

Advancing Research as Praxis in Public Administration Graduate Education

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ABSTRACT

Engaging praxis (theory and practice) towards doing research is fundamental to every public administration (PA) scholar. However, public administration's practical objective as praxis and applied social science is often challenged by an emergent culture of treating research as mere academic compliance for graduate PA students. Both descriptive and analytical, this study aims to investigate the topic selection and theme consideration in doing public administration research. This case study seeks to analyze the research outputs in the public administration masters program from 2005 to 2018 of a university in Cebu City, Philippines. The study summarized and adopted the trends of topic selection and theme consideration in conducting public administration research from Bowman and Sami (1978), Perry and Kraemer (1986), Box (1992), Bingham and William (1994), and Terry (2005) in Raadschelders & Lee (2011), for content analysis. The study utilized descriptive statistics to present the data. Findings show that most of the graduate students' research outputs point towards a specific theme that is commonly used. Most of the graduate school studies are classified as informative research that is directed towards description and information over a particular topic or issue in focus. Also, there are themes and issues in PA research that are less considered because researchers may prefer an already established methodology and design. The discussion expounds on salient issues of academic research in PA and the importance of praxis and research utilization since these are necessary to strengthen the research culture in the discipline. This study will also recommend possible research themes and topics for PA graduate students to explore and to strengthen praxis in doing PA research.

Keywords: *public administration, research, praxis, trends, topics, themes*

INTRODUCTION

Public administration (PA) scholars conjoin a bipolar tension between practice and theory. As scholars, we experience pressures in maintaining PA's practical relevance as an academic discipline in both literature and practice. Brower et al. (2000) asserted that we maintain the legitimacy of one's field by building and testing appropriate theories in a given context in research processes. Gill and Meier (2000) emphasize that PA, as an academic discipline, should carefully examine the methodological infrastructures of research since it has a very significant role in the discipline. In PA research, important attention should always be on its

technicalities; thus, both theorists and practitioners should upgrade their methodological skills. Importantly, the utilization of research outputs in the academe should be an integral part of the bigger purpose of academic scholarship for society.

Eikeland (2012) provides that praxis as a form of knowledge generation is a collaborative and harmonious agenda of knowers-practitioners based on the ideas coming from the field of practice. Knowledge discovery is not monopolized, rather a co-creation of both theorists and practitioners. Seemingly, this is relevant to the mandate of public administration as an applied social science, which praxis (the condition wherein there is that particular connection between theory and practice) is at the

core of doing research. It is then encouraging researchers to use their ideas, theories, and thoughts to have a landing in the field of practice.

Scholarship indeed should address the concern of society. In the context of Philippine public administration, Brillantes and Fernandez (2008) emphasized that it is crucial to inherently trace the history and evolution of the discipline to examine the influences of theory and praxis towards an academic scholarship. Nevertheless, it is essential to critically analyze the trends and the research agenda choices of most scholars in the discipline.

Typically, PA focuses on an agenda that includes the government, governance, administration vis-à-vis the socio-political and administrative situations of society. Public administration academics, scholars, and practitioners are expected to cultivate a culture of knowledge generation and discover new ideas in the growing transdisciplinary research agenda of PA. These ideas will likely be refined and put into action, which will eventually help our society resolve the emerging and continuing challenges in governance and administration.

Trends, PA Research, and Praxis

In a recent study conducted by Raadschelders and Lee (2011), they emphasize the need to revisit the research outputs done in the discipline for scholars to rethink and reconsider the research focus over time. Stocktaking is an essential activity in identifying the trends, topics, and methods emerging, prevailing, and declining (Raadschelders & Lee, 2011). This will even benefit the discipline by questioning: Do the research topics consider and reflect various subjects or issues that encompass society's needs? Does the research scholarship provide a varied methodological approach that is important for the development of the discipline, or is it conquered by a specific set of methods repeatedly used?

Various literature and research analyze the trends in public administration research, and most of those are scholarly works from western societies. Box (1992) first classify the streams in research articles as provided by Perry and Kraemer (1986). It is necessary to focus on specific parameters to assess whether research concentrates on crucial issues of public administration. From as concise investigation, they provide two streams, which include a) research that endeavors an examination

and generation of verifiable knowledge and b) research that focuses on methodologies and identifying the issues herein (Box, 1992; Perry and Kraemer, 1986). Box (1992) then identified the subject of focus in PA research by examining submitted and published articles in the Public Administration Review from 1985 to 1989. The study intends to survey the articles and categories whether a) research and articles towards building, extending, or modifying a theory, model or hypothesis, b) research and articles towards discussing or illustrating broad issues, trends, or ideas in public administration and governing, and c) research and articles explaining, demonstrating, or surveying problems or questions of professional practices (Box 1992). He eventually used the categorization of articles based on topics. It will then identify a wide range of issues on theory- and issue-related in the study of public administration.

Moreover, the study of Raadschelders & Lee (2011) has identified topics that scholars consider in researching public administration based on publications in the Public Administration Review in 2000-2009. Pioneering this study, Bowman and Sami (1978), Perry and Kraemer (1986), Box (1992), Bingham and William (1994), and Terry (2005) extensively provided topic consideration in PA research. Significantly, they even highlighted the contribution of practitioners to knowledge building in the discipline. In their studies, they provided a categorization of topics which includes: politics-administration dynamics, public administration research, public/ private sector, reorganization, conflict resolution, motivation, bureaucracy, regulation, comparative administration, decision making, creativity, ethics, planning, federalism, information, finance, innovation, leadership, local government, presidential organization, organizational death, policy, strategic management, and courts (Bowman & Sami, 1978; Perry & Kraemer, 1986; Box 1992; Bingham & William, 1994; Terry, 2005; Raadschelders & Lee, 2011).

Similarly, McCurdy and Clearly (1984) analyzed doctoral dissertation abstracts in the issue of Dissertation Abstract International in 1981 and found out that a significant portion of PA research has neither dealt with significant issues nor produced studies with an exemplary level of significance. The methodological progress and standard of research have been noted to be low quality and inadequate.

McCurdy and Clearly (1984) found out that the study was not fully utilized and was not presented to the sectors, organizations, and institutions concerned. On the other hand, Garson and Overman (1983) emphasized that the PA research produced is fragmented, non-cumulative, and underfunded. Perry and Kraemer (1986) supported this by asserting that there should be (a) a focus on the core issues of public administration, (b) institutionalization of research through funding support, and (d) that there should be a methodological improvement such as advancement of the research process, examination methods, and analytical tools in public administration.

Relevant studies in related disciplines also provide a comprehensive understanding of scholars' and practitioners' research topics and themes in their field of interest. For example, De Vries, Bekkers, and Tummers (2016) provide that in the study of public administration, only a few researchers examine the innovativeness, learning capacities, importance of public sector innovation, and normative approaches to public organizations (Berry, 1994; Borins, 2001; Salge & Vera, 2009; Osborne & Brown, 2011; Hartley et al., 2013; Bason, 2010; De Vries, Bekkers, & Tummers, 2016). Kuipers and Welsh (2017) identified that in disaster research, there is a lack of attention in the interconnectedness and advancement in networked connection through cyber communication (social media and internet use) in advancing concerns in disaster and crisis management, response, recovery, and rehabilitation. They even emphasized that if these topics center in disaster research, it can help policymakers and practitioners understand the unexpected turns in crises and prepare the community in handling those in the future. Also, Snead and Wright (2014) studied e-governance research efforts in the US by identifying the gaps. They found out that most studies in e-governance has a weak theoretical grounding and recommended measures for future research efforts. Da Cruz, Rode, and McQuarrie (2019) provide a review of current themes and future urban governance priorities. For more global and comparative research in good governance, they emphasize that the discipline needs to focus on research that can systematically collect and generate comparable data and experiment with methodologies to create new empirical insights.

Nevertheless, a significant issue that confronts the scholarship on public administration is on the need for "phronetic" research (research that contributes to individual and social life) and the importance of "praxis" to research in engaging practice with theory building to address the society's immediate needs and concerns. Box (1992) asserts the usefulness of research in theory and practice (praxis). He mentioned that theories used in explaining research are becoming unrelated to practice. Academicians' language is becoming unrelatable or challenging for practitioners' perusal, which hampers the utilization of research on society's critical issues. Additionally, Mattson and Kemmis (2007) provide that praxis-related study aims to develop a culture of inquiry that engages the field setting, develop a critical approach among participants, empower participants to take action, build a sense of solidarity, consider life experiences as a basis for development initiatives, and open communicative spaces that will contribute to praxis or landing. Therefore, both practitioners and researchers have a central role in doing praxis-related research since praxis is essential in addressing public concerns. Nabatchi (2012) supported this by asserting that controversies and issues concerning the public can be discussed meaningfully through public participation for value-based public policies and research.

The related literature and relevant studies amplify that past research over the decade needs to be more theory and practice-based to be useful for the practitioners. Western academic communities have utilized stocktaking of research outputs to identify the trends, focus, topics, and popular themes. Most related studies centered on their review and analysis of journal publications, and little have studied the research trends in higher education. Research endeavors and academic work in the academe are perhaps the most basic ground to train scholars and practitioners for praxis. Nevertheless, limited studies have focused on accounting for the topics and purpose of doing PA research in graduate school. Also, there is little scholarly work in the Philippines that talks about research trends in the public administration discipline. Significantly, there is a need to investigate how the scholars in PA consider the topics in researching the field. It is essential to critically analyze the trends and choice of scholars' research agendas to understand better

whether research is geared towards understanding and providing solutions to society's problems. Importantly, the need to call for praxis towards research utilization is necessary to advance a "phronetic" and "praxis" -oriented scholarship in public administration. This study aims to investigate the topic selection and theme consideration in doing public administration graduate school research. Also, this study will answer the following objectives: a) to identify the streams, subject of focus, and topics in doing public administration research, b) to explain the issues that concern doing PA research in the academe both as an academic and practical requirement, and c) to provide recommendations for future research direction in academic writing for PA.

METHODOLOGY

This descriptive and explanatory study utilizes qualitative methods in research. The study will be using a case study method to descriptively and analytically identify and describe the trend of topics and themes selection on graduate students' preference in doing public administration research. According to Yin (2003), a case study is an appropriate method for providing an in-depth insight into a specific phenomenon or problem in focus. Hancock and Algozzine (2006) added that case study research is ornately descriptive since the sources of information are fundamentally deep and varied. A case study will further elucidate and enrich the discussion on the topic selections and thematic consideration of PA scholars.

Moreover, this study will be utilizing document and text examination of graduate research outputs in the PA masters program at a university in Cebu City, Philippines. The university's public administration graduate school has produced professionals, academicians, and practitioners of public administration who have served and contributed to the country. The program also uses a curriculum that is responsive to the global demands and trends in maintaining an excellent at par status in the national and international community. With this, it is necessary to track down and to look into the research conducted from 2005 to 2018 to assess topics, trends, and themes on the research work of graduate students, and to provide measures in developing a profound and responsive research culture towards

praxis in PA as an applied social science. The research in the masters program was accessed based on the list provided by the university library from 2005 to 2018 (13 years), which includes 55 (70.51%) special problems or technical papers and 23 (29.49%) theses, a total of 78 (100%) research works.

The study used content analysis in treating the data. Basically, the use of content analysis is to determine from a given qualitative data (i.e., text, document) the presence of specific themes and concepts. In so doing, the researcher can, therefore, quantify and analyze the meanings and relationship of topics to provide an inference. In its richness, this kind of analysis offers researchers the opportunity to establish their context of the inquiry, which opens the doors for rich repertoire and social-scientific constructs that the existing research culture has not explored. This type of analysis is suitable for this study since texts from research outputs are primary data sources. In support, Krippendorff (2018) provided that "content analysis goes outside the immediate observable physical vehicles of communication and relies on their symbolic qualities to trace the antecedents, correlates, or consequences of communication, thus rendering the (unobserved) context of data analyzable (Krippendorff, 2018)."

This study presents a categorization of topics, streams, and themes based on Bowman and Sami (1978), Perry & Kraemer (1986), Box (1992), Bingham & William (1994) Terry (2005), and Raadschelders & Lee (2011). The research was then checked one by one, analyzed, classified, and coded. Firstly, the study classifies the research outputs according to streams (whether the research is into a generation of verifiable knowledge or testing of methodologies), then grouped according to the subject of focus (whether the output is on building, extending, or modifying a theory, model or hypothesis, or discussing or illustrating broad issues, trends, or ideas in public administration in governing, or on explaining, showing, or surveying problems or questions of professional practices) and later categorized by topic. Data presentation utilized descriptive statistics limited to frequency count and percentage. The discussion focuses on the trend of public administration research works by looking at the topics for public administration research. This study interpreted and explained the findings and

formulated the conclusion using the theories and claims from related literature and relevant studies. However, the findings generated are limited to analyzing PA graduate school research from 2005-2008 in one university. Future studies may explore more institutions for higher learning as study sites and may include doctoral dissertations in PA.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In analyzing the trends of research topics, themes, and issues selection of student-researchers

in the graduate program of public administration, it is vital to identify first the streams, followed by the subject of focus, and the topics considered by researchers. The findings in this study utilized a summary of what Bowman and Sami (1978), Perry & Kraemer (1986), Box (1992), Bingham & William (1994), Terry (2005), and Raadschelders & Lee (2011) provided in their work. The succeeding sections will include the classification of research, a discussion on the issues encompassing academic research in PA, and extensive discussion of why praxis is vital to PA and governance.

Table 1. Streams in Graduate School Public Administration Research

Streams	Seminar Paper (55)	%	Theses (23)	%	Total (78)	%
a. the purpose of public administration is on validating knowledge and facts that will improve the discipline as an applied science	55	100%	23	100%	78	100%
b. focusing on the issues of methodologies in public administration which enables an assessment of practicality, providing better suggestions for ratification and improvements	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%

According to Perry and Kraemer (1986) in Raadschelders & Lee (2011), there are two dominant streams in writing research in public administration. Table 1 shows the streams of graduate school public administration research from 2005 to 2008. From the data shown in the table, all of the studies, both seminar paper (55 or 100%) and thesis (23 or 100%) are solely focused on the first stream that is PA research on validating knowledge and facts that will improve the discipline as an applied social science. However, none of the graduate school researchers focus on methodological issues of researching public administration. This proves that students in PA are interested in matters relevant to the field and discipline compared to looking into the problems of research processes and methodologies.

The researchers' preference in PA as to what stream to take in writing a study in the field follows a positivist approach using mainstream social science research methods. This adheres with researching to validate ideas and facts generated vis-à-vis with the existing issues and set up in the discipline. This is a convenient approach to public administration research. Perhaps, most scholars of

public administration in the graduate studies explore the second stream less. This shows that the graduate studies' research culture in public administration aims at a theorist-practitioner or theory-practice stream. The interest in practical issues or problems in our community aims to use research results and findings to provide ideas for action to practitioners working in the field. Raadschelders & Lee (2011) alarmingly noted that the practitioners are even less engaged in the contribution of research publication. Alas, this duality has long been observed between theorists and practitioners in PA. Seemingly, it is relevant to engage our practitioners in theory building since they are immediate observers, responders, and the valuable data and gatekeepers of the field.

Though theory-practice oriented research is in the focus of various studies over the decade, it can be noticed that investigations on methodological issues and problems in public administration are also necessary to explore. Perry and Kraemer (1986) vigorously posed that most of the articles explore applied research reviews, which mainly focuses on problems that limit the development and testing of pragmatic theories. Though problem- or issue-

centered research agenda is commendable, the idea of exploring methodological issues of research in public administration further promotes a comprehensive assessment of whether existing methodologies that remained unchallenged is still useful in providing substantial inputs in resolving problems and questions posed in research agendas. The evaluation of methodological processes' difficulties provides comprehensive and new insights into public administration research.

Box (1992), along with Raadschelders & Lee (2011), also provided a different framework in looking into the subject of focus in doing research in public administration, where he identified three themes. In his study, he determined that most of the public administration investigations center toward issues and problems faced by society vis-à-vis public administration and governing. This can elucidate the current graduate school research culture in public administration.

Table 2. The Subject of Focus in Doing Public Administration Research

Subject of Focus	Seminar Paper (55)	%	Theses (23)	%	Total (78)	%
a. Research and articles towards building, extending, or modifying a theory, model or hypothesis	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
b. Research and articles towards discussing or illustrating broad issues, trends, or ideas in public administration in governing	49	89.10%	21	91.20%	70	89.74%
c. Research and articles are discussing, illustrating, or surveying problems or questions of professional practices.	6	10.90%	2	8.70%	8	10.26%

Table 2 shows the subject of focus in doing public administration research in the graduate school both in seminar paper and theses. Significantly, most of the research focuses on discussing or illustrating board issues, trends, or ideas in public administration in governing 49 (89.10%) seminar papers and 21 (91.20%) theses qualified under this category. On the other hand, there is less research that fits the third subject of focus, as described. Out of 55 seminar papers, there are 6 (10.90%), and out of 23 theses, there are 2 (8.70%) research works, which is under discussions and illustration of problems in professional practices. Moreover, the table presented none of the graduate school research from 2005 to 2018 that fall under the first category, which is on research towards building, extending, modifying a theory, or model, or hypothesis. From this, most of the research conducted in public administration graduate school program is towards a practical approach where it has only focused on discussions and illustration of broad issues, trends, and ideas in public administration and governance. A few of the research focuses on the issues and problems of professional

practices, and there was none on the building, extending, and modifying theory. Thus, most of the research that public administration scholars are doing focus on problem-related and issue-related. Fitzpatrick, Goggin, Heikkila, Klingner, Machado, and Martell (2011) support this claim based on their comparative public administration research review. They mentioned a few scholars who are more critical and aware of comparative theories and methodological issues. The discipline is vibrant that it has a lot to offer in exploring the methods and levels of analysis. For comparative scholars, Fitzpatrick, Goggin, Heikkila, Klingner, Machado, and Martell (2011) suggested that there is a need to draw more on methods and theory in PA since the discipline does not only require to illustrate or explain broad issues and ideas. Apparently, research that engages the experiences of practitioners in the field is necessary to address this concern. Nevertheless, the importance of theory-based research towards the model, theory, and hypothesis building, extending, and modifying cannot be taken for granted.

The discipline of public administration as an applied social science embodies praxis. Basic research such as in the graduate school program is an ideal ground for practicing more theory-guided research initiatives to answer the problems in the field. As what Eikeland (2012) asserted in the concept of praxis, it is not enough to focus on the technicalities of the

theories alone, nor to the practicality of the research being problem-centered, but instead, research geared towards praxis is the connivance of theory and practicality. To clearly define the current research trends and culture in the graduate school program of public administration, Table 3 categorizes topics preferred by researchers from 2005 to 2018.

Table 3. Topic Categorization of Research in Public Administration

Topic Categories	Seminar Paper (55)	%	Theses (23)	%	Total (78)	%
a. Politics-Administration Dynamics	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
b. Public administration research	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
c. Public/ private sector	1	1.82%	1	4.35%	2	2.56%
d. Reorganization	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
e. Conflict resolution	1	1.82%	0	0.00%	1	1.28%
f. Motivation	4	7.27%	1	4.35%	5	6.41%
g. Bureaucracy	6	10.91%	1	4.35%	7	8.97%
h. Regulation	2	3.64%	0	0.00%	2	2.56%
i. Comparative administration	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
j. Decision making	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
k. Creativity	2	3.64%	0	0.00%	2	2.56%
l. Ethics	1	1.82%	1	4.35%	2	2.56%
m. Planning	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
n. Federalism	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
o. Information	26	47.26%	10	43.47%	36	46.15%
p. Finance	0	0.00%	1	4.35%	1	1.28%
q. Innovation	1	1.82%	4	17.38%	5	6.41%
r. Leadership	2	3.64%	1	4.35%	3	3.86%
s. Local government	3	5.45%	1	4.35%	4	5.13%
t. Presidential organization	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
u. Organizational death	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
v. Policy	4	7.27%	1	4.35%	5	6.41%
w. Strategic management	2	3.64%	1	4.35%	3	3.86%

From topic classification and analysis made in the different graduate research (both seminar paper and thesis), “information” as a category is dominant among graduate school researchers. There are 26 (47.26%) seminar papers, and 10 (43.47%) thesis work preferred a descriptive-informative study for their graduate research output. An informative study’s main goal is to give information and discuss context, issue, topic, or phenomenon. Significantly, the findings present that out of 23 categories for topics, there are nine topics that researchers could not explore. This includes politics-administrative dynamics, public administration research, reorganization, comparative administration, decision making, planning,

federalism, presidential organization, and organizational death.

On the other hand, several topics or themes also interest some researchers in doing a study such as topics on bureaucracy which has 7 (8.97%), the motivation has 5 (6.41%), innovation has 5 (6.41%), and on the policy has 5 (6.41%). Other topics considered for research work is on local government which has 4 (5.13%), leadership has 3 (3.86%), strategic management has 3 (3.86%), public and private sector has 2 (2.56%), the regulation has 2 (2.56%), creativity has 2 (2.56%), ethics has 2 (2.56%), conflict resolution has 1 (1.28%), and finance has 1 (1.28%).

Present research in PA focuses more on the categories of information, which is relatively important to the discipline. Though informative inquiries are essential, however, there is always a need to connect the information gathered to actual practice in crafting resolutions to address pressing issues. Studies found in 2005 to 2018 research outputs are mostly towards information giving. Limited research outputs submitted further highlight the study's utilization at the end of submission and academic compliance towards addressing sectoral, institutional, and societal issues.

Engaging theory (as generated by think tanks in the academe through various research) towards action in the field by the practitioner, as Brillantes and Fernandez (2008) called it as landing, is central to PA as applied social science. McCurdy and Clearly (1984) thought in their work that research often ends up unutilized by practitioners (though the claim found to be archaic); however, it is still relevant in today's research culture in the academe. The academe's dilemma is still pertinently problematic in pursuing the discipline for having a research as praxis. Interestingly, Gibson and Deadrick (2010) provide that both practitioners and scholars have a shared interest in most of the topics in the public administration discipline. What made PA fail to address the research-practice gap is the insufficiencies in connecting theorists and practitioners to discuss topics, issues, and concerns faced by the field. Even more, theorists and academics occasionally focus on serving personal interests in knowledge generation that cultivates the tendency to focus on what can be most beneficial and rewarding (Bolton & Stolcis, 2003). Besides, Bolton and Stolcis (2003) argued that as scholars, "we learn to safeguard our rewards by creating rationales for privileging our perspectives (Bolton & Stolcis, 2003)."

Issue of PA Research in the Academe

Research in the academe centers on praxis and the utilization of different studies that will ultimately address society's problems. Praxis, the connection between theory and practice, will help address the issues and questions raised

in the PA discipline. However, studies' utilization is less likely to be pursued because of various dilemmas confronting the academic discipline.

Gibson and Deadrick (2010) provide that there is this research-practice gap in the discipline, but what is vital to acknowledge is the concern on broadening our view of public administration and knowledge (Box 1992: Gibson & Deadrick, 2010), and to focus more attention to practitioner needs (Streib et al., 2001: Gibson & Deadrick, 2010). McCurdy and Clearly (1981) also have cited that there should be a need for researchers in public administration to focus on relevant issues and problems that will eventually be connected to the methodological ideas to enable applying these theories into practice. Additionally, Gibson and Deadrick (2010) also cited that in research, the ongoing battle of practical relevance vs. methodological rigor calls for an academic that works with agencies, institutions, and a practitioner that speaks and shares before the academe (Bolton and Stolcis 2003).

Seemingly, the financial support is a contributing factor in making a more productive scholarly work (Brewer et al., 1999). According to Martin (2010), many social scientists in the west rely on funding from research councils and governments that prioritize policy and practice alignment. Perhaps, funding provides an opportunity to materialize those research ideas that need resources to shed out. Brewer et al. (1999) clarified that the point is not to induce research with monetary rewards, but to eliminate financial barriers that prevent students from concentrating on their studies and completing their degrees by developing research merely for completion. Moreover, financial aid can support specific research projects such as the seminar paper or master's thesis. However, the Philippine research culture, specifically among research students, faces a lack of financial support, grants, and sponsorship, making it challenging to produce more quality scholarly work. Perry and Kraemer (1986) provide that doing research needs institutional help and intervention, such as streamlining research culture, strengthening faculty roles in the research agenda, and

providing necessary funds that are relevant and needed in the academe today. Since most funding opportunities are coming from research councils, governments, and scholarly organizations, Martin (2010) added that most of these funding opportunities do not only provide the needed resources to conduct the research but also most of the funders have strengthened the interaction of researchers and practitioners to enhance the prospects of utilization.

Essentially, developing research requires various resources, such as time and finances. Researchers tend to select a more attainable, feasible, and straightforward type of study, while explicitly replicating the established methodologies, set of instruments, and research design from existing and on-shelf research outputs. Such a trend may eventually result in undermining the quality of the research produced.

Like any other discipline, a major concern in PA research centers on the methodological improvements. Most of the agenda in doing a graduate school study is focused mainly on discussing, illuminating, and illustrating broad issues. Though this is commendable, scholars should also explore methodological and theoretical points of existing studies to address the central question and develop a concrete solution. There are varied ways and methods in researching in PA that are rich to explore. Bartels (2012) even stimulate researchers with his novel idea to be “actionable researchers” and to consider a process-oriented methodology that explicitly engages in contributing to local, neighborhood-based participatory, and collaborative knowledge building. As such, it helps generate interventionist and participatory knowledge co-creation to environmental policymaking, security and intelligence, welfare provision, health care, and regulation of financial markets (Bartels, 2012). On a side note, Perry and Kraemer’s (1986) traditional idea on consistent and extensive use of meta-analysis in improving the case study methodology is still valid until today. It is also important to refine qualitative methods in preventing rhetoric and biases. Moreover, the advanced use of quantitative at par with the qualitative methods in doing research will

significantly help provide solutions to public administration research’s methodological-theoretical issues.

Research as Praxis in Governance

Public administration research involves the promotion of good governance. This agenda couples with the promotion of praxis to provide substantive and sustainable solutions to problems based on theorists’ perspective and practitioners’ experience. However, most research in the applied social science discipline, though problem or issue-centered, lacks ‘landing’ in the field. Another argument that this study pursues is the utilization of the research through praxis is important. However, this study infers that based on the findings, PA graduate researchers need to mainstream the practical implications of their research outputs in helping the bigger community through theory and research results utilization while addressing the theorist and practitioner gap. Thus, research in graduate studies should not be treated as a mere academic requirement but rather as a worthwhile activity that benefits society.

Interestingly, Martin (2010) provides that researchers need to engage in process-oriented research that builds policy actors’ capacity in establishing constructive, communicative patterns by learning the local problems firsthand. Here, Martin (2010) presented that this approach to governance goes beyond a community of inquiry; instead, it establishes a community of practice, “new ways to act toward recurrent problems and patterns of behavior emerge from the interaction between researchers, policy actors, and concrete situations (Schwandt, 2005: Martin, 2010).” From this, researchers should build on the need for a practical situation, not from researchers’ needs. In this way, the researchers’ position as part of the community and the research process to connect, engage, interact, and provide the research results for utilization. Cook & Wagenaar (2012) provided that researchers can unfold meaningful knowledge through engaging in daily practices.

The World Governance Indicators (WGIs) from Kaufman, Kraay, and Mastruzzi (2008) support praxis through PA research since it

promotes accountability to the society and the community; thus, the research shall not only serve as a data and information extracting mechanism for scholarly and academic work but rather a form of responsible conduct of inquiry and accountability to the sector and the larger community. The WGI indicates the promotion of voice accountability, political stability and absence of violence, government effectiveness, regulatory quality, the rule of law, and control of corruption. Significantly, propositions serve as an overarching theme for research agenda and scholarly work. Likewise, this further promotes assessing good governance in the field and in addressing a more ground-based approach in researching the discipline. Some of the indicators that were not thoroughly explored by graduate researchers, including political stability, absence of violence, and corruption control, may have been considered important to critical, analytical, and political engagement and discourse to point out discrepancies in the public administration dynamics. Nevertheless, research formulated based on governance indicators greatly leads to a study that creates a landing in practice.

Intriguingly, Mattsson and Kemmis (2007) provided that what is needed today is an advice from the field of practitioners—a knowledge and theory that comes from the realities of what PA is focusing on, which is the institutions, agencies, organization, communities, and societies. Ideally, researchers provide and conduct their study for contribution to knowledge, theory, action, and praxis, to contribute to the development of the field's practice tradition. It is important to note that varied approaches such as interpretive-hermeneutical or empirical-analytic or critical-emancipatory, are essential towards realizing praxis in PA research.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

As public administration continuously pursues research as praxis, the field meets problems involving theorists and practitioners' roles. The culture of research in academic communities in the country hinders the

cohesive development of scholarship that is responsive to society's needs. It is unfortunate to note that what compels the academic research culture to prosper because a) most of the academic research output is treated as a mere course requirement and done for compliance sake, b) research in the field of applied social science and specifically in PA, though appreciated, lacks utilization for the benefit of the community, institutions, or agencies in focus, and therefore problems remain unresolved, and c) doing academic research is challenging resource-draining, and problematic due to lack of funding, and lack of theoretical and methodological development. Even so, praxis is an essential aspect of applied social science, which means that a substantive action should always be a forefront objective of every research agenda that a public administration scholar, theorist, and practitioner is undertaking.

Praxis and the utilization of research are essential in the so-called 'landing' in the field of PA as it can impact and help to provide substantive and sustainable solutions for problems and issues in communities, government, institutions, organizations, and societies through theory and research results utilization. As PA promotes accountability, scholarship in the discipline should not confine itself in the traditional research way of data and information extraction to storage. Instead, responsible conduct of inquiry and accountability to the wider community should be at the core of the discipline's mandate. This study asserts that:

- a) research in public administration should involve praxis and utilization, specifically for graduate studies, not to treat research as just merely for compliance sake,
- b) as applied social science, the use of theory and methodologies in designing research should be contemplated well and revisited by researchers to provide better and varied approaches in PA,
- c) scholars and practitioners may focus on the issues relating to methodologies in PA, which will typically provide an assessment of practicality that will be useful to public

administration education, research, and practice,

d) scholars and practitioners may work on underrepresented topics such as but not limited to politics-administration dynamics, public administration research, public/private sector, reorganization, conflict resolution, comparative administration, decision making, ethics, planning, federalism, finance, innovation, presidential organization, and organizational death.

e) Other considerations for the research agenda should focus on addressing governance issues to contribute and help attain better and holistic societies.

For so long, the Philippine public administration scholarship struggles in identifying a more locally established identity and not just merely a replica of what has been suggested by western scholars. The development of research works and a more grassroots-oriented approach in utilizing study results and outcomes could lead to a better community and a more progressive discipline in the academe.

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