act of helping involves a relationship between two parties with consideration of the benefits and risks associated with helping for both the helper and the party being helped. In other words, the theory suggested that one will not participate in public service if the act does not benefit the person more than what the person needs to spend. This concept may apply more to organisations, which have multiple requests or a limited budget to participate in public service activities, than individuals. The theory identified extrinsic elements which can be used for assessing the exchange and service relationship: rewards (Perry et al., 2010), costs, profits, and equity and distributive justice (Redmond, 2015). In this regard, the utilitarian and service incentive systems as motives for doing public service are important to be included in the assessment to be able to accurately address the multiple motives and situations of doing public service (Gill, 2013b; Viljoen, 2014).

The empathy-altruism hypothesis alternately discussed that feelings of empathy and compassion for others produce motivation to work for others' welfare. This hypothesis emphasised the importance of developing empathy for others which enables a better understanding of others' situations (Lishner & Stocks, 2007). According to the culture theory instead, decisions, relationships, and activities are powered by social beings and a group with distinctive ideas, beliefs, values, and knowledge; called culture, commonly shared by its members (Serrat, 2017). According to this concept, a member of a cultural community may have high motivation to serve another member. For example, an indigenous Filipino trait, *bayaniban*, or the spirit of civic unity, cooperation, mutual help and concern among Filipinos, has been practised in Filipino communities throughout history, even before colonization (Ang, 1979). Drawing from this theory, the sense of concern for others as part of Filipino culture can push people and institutions to help others and society.

As espoused by the community development framework, believing in and developing the capacities of the community to participate in the whole process of influencing changes to their situation are important to be facilitated through service programmes. This process leads to people and community empowerment (Manalili, 1990), which is also a core objective of the social work profession (International Federation of Social Workers, 2014). To encourage more active participation, participatory mechanisms must be made available to the community at every stage. In return, the people are capable of solving their problems, leading to the feeling of fulfilment in terms of their rights to self-determination, participation, and the human rights in general, to freely pursue life development (East, 2016; International Federation of Social Workers, 2018; Manalili, 1990). This ideology can also be a form of spirituality or the 'greater power' that people believe in, which sustains hope and enable people to engage (Bernardo et al., 2014).

Regardless, although UPOU holds vast potential, UPOU has a small population of faculty, staff, and students; leading it to be known as one of the smallest in the UP system. The modest size of UPOU enabled flexibility and agility in adjusting to various changes and needs (Lumanta, 2014). However, the small number of faculty and staff also means more challenges in running various programmes and units while pursuing high-quality standards. The situation is particularly true for some teaching personnel that have to divide between conducting close monitoring for practicum students and other roles in the university besides teaching. Consequently, the learning experience of students was limited in addition to compromising the teaching quality and the well-being of the teachers (Taylan, 2015). This multiplicity of roles among teachers and staff became a continuing concern in the effectiveness of task execution (UP Padayon, 2017); restricting the ability to maximize opportunities for equally important tasks such as research, self-enhancement, innovation, and of course, public service.

With UPOU's efforts in working for and with various internal and external parties, the diverse and multiple motivations that push people and institutions to engage with UPOU as an online and distance learning institution are necessary to be identified and analysed. This research will help UPOU to institutionalise systems that can sustain the participation of its stakeholders and encourage more actors in these endeavours, therefore realising its organisational mission and mandate as a public service university. The literature review which discussed various theories and frameworks on the drive behind public service motivation guided the research in investigating the factors and hindrances of PSM among UPOU's stakeholders at various levels and forms.

3. Research Method

This section presents the ways the study was conducted through discussions of the research design, population, data collection methods, and data analysis.

3.1. Research Design

The research used the Exploratory Sequential Mixed Methods Design. The research explored the public service of UPOU, given the limited literature about the subject matter before the current study. As it applied a sequential design, the research was conducted in two phases; starting with an exploratory qualitative phase before the confirmatory quantitative phase. The purpose of the qualitative phase is to explore and discuss in-depth the various perceptions of public service by the leaders of the university and its partner organisations. The existing theories related to public service motivation (PSM) as discussed in the literature review became the bases for the construction of questions in the first phase. Drawing from the results of the first phase, the succeeding quantitative phase was used to test, validate, and generalise the initial findings from the qualitative phase. The second phase measured the various dimensions of the problem raised in the first phase within a larger population of stakeholders. Data drawn from the first phase were used to analyse the statistical results in the second phase, guided by post-positivism theory.

3.2. Population

The population target for the study's data gathering was UPOU's stakeholders; external and internal. Following the research design discussed above, samples were chosen from different categories of the population for each phase. For the first phase, the population included UPOU administrators, coordinators from UPOU of selected public service projects, and coordinators from partner institutions and communities of the same projects. These interviewees were targeted based on their actual position and involvement in the organisation and programmes. For the second phase, the samples who participated in the survey involved 223 members of UPOU; composed of teaching personnel, staff, and students, and 211 external stakeholders or project participants from the selected projects, who were mostly not part of UPOU.

Flagship public service projects executed by three (3) faculties of study in UPOU were chosen for this study; highlighted for documentation and assessment. Minimum criteria used for the selection of the projects were: (i) the existence of a documented agreement between UPOU or UPOU unit and partner organisation or community, for example, a memorandum of agreement or understanding; (ii) at least three years of project's existence as of the starting conduct of the study; and (iii) project involvement of UPOU personnel such as teachers and staff. Aside from the chosen projects from the three faculties of study, one flagship university-wide public service project was also documented and assessed in the study, applying the same set of criteria.

3.3. Data collection

The first phase required the use of qualitative methods through semi-structured interviews. It provided an in-depth understanding of UPOU's public service system based on the visions and experiences of UPOU's leaders and its partner organisations who were involved in the university's decision-making and management of selected public service projects. Meanwhile, an online self-administered survey was employed for the second phase of the study to gather perceptions of the larger population of UPOU stakeholders. The survey served to triangulate the findings from interviews and make necessary generalisations in the analysis. Guided by the data collected from the interviews, the survey covered questions on similar topics as the first phase. The survey was conducted separately for two groups of respondents: UPOU internal community and public service project participants.

This inclusion of both internal and external stakeholders ensured that the chosen public service projects were represented well by their respective project participants who come from various locations and contexts. The questionnaire was sent through electronic mail to all the target respondents from each of the survey groups who meet the criterion outlined, then returned in the same manner. Aligned with the explanatory nature of this research, the questionnaire included open-ended questions on relevant topics which provided the respondents with the opportunity to explain the choices they made in the preceding questions. An open-ended question was asked at the end of each major topic, as well as at the end of the questionnaire itself which allowed the respondents to share their perceptions on other important topics which were not covered in the questionnaire.

3.4. Data Analysis

Following the sequential mixed-methods research design, the data drawn from each phase of data collection were analysed separately. The qualitative data was analysed using thematic analysis which determined various codes and themes within data responses. The numerous transcripts were read and reviewed to create codes consistent with the research questions. Excerpts with similar codes were categorised together before patterns or themes were drawn from the analysis. Throughout the process, interviewees' own words and narratives were maintained to ensure accurate analysis and interpretations.

The qualitative data across the respondent groups were explained and compared in terms of the themes identified. Responses for each question from various respondents were compared, which showed similarities and differences in the perceptions of the interviewees. Guided by the theories and concepts from the literature and framework, the researcher's interpretation of the lessons and insights from the interviewees' narrations were discussed for each code and category; with an emphasised effort to maintain the same wordings or terms provided from the narration. These interpretations provided spaces for further exploration of categories and themes through the quantitative second phase.

For the second phase; after undergoing screening and normality check on the data sets, descriptive statistical analysis was conducted on each variable of data sets for UPOU respondents and project participants, before being compared to determine the similarities, differences, and observed patterns of perceptions of the two respondent groups. Further analysis through inferential statistics was performed using correlation analysis which enabled the identification of the relationships between the research variables and the strength of these relationships. The consistency scores of respondents' perceptions within various aspects of UPOU's public service were also displayed.

After the data-gathering process was completed, the findings from both qualitative and quantitative phases were discussed in terms of the extent and ways these results converged, diverged, or related to each other. Content areas presenting similarities in both qualitative and quantitative data were highlighted. Additionally, differences in dimensions within one set of results from the other data sets were examined and discussed. The whole process of comparing and contrasting the data from two sources is called triangulation (Creswell 2009; Newcomer et al. 2015), which they suggested to produce valid and credible final results. The results were synthesised.

In the effort to further the research validity, peer examination through pilot testing of questionnaires, data collection from several sources, the involvement of more stakeholders from various backgrounds, and guidance from the research supervisors who are seasoned researchers in the field, have contributed to a more holistic picture of the research problem. In terms of research reliability, the study developed a research design that enabled multiple levels of validation of responses from multiple stakeholders. Moreover, the collected data; after undergoing regular checking and review, was managed and processed by using software for data consolidation and analysis. These mechanisms ensured that the study and its results are consistent and dependable.

4. Findings

The findings from the study were categorised into two types following their respective phases: qualitative data and quantitative data.

4.1. Findings from the Qualitative Phase

The interviewees in the qualitative were mentioned by their position instead of their name for privacy and to make accurate analyses by relating the answers with the respondents' experience. The data collected were grouped into similar themes before being identified as the following motivating factors for UPOU stakeholders to engage in public service initiatives:

Public service mandate of the university

The UP Charter specifies the goal of UP and its CUs. According to **UPOU Administrator 3**, the UP Charter encourages him/her to respond to the public service call as part of its mandate. He/she also mentioned that although the policy was outlined, the execution need to be thoroughly planned due to being provided with *no existing template*. The UP Charter also indicated UPOU's position as a leader in public service efforts among HEIs.

Service initiative as part of a personal and professional ideology and advocacy

People's advocacies and how they see the world push them to work with communities. Accordingly, doing public service helps members of the university to advance their own calling. Some other interviewees also explained this idea in other ways, such as **UPOU Project Leader 1** who mentioned that he/she and the people alike were not *materialistic* when deciding to participate in public service, but instead, they proceed with pure personal and professional interest to help those in *need*. Meanwhile, **Partner Organisation 2**; as a representative of the receiving end of the public service, mentioned that the public service projects fulfilled what they *want* to achieve.

Psychological reward or feeling of fulfilment

Related to one's ideologies as motivation, service programmes can provide psychological rewards or a sense of fulfilment for the UPOU personnel doing public service. For example, **UPOU Project Leader 1** mentioned that public service rewards intrinsically, letting the benefactors clean the *toxicity of work* and *enjoy* more than extrinsically such as extracurricular points. **UPOU Administrator 1** also expressed a similar idea, whereby he considered public service as a *personal* preference, just like choosing to work at UPOU instead of other institutions. He continued by describing that public service gave his life *purpose* and *meaning* aside from rewards either materialistically or psychologically.

Service to people as being innate in one's life in UP and Philippine culture

Some interviewees such as **UPOU Administrator 2** explicitly mentioned the spirit of public service and a people-oriented mindset were directly *ingrained* into them through the education and evolution of UP which showed the university's relevance and responsiveness to the needs of society. The same interviewee also believed that public service is a responsibility of being '*Iskolar ng Bayan*' or Scholars of the Nation. Additionally, with UPOU's history of establishment in consideration, three of the respondents explained that UPOU has always put the public; especially those in marginal situations, at the centre of its operations. Being the pioneer and leading open and distance university in the Philippines, the interviewees explained that UPOU needed to develop ways to help out other institutions while always considering the situations of the public. The other interviewees also mentioned that UPOU does not only do public service as part of its functions; but instead, as an ongoing journey since they were UP students. They said that the intention of helping the community was always there, just as the service culture was embedded in Filipinos.

Positive perception and reputation of excellence of UP and UPOU

Interviewees mentioned that the positive perception of UPOU and UP facilitates the development of trust among partners of UPOU, as mentioned in the previously identified factor. **UPOU Project Leader 1** conforms to this notion by believing that it was their task as a representative of UPOU to carry the *reputation* in community service forward since the community trust their *expertise*.

Well-packaged public service programme

Interviewees, from both UPOU and partner organisations, said that the public service programme should be considered carefully in terms of its goal, approach, expected impact, and facilitative system. **UPOU Administrator 3**, for example, mentioned that behind every public service project, they crafted mechanisms which may *excite and encourage participation* from UPOU's community members; particularly students, to become part of the initiatives regardless of the locations. Well-thought projects also attract potential partners. **UPOU's Partner Organisation 3** were very appealed to *the innovative ideas* sent to them as a proposal for the public service project. The clarity and confidence of the project concept motivated them to take part in it.

More balanced work functions

One interviewee, **UPOU Administrator 1** explained that various tasks in the university can hinder people from pursuing and giving their commitment to public service initiatives, especially due to the time and work needed for the *huge class size* related to their teaching task. Another three interviewees also highlighted similar issues; mentioning that time, energy, and focus are essential when it comes to doing public service, usually more than what it takes for doing teaching or research. From these statements, a balanced distribution of tasks would increase their motivation to join in public service.

Provision of load or academic credit for public service

The interviewees mentioned that academic crediting or loading system arrangement can help in motivating UPOU personnel to become more involved in service programmes. The act signifies that the university recognises the importance of efforts and expertise given by the personnel in public service. Furthermore, they explained that it also legitimises the participation and hard work of UPOU personnel in public service. **UPOU Administrator 2** mentioned that this idea is doable since UPOU has managed to make the loading system available to Massive Online Open Courses (MOOCs).

Compensation or honorarium offered

Some interviewees shared that financial rewards such as honorarium have encouraged people to a certain extent. Their service and time spent are monetarily rewarded while implementing service programmes.

Recognition and other non-monetary incentives

UPOU interviewees narrated that the faculty or staff can include their service initiatives for existing recognition or awards and evaluation systems in the university. Some interviewees such as **UPOU Administrator 2** explained that these existing systems require revisions, though, to encourage more people to participate.

4.2. Findings from the Quantitative Phase

For the qualitative phase, there were two types of motivators which were asked of the respondents: (1) motivational factors in actual public service engagement; and (2) factors that will increase motivation to participate in future service endeavours. A five-point Likert scale ranging from (1) '*Does not motivate at all*' to (5) '*Strongly Motivates*' was used to rate each motivational factor which was drawn from the interviews.

Motivational factors for actual service engagement

Among the identified motivational factors, *service initiative as part of one’s advocacy and ideology* was the mostly agreed motivational factor for the UPOU respondents ($M=4.57, SD=.720$). One respondent explained, “the topic in the project is my burning passion as I am a public servant”. *Psychological reward or feeling of fulfilment* factor ($M=4.35, SD=.795$) followed the tally. Effects on those who are involved in the project were emphasised in this factor, with one respondent mentioning “the hope to inspire others” being part of the project was motivating. This perception was also shared by the project participants from the external stakeholders of UPOU. The perceived effects of the project and the psychological reward drawn from the service programme were the factors that were highly agreed to by the project participants. “It developed [a] sense of pride and honor [sic], make [sic] a difference in public service in the community”, one respondent shared. Another respondent explained the amazing feeling of fulfilment when one helps others.

Table 1 Motivational factors in actual service initiatives

Motivational Factors	Mean (M)		Standard Deviation (SD)	
	UPOU	Project Participants	UPOU	Project Participants
Public service mandate of the university / Organisational and professional growth	4.02	4.77	.954	.617
Recognition and other non-monetary incentives	3.52	4.39	1.110	.865
Service initiative as part of the personal and professional ideology and advocacy	4.57	4.59	.720	.699
Psychological reward/ feeling of fulfilment	4.35	4.63	.795	.699
Service to people as being innate in one’s life in UP and Philippine culture	4.24	N/A	.874	N/A
Good image and reputation of excellence of UP and UPOU	4.11	4.82	.924	.547
More balanced work functions in UPOU	3.83	N/A	.950	N/A
Well-packaged public service programme in UPOU	3.76	4.67	1.058	.652
UPOU’s provision of load/ academic credit for the initiative	3.52	N/A	1.130	N/A
Compensation/ honorarium offered	3.22	N/A	1.263	N/A

Meanwhile, the *good or positive image and reputation of UP and UPOU* factor had the strongest effect in motivating the public to get engaged ($M=4.82, SD=.547$). The public’s positive perception of UP and UPOU was confirmed in the respondents’ explanations. One respondent shared, “the name speaks for itself; being part of UP is such a great opportunity”. *Professional and organisational growth that can result from the service project* factor followed the list ($M=4.77, SD=.617$). One project participant explained, “[being a] public servant is the nature of my work, so I need this engagement to enhance my skills to be a public servant, to update my knowledge in giving service to others”. On the other hand, compensation or honorarium was perceived as the least motivating factor for UPOU respondents ($M=3.22, SD=1.263$) followed by *recognition and other incentives* to be received. The latter was also perceived by the project participants to be the least motivational factor for them ($M=4.39, SD=.865$).

Other motivational factors for actual engagement

In addition to the motivational factors that were assessed, the respondents provided other motivational factors that pushed them to participate in service initiatives of UPOU. *The team involved in the service initiatives* was revealed by UPOU respondents as one additional motivational factor; particularly the project team’s responsiveness and alertness to address arising issues in a project. Meanwhile, a few project participants mentioned that the online nature and innovativeness of the UPOU service projects were a

huge pull factor for them. Due to the digital concept, the programmes were made to be easily accessible and self-paced which allowed flexibility for the participants to juggle the programme together with their usual work and personal arrangements. The projects were also free of charge for those who wanted to avail of the programmes, which encouraged more people to join in. Some also narrated that they were influenced to join the service projects from recommendations by their workmates, families, and other peers.

Factors to Increase Motivation for Future Service Endeavours

Almost all respondents from the project participants group; totalling 98.3 per cent, shared that they want to engage in future service projects of UPOU.

UPOU members perceived *the social relevance of service initiatives* as the highest factor that motivated them to engage in future endeavours ($M=4.49$, $SD=.707$). One respondent indicated that they will engage more if service initiatives are within the advocacies of the university and their personal advocacies. Another suggested the need for UPOU's public service to "focus on those who are most vulnerable poor communities" or "improve the lives of those in the margins" for UPOU's public service. A *strengthened or renewed sense of service or service culture in the university* was the factor that followed the tally ($M=4.43$, $SD=.723$). A participant shared that the "perspective that public service is part of the everyday life of any academic" may need to (re)surface in the university.

A *sustained and well-planned project* followed closely in the rank as a highly motivational factor for future endeavours. One respondent shared about the need to integrate a "robust theory of change, indicating the higher goal and the means of achieving such goals through UPOU public service". One respondent mentioned that service initiative; when appropriately planned and applied with the theory of change, should have relevance to academic programmes, indicating the relationship between instruction, research, and service. Furthermore, one project participant shared that their involvement in the project made them feel that they were part of the change process while another mentioned the dedication of UPOU to its activities and ample time provided to perform various tasks make them want to sustain their involvement.

UPOU respondents perceived that other physical supports coming from the university could also motivate them such as transportation and accessibility, food, temporary shelter, and protective gear. These forms of support can provide them with a sense of assurance in their safety and health while they perform public service. On the other hand, among the mentioned factors, *higher compensation* was perceived to be the least motivating for respondents' engagement in future service endeavours ($M=3.73$, $SD=1.051$), followed by a *new award or recognition system for public service* ($M=3.89$, $SD=.869$). These results were similar to the motivational factors in actual engagements, where extrinsic incentives were seen as the least motivating.

Other factors to increase motivation to participate were suggested by the survey respondents, such as *sufficient information and communication to stakeholders* such as the alumni about UPOU's service opportunities and the *need for a dedicated unit in UPOU for the public service programme of the university* would better facilitate their involvement. These suggestions touched on the management system and structure of public service planning. Also touching on the management system was a suggestion to provide *a mechanism to recognise and identify the capacities of possible stakeholders and appropriate service engagements*, which were mentioned during the interviews.

5. Discussion

The Public Service Motivation theory speaks of why people engaged in public service (Perry et al., 2010). The theory can also explain the opposite: what hinders people from getting engaged and how these can be addressed. In the study, the motivational factors raised by respondents from both interviews and surveys can be categorised in various dimensions: individual, university system, and the public in general.

Individual factors

The most prominent motivator for UPOU was the personal and professional advocacies of the respondents, which informed their participation in service initiatives. UPOU's external stakeholders mentioned that they were motivated to engage with UPOU on service projects when their objectives and advocacies fit with those of UPOU's service project. The empathy–altruism perspective, concepts of prosocial behaviour, and self-rewards taken from the Social Exchange theory explain the above findings. The desire to contribute to societal changes and concern for the welfare of others can also push stakeholders to engage in public service programmes. UPOU's service initiatives are therefore seen to help in achieving these advocacies and causes. Public service can also be considered an expression of the spirituality of involved parties; the greater power people believe in that gives and sustains hope. Given these results, identifying the advocacies, ideologies, and a feeling of concern for others among the stakeholders is necessary to be considered for the development of UPOU's service mission and programmes.

The study also identified professional growth and psychological reward or sense of fulfilment resulting from service programmes, whereby; as initially explained above, when they can anticipate benefits from participating in service endeavours, they are likely to engage. On the other hand, some respondents did not agree with this concept of rewards as motivational factors. The difference in the perceptions of research participants about enhancing UPOU's award and incentive systems suggests that participation in service initiatives is not universally seen as endeavours that need to be well-incentivised or awarded, especially in terms of financial benefits. However, other types of incentives can also help motivate people which may not be in monetary form; such as personnel promotion (Gill, 2013a, 2013b; Viljoen, 2014) and psychological rewards and benefits such as a deepened sense of meaning, purpose, and self-worth, as espoused by the Prosocial Behavior theory (Klein, 2017; Schroeder & Graziano, 2014), as cited during the interviews.

The above discussions suggest a closer consideration of the motivational factors for both the university and the public which has been suggested by the Social Exchange theory. By doing so, an increase in mutual support and participation of UPOU's stakeholders in UPOU's service programmes can be achieved.

Organisational factors

During the interviews, the leaders from UPOU's partner organisations emphasised the importance of the alignment between their organisational objectives and UPOU's service programme objectives. The respondents also identified UPOU policies and Philippine government policies, particularly on procedures that affect ease in partnership building and project reporting. Some of the identified motivational factors suggest a revision of existing UPOU policies or the creation of new ones: reflecting a balanced workload of UPOU personnel, a well-planned UPOU service programme, an increased number of human resources, and an improved loading system of UPOU's personnel. These changes will give staff enough time to perform multiple roles and balance their work functions.

A well-packaged public service programme in UPOU; including its goals and perceived impacts, was also considered by the respondents as a motivational factor, especially by the participants of the selected service projects. Part of this motivational factor is the programme's innovativeness and the public's free and open access to UPOU's service initiatives through the use of information and communication technology (ICT). These factors facilitated the public's unhampered participation and smoothen the flow of the service programme. Moreover, this identified factor endorsed the niche of UPOU as an

open and distance e-learning institution in making its programmes more accessible to the public through the use of ICT and networked technologies. This finding also reaffirms UPOU's worldview and mission of contributing to social transformation through its programmes, including public service.

For future service endeavours of UPOU, the research respondents suggested various logistical support to those involved in service activities such as the following themes: transportation, housing, access to the network, and safety and health. These suggestions can address the hindrances to participating in service programmes, especially within the context of crises like the Covid-19 pandemic. A functional management structure; including a dedicated team for public service, was also suggested to be created as a motivational factor. These suggested organisational factors such as functional management structure, award system, and logistical support can be categorised under institutional infrastructure and architecture as an important element in doing and measuring the efficacy of public service (Wynne & Morris, 2018).

Fulfilment of the mandate of UPOU was also considered a motivator, especially by the UPOU internal stakeholders. Through the UPOU's service programme, UP's legal obligation stated in the UP Charter and UPOU's roles specified in the Open and Distance Learning Act were seen as motivational factors for UPOU members to engage in service programmes, whereby such act reflects a fulfilment of the university's responsibilities as a government institution. This motivator can be categorised under the institutional rewards or benefits that can be drawn from UPOU's involvement in service as explained by the Social Exchange theory (Redmond, 2015).

The results of the study also emphasised the need for a gradual shift in institutional culture for all stakeholders to embrace perspectives of public service and engagement. The shift is a necessary ingredient that can support and motivate stakeholders to partake in service and engagement (Noel & Earwicker, 2015). These institutional changes can cover various areas; such as organisational mission; support packages; active participation and leadership mechanisms for faculty community members and leaders; staffing and structural changes; funding; and finally, reporting, review, and evaluation (Furco et al., 2009; Gelmon et al., 2005).

Community or the public

From the points of view of UPOU's partner organisations and service project participants, the reputation of excellence and positive image of UP and UPOU was the prominent motivational factor for them to engage with UPOU on public service projects. Such high regard from the public for UPOU can be a result of their observed excellence in UP's programs and accomplishments including UPOU's public service. Based on the projects that these external stakeholders have participated in, UPOU may have been considered excellent experts in the following areas of interest: child rights, social development, education and teaching methodologies, research, ecology, sustainable development, and the use of ICT. Furthermore, the public's high regard for UP and UPOU is also seen to attract more partners and stakeholders to join its service-oriented causes in the future. Social Exchange theory explains that the public's trust, coupled with the concept of social reward as motivators for the university and the public to do service, can improve the organisation's social relationship. In this process, mutuality and reciprocity of benefits between both parties; derived from public service, can be fulfilled (Guanzon, 2014; Moore, 2014).

Filipinos and UP were also considered as naturally service-oriented by the research respondents, where engagement in cause-oriented activities comes as instinctive. The respondents suggested that this sense of service in the university and among Filipinos may need to be awakened or strengthened to enjoin more people to participate in UPOU's future service endeavours. This perception is well aligned with empathy, altruism and spirituality concepts, prosocial behaviour theory, and cultural theory. These theories and concepts explain that interest in achieving society's welfare and improved life may be considered part of values, knowledge, lifestyle, and mission that are realised through *bayanihan* or spirit of civic unity, cooperation, mutual help, and concern among Filipinos (Ang, 1979; Serrat, 2017). Additionally, the interviewees narrated that the functions and purposes of higher education can be historically traced to universities' responsiveness to societal realities and conditions. These efforts formed the service culture of

UP and UPOU. Sustaining and strengthening this service culture will help UPOU in motivating more stakeholders to get engaged in more service programmes that can likewise sustain UPOU's positive image and reputation of excellence, a prominent public service motivational factor among the public.

The results of the study show that these factors can help address the identified issues which hinder people from participating in service endeavours. These factors can serve as policy recommendations for UPOU's public service. Thus, there is a need to develop appropriate policies for public service that will not only define the public service directions but will also make the discussed motivational factors available in the university for public service. The motivational factors identified by the respondents are not exclusive and separate from the others. Some relate to or are affected by other factors in varying ways and degrees. Thus, the varied perceptions of the respondents on public service motivation suggest the importance of taking a holistic look at the public service system that considers various elements of the organisation, as explained by the systems theory (Johnson et al., 1964). According to the theory, these motivational factors and organisational elements include vision and goals, resources, structure, access, innovation, policies, strategies, output, and the needs of the communities including its partner organisations.

Using these motivational factors to engage in the development and improvement of public service highlights the significance placed by the organisation on the feedback and participation of its stakeholders. A participatory approach in programme development and management as suggested by the community-based development framework can help in creating multi-stakeholder feedbacking mechanisms (Manalili, 1990; Wirutomo, 2014). Categories for motivational factors can be created for a more strategic system of institutionalising motivational mechanisms for public service in UPOU, which hopes to motivate and provide support to the communities within and beyond the university, in public service engagement. This categorisation can also expand opportunities for UPOU; notwithstanding the political and socio-economic context of the university, in the following terms: (i) legal mandate and university directions; (ii) content, theme, and methodology of service programme; (iii) academic or career development; (iv) monetary and recognition; (v) organisational history and culture; (vi) opportunities for leadership and active participation; and (vii) administrative and logistical mechanisms.

6. Conclusion

Following an exploratory sequential mixed-methods design, the study was able to identify the motivational factors that encourage UPOU and its stakeholders to engage in public service. The factors were identified at three different levels; individual, university, and community. Consistent with the concepts of altruism and spirituality, one's advocacies and ideologies was the greatest motivator for UPOU's internal members. Conversely, positive public perception and the reputation of excellence in the university; driven by the public's trust, were the main motivators for UPOU's external community to get engaged. The social relevance of service initiatives and a strengthened sense of service in the university are factors that can increase the motivation of the UPOU community to engage in future endeavours. These factors were recommended to be institutionalised as university policies to provide facilitative mechanisms for people's participation. The study was able to validate the theories and concepts discussing motivation factors in service which can be drawn from or made available at various levels and forms. The paper also highlighted the importance of communicating the motivational factors and making these factors available to stakeholders. In addition, the study identified factors that hinder stakeholders from engaging in service programmes which can be addressed mostly by the identified motivators themselves. The research; having been conducted at UPOU, can provide insights into similar HEIs for instituting their policies and programmes with the same purpose of increasing public service engagement. The continuous implementation of these policies may eventually contribute to nationwide social development. Ultimately, the study confirms the niche of UPOU as an open and distance e-learning institution in making its programmes more accessible to the public through the use of ICT and networked technologies. The findings also reaffirm UPOU's worldview and mission of contributing to social transformation through its programmes, including public service.

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