

WORK ENGAGEMENT, SENSE OF COMMUNITY AND JOB SATISFACTION: A PATH MODEL ON PUBLIC SERVICE MOTIVATION AMONG PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOL TEACHERS

Quennie Jean T. De La Cruz¹, Eugenio S. Guhao Jr. DM²

University of Mindanao, Davao City, Philippines

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Abstract: The study identified the best-fitting path model of teacher public service motivation in public secondary schools, influenced by work engagement, sense of community, and job satisfaction. Utilizing a stratified sampling technique, data from 400 teachers in Region XI, Philippines, were analyzed using the mean, Pearson r, and path analysis. Findings revealed very high levels across all four variables, with significant correlations observed between work engagement, sense of community, job satisfaction, and public service motivation. Results demonstrated that Model 3 emerged as the best-fit model, exhibiting that work engagement and job satisfaction directly impact the sense of community. Additionally, the sense of community and perceived work engagement serve as predictive factors of public service motivation. Theoretically, these results contribute to educational management by positioning public service motivation as a dynamic concept shaped by work engagement and a sense of community, with job satisfaction serving as an underlying driver. Practically, the research offers school leaders a strategic framework to enhance teacher retention and commitment to public service by establishing collaborative professional learning communities, minimizing non-instructional administrative tasks, and ensuring fair career advancement opportunities.

Keywords: Job satisfaction, Path model analysis, public service motivation, Public secondary school teachers, sense of community, work engagement, REGION XI, Philippines.

SDG Indicators: #3 Good Health and Well-being, #8 Decent Work and Economic Growth, #16 Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions.

I. INTRODUCTION

Public Service Motivation (PSM) among public secondary school teachers marks a key convergence of personal altruism and systemic decline (Ragmac & Labitad, 2025). While educators begin their careers with strong PSM, this dedication is often undermined by severe work-life conflicts, excessive administrative duties, and insufficient professional support (Consigna & Doronio, 2025), leading to amotivation (Geronimo & Olegario, 2020). Consequently, occupational well-being consistently ranks among the lowest measures for teachers (Guiiao & Baguio, 2025; Natarajan, 2026). The core problem is a systemic inability to preserve educators' altruistic dedication, where sacrifices like burnout outweigh their public role's significance. Understanding and promoting PSM is crucial for strengthening governance and enhancing public service delivery (Yaseen, Osman & Mohd Nadzri, 2025), driving innovation (Lee & Kim, 2024), and ensuring ethical outcomes (Wang & Li, 2024). Individuals with high PSM demonstrate greater grit against bureaucratic obstacles (Vandenabeele & Ritz, 2024), stabilize internal service spirit for improved governance (Hassan & Wright, 2025), positively influence client

interactions (Tao, Liu, & Wen, 2024), and remain in public-sector careers (Bednarczuk, 2024). Deep-rooted PSM reduces turnover intentions and institutional costs (Hur & Abner, 2024).

Educators typically exhibit high PSM fueled by dedication to societal well-being (Aydın, Demirkasımoğlu, Güner Demir, & Erdemli, 2022; Brunetto, Farr-Wharton, Shacklock, & Teo, 2021). However, organizational circumstances significantly influence its manifestation (Prismakova, 2021). Unsupportive environments and heavy administrative loads can increase amotivation (Heine, van Witteloostuijn, & Wang, 2022; Xu, 2022). Recent studies underscore the interrelation between PSM and work engagement, noting that teachers with high PSM exhibit greater engagement (Ding & Wang, 2023) and show enthusiasm and perseverance against systemic challenges (Yaseen et al., 2025). Focused training initiatives boost PSM and job performance (Alkan, Aydın, & Özyurt, 2022). Additionally, authentic school leaders foster teamwork and higher engagement (Guhao & Quines, 2021), while supportive environments strengthen organizational commitment (Caballero & Guhao, 2020). Conversely, heavy workloads lower engagement, especially absorption (Maquidato & Bayani, 2024). Elevated engagement consistently requires authentic leadership and a clear purpose (Ding & Wang, 2023).

Furthermore, PSM is closely tied to a sense of community (SOC). A robust SOC boosts employee engagement, maintaining PSM and dedication (Ragmac & Labitad, 2025). Although PSM fuels motivation, its influence on well-being is often exceeded by SOC and Sense of Community Responsibility (SOC-R) (Boyd & Nowell, 2022). Higher PSM is associated with a stronger sense of community (Geolina & Guhao, 2021). Collaborative professional practices and shared leadership are linked to stronger school belonging (Espirituoso & Carreon, 2025), while professional disconnection weakens it (Melzak, Allen, K.-A., Jain, & Pruyn, 2025).

PSM is also positively linked to job satisfaction, which heavily influences engagement (Alutaya & Guhao, 2024). Nurturing PSM through supportive leadership and fair pay attracts skilled staff and enhances public sector performance (Hassan & Wright, 2025). PSM predicts performance and increases overall well-being and job satisfaction (Songcog & Guhao, 2024). Job satisfaction is deeply linked to psychological capital and PSM (Alutaya & Guhao, 2023), though extrinsic satisfaction, like promotions, may diminish over time (Otto, Dekker, Dekker, Richter, & Zabel, 2022).

To investigate these dynamics, this research utilizes Public Service Motivation (PSM) Theory, introduced by James L. Perry in 1996, which posits that public workers are motivated by attraction to public policy, commitment to the public interest, compassion, and self-sacrifice. Peter Blau's (1964) Social Exchange Theory (SET) further clarifies how positive workplace experiences shape behavior through reciprocity; supported educators naturally respond with greater professional devotion. Methodologically, the study adopts a structural approach and presents a conceptual framework (Figure 1) mapping three latent exogenous variables—Work Engagement, Sense of Community, and Job Satisfaction—against the latent endogenous variable, Public Service Motivation. Bidirectional correlations are hypothesized among the exogenous variables, while direct structural paths propose that increased Work Engagement, Sense of Community, and Job Satisfaction directly boost PSM among educators.

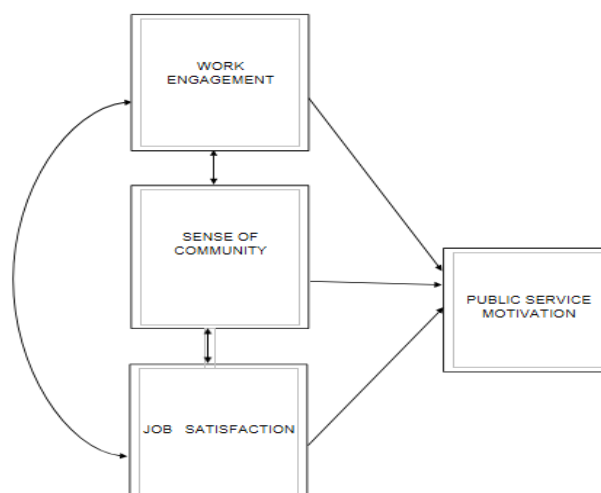


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework of the Study showing the direct relationship of the latent exogenous variables towards the latent endogenous variables.

The direct links from Work Engagement and Job Satisfaction to Public Service Motivation are grounded in Social Exchange Theory (Blau, 1964), asserting that favorable workplace conditions generate reciprocal prosocial commitment. Work Engagement (vigor, dedication, absorption) directly influences Public Service Motivation by motivating teachers to channel their efforts into their public role (Ding & Wang, 2023; Yaseen et al., 2025). Similarly, Job Satisfaction (achievement, pay, support, and advancement) acts as a direct precursor, since satisfied needs encourage stronger organizational identification and lasting commitment to the public good (Hassan & Wright, 2025; Songcog & Guhao, 2024).

The structural route connecting Sense of Community to Public Service Motivation relies on Psychological Sense of Community Theory (McMillan & Chavis, 1986). Sense of Community, reflected in reinforcement of needs, membership, influence, and shared emotional connection, directly drives Public Service Motivation by grounding individual altruism in a supportive setting (Geolina & Guhao, 2021). Consistent with Perry's (1996) Public Service Motivation Theory, strong belonging transforms institutional support into sustained civic duty, compassion, and self-sacrifice, offering the pathway needed to reduce burnout and preserve intrinsic commitment (Boyd & Nowell, 2022; Ragmac & Labitad, 2025).

The study aims to determine the best-fit path model of public service motivation among secondary school teachers in Region XI. Specifically, it seeks to determine the levels of work engagement, sense of community, job satisfaction, and public service motivation through their respective indicators. Additionally, it aims to determine significant correlations among these variables and identify the best-fit path model. The null hypotheses, tested at a 0.05 significance level, state that there are no significant relationships among the variables, and no single model will best fit the data.

Existing literature exhibits empirical gaps regarding the structural mechanisms driving public service motivation. Earlier research largely examined these variables as separate predictors without adequately testing dynamic structural pathways, specifically how job satisfaction and work engagement exert indirect effects through sense of community (Boyd & Nowell, 2022; Ding & Wang, 2023). Furthermore, empirical investigation into these combined constructs among public secondary school teachers in Region XI remains limited. This study tackles these gaps by applying path analysis to compare competing models, providing an empirically supported best-fit path model clarifying direct and mediated relationships (Yaseen et al., 2025).

Addressing public service motivation in Region XI is urgent due to growing administrative pressure, occupational stress, and blurred boundaries from recent national policy changes. Failing to examine the structural factors behind educators' commitment could speed up teacher turnover and weaken instructional quality. Without an empirically validated structural model, educational leaders lack the precise mechanism to design targeted interventions, potentially wasting resources on isolated programs that fail to reduce burnout or preserve the altruistic spirit essential to public-sector effectiveness.

This research supports the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals 16 and 8 by providing evidence to develop transparent and resilient public institutions. At the institutional level, the empirical model provides a targeted roadmap to operationalize welfare-oriented policies like DepEd Order No. 002, s. 2024 and DepEd Order No. 024, s. 2024, aligning with the MATATAG Agenda, the Five-Point Reform Agenda, and Region XI's Sumbanan Framework. Institutionalizing professional learning communities and participatory leadership can mitigate teacher burnout and safeguard instructional time.

Ultimately, this research offers a validated structural path model explaining relationships among work engagement, sense of community, job satisfaction, and public service motivation. Future studies may employ this model to investigate organizational factors like digital overload and leadership approaches, providing a reliable framework for teacher retention and organizational behavior in the public sector.

II. METHOD

This section provided a thorough overview of the research methodology, covering the study's execution, participant demographics, the instruments and materials used, and the research design and procedures implemented, where relevant.

Research Respondents

The participants in this study are 400 active public secondary school teachers from the 19,684 currently employed in the eleven Schools Division Offices of the Department of Education, Region XI (Davao Region), Philippines. The region was selected because its varied urban and rural public secondary school system provides a comprehensive setting to explore public service motivation among teachers. These individuals are considered appropriate for the study as they are key actors in public education and directly experience work engagement, a sense of community, and job satisfaction, which are

hypothesized to influence their public service motivation. To ensure accurate representation across genders, ages, teaching roles, and years of experience (from both junior and senior high schools), a stratified random sampling technique was utilized, which reduces sampling bias, enhances generalizability, and ensures proportional representation (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Fraenkel, Wallen, & Hyun, 2019). Eligible participants had to be permanent teachers (ranging from Teacher I to Master Teacher V) with at least one year of teaching experience in their current position to ensure sufficient familiarity with the school environment, while parents, students, administrators, retired teachers, and private school educators were excluded. In terms of professional rank, the sample was primarily composed of Teacher II (29.75%), Teacher I (28.00%), and Teacher III (24.25%). In terms of years of service, the highest frequency was in the 7–10 years bracket (29.3%), followed by 1–3 years (22.5%) and 11–15 years (19.0%). Participation was completely voluntary; participants could withdraw at any time, and their previously collected information would be removed to maintain ethical standards.

Materials and Instruments

A structured survey questionnaire containing adapted, multidimensional tools evaluated the key constructs. Public Service Motivation was assessed using Perry's (1996) Public Service Motivation Scale (attraction to public service, commitment to public interest, compassion, and self-sacrifice). Work Engagement was measured via Schaufeli and Bakker's Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES) (vigor, dedication, absorption). Sense of Community was evaluated using the School Community Index (need reinforcement, membership, influence, shared emotional connection), while Job Satisfaction utilized a modified scale (work accomplishment, pay satisfaction, supervisor satisfaction, work assistance, peer support, advancement chances). A 5-point Likert scale (1=Strongly Disagree to 5=Strongly Agree) was used for all tools, with overall mean scores interpreted as: 4.20–5.00 (Very High, consistently observed), 3.40–4.19 (High, frequently observed), 2.60–3.39 (Moderate, occasionally observed), 1.80–2.59 (Low, rarely observed), and 1.00–1.79 (Very Low, never observed). Content validity was confirmed by five internal expert validators with a Very High mean score of 4.86. Construct reliability, assessed via a pilot test of 30 non-sample teachers, yielded excellent internal consistency: Public Service Motivation ($\alpha = .838$), Work Engagement ($\alpha = .857$), Sense of Community ($\alpha = .938$), and Job Satisfaction ($\alpha = .925$).

Research Design and Procedure

This research employed a quantitative, non-experimental descriptive-correlational design to systematically measure and describe relationships among naturally occurring variables without experimental manipulation (Creswell & Creswell, 2018), allowing the researcher to examine the existing psychological states and organizational perceptions of teachers within their natural work environment. To identify the best-fitting model, Structural Equation Modeling (SEM)—specifically, path analysis—served as the primary analytical method, enabling the concurrent assessment of complex, interdependent relationships among multiple variables beyond basic bivariate correlations (Hair, Black, Babin, & Anderson, 2022). The researcher distributed survey forms to selected participants after ensuring they reviewed the research information sheet outlining objectives, voluntary participation, privacy, and entitlements. Statistical treatments used to achieve the research objectives included descriptive statistics for determining variable levels, the Pearson r for significant correlations, and path analysis to determine the best-fit path model of public service motivation. The structural models were assessed using standard goodness-of-fit indices and their related cutoff values to confirm statistical soundness. Following the guidance of Hair et al. (2022) and Kline (2023), several fit indices were reviewed to thoroughly evaluate how well the model fit the data. The fit indices and their acceptable thresholds applied in the model evaluation are as follows:

INDEX	CRITERION
Chi-Square / Degrees of Freedom	$0 < \text{value} < 2$
P-value	$> .05$
Normed Fit Index (NFI)	$> .95$
Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI)	$> .95$
Comparative Fit Index (CFI)	$> .95$
Goodness of Fit Index (GFI)	$> .95$
Root Mean Square of Error Approximation (RMSEA)	$< .05$
P of Close Fit (Pclose)	$> .05$

The data collection procedure was conducted systematically following a chronological protocol, starting with formal ethical approval from the University Management Ethics Review Committee (UMERC) and the Department of Education Division Office in Region XI. Participants were selected through stratified random sampling by school size and location, and each provided informed consent after being briefed on the study's purpose, voluntary nature, and withdrawal rights. Structured questionnaires were administered in printed and digital formats, with strict privacy protocols ensuring complete anonymity and the secure storage of data in password-protected files for academic reporting. Once collected, responses were reviewed for completeness, tallied, and entered into SPSS and AMOS for data cleaning and analysis. Descriptive and inferential statistical techniques were applied to address the research objectives. The Mean was calculated to determine the overall levels of work engagement, sense of community, job satisfaction, and public service motivation. Pearson's r correlation coefficient was utilized to examine the significance of bivariate relationships between the exogenous and endogenous variables. Lastly, Path Analysis via SEM, utilizing Maximum Likelihood Estimation, was conducted to test the hypothesized direct and indirect structural paths, assess model fit, and identify the best-fit path model (Thakkar & Thakkar, 2020).

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The data and findings presented in this section are derived from responses from public secondary school teachers in Region Xi regarding work engagement, sense of community, job satisfaction, and public service motivation. The discussion is organized under the following subheadings: the levels of work engagement, sense of community, and job satisfaction, as well as public service motivation; and the relationships among work engagement and public service motivation, sense of community and public service motivation, and job satisfaction and public service motivation.

Level of Work Engagement

Shown in Table 1 is the level of work engagement among public secondary school teachers in Region XI. The overall mean score is 4.30, described as very high, with a standard deviation of 0.453, which means that work engagement is often evident. The mean ratings of the indicators of work engagement are as follows: vigor obtained a mean of 4.31 with a standard deviation of 0.534, or very high; dedication recorded a mean of 4.49 with a standard deviation of 0.506, also very high; and absorption obtained a mean of 4.10 with a standard deviation of 0.533, classified as high.

Table I: Level of Work Engagement

Indicators	SD	Mean	D.E.
Vigor	0.534	4.31	Very High
Dedication	0.506	4.49	Very High
Absorption	0.533	4.10	High
Overall	0.453	4.30	Very High

The overall very high response rate indicates that teachers feel energized, persevere through difficulties, and maintain balance between their personal and professional lives. These findings align with empirical literature documenting high engagement among educators who experience authentic leadership, meaningful job purpose, and targeted support (Ding & Wang, 2023), as teachers driven by a strong commitment to public service exhibit enthusiasm and persistence to overcome systemic challenges (Yaseen et al., 2025). Furthermore, this commitment is maintained when workplaces provide supportive structures that recognize teacher contributions and align with organizational values (Caballero & Guhao, 2020). However, the slightly lower mean score for absorption aligns with Maquidato and Bayani (2024), who observed that Philippine public school teachers often exhibit absorption as a weaker dimension amid excessive workload, occupational stress, and non-teaching duties, noting that unresolved bureaucratic pressures consume mental capacity while supportive environments free cognitive energy to remain fully engaged.

Level of Sense of Community

Table 2 presents the summary of the level of sense of community among public secondary school teachers. The overall mean score is 4.26 with a standard deviation of 0.526, which is described as very high, indicating that a sense of community is often evident. In terms of indicators, reinforcement of needs obtained a mean of 4.34 with a standard deviation of 0.582

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or very high; membership has a mean of 4.14 with a standard deviation of 0.686 or high; influence recorded a mean of 4.21 with a standard deviation of 0.568 or very high; and shared emotional connection acquired a mean of 4.34 with a standard deviation of 0.557 or very high.

Table II: Level of Sense of Community

Indicators	SD	Mean	D.E.
Reinforcement of Needs	0.582	4.34	Very High
Membership	0.686	4.14	High
Influence	0.568	4.21	Very High
Shared Emotional Connection	0.557	4.34	Very High
Overall	0.526	4.26	Very High

The overall very high response indicates that teachers develop deep emotional connections, trust, and active engagement within their schools, corresponding with Espirituoso and Carreon (2025), who showed that distributed leadership and teamwork cultivate unified professional groups where educators feel supported and appreciated, enhancing their well-being and dedication (Boyd & Nowell, 2022; Ragmac & Labitad, 2025). High scores across SOC domains point to a cooperative atmosphere where teachers rely on coworkers and participate in decision-making, as Melzak et al. (2025) noted that supportive peer relationships and transparent dialogue are structural factors that avert professional isolation. By fostering robust shared identity, schools offer the support needed to convert individual generosity into sustained civic responsibility (Geolina & Guhao, 2021). Moreover, elevated SOC aligns with Work Engagement when teachers invest considerable effort; supportive institutional frameworks free mental capacity for engagement (Ding & Wang, 2023; Yaseen et al., 2025), whereas bureaucratic overload causes cognitive fatigue, affecting absorption (Maquidato & Bayani, 2024). Ultimately, when professional needs and social integration are acknowledged (Caballero & Guhao, 2020; Guhao & Quines, 2021), teachers respond with increased commitment and reduced turnover intentions (Hur & Abner, 2024), demonstrating that fostering professional learning communities protects well-being, reduces amotivation (Geronimo & Olegario, 2020), and maintains public service motivation.

Level of Job Satisfaction

Described in Table 3 is the summary of the level of job satisfaction of public secondary school teachers. The overall mean score is 4.30 with a standard deviation of 0.505, which is very high, indicating that job satisfaction is often evident. In terms of indicators, sense of work achievement obtained a mean of 4.51 with a standard deviation of 0.497 or very high; remuneration satisfaction have a mean of 4.11 with a standard deviation of 0.761 or high; superior satisfaction recorded a mean of 4.34 with a standard deviation of 0.686 or very high; work support acquired a mean of 4.32 with a standard deviation of 0.588 or very high; colleague support landed a mean of 4.46 with a standard deviation of 0.571 or very high; and promotion opportunity had a mean of 4.08 with a standard deviation of 0.727 or high.

Table III: Level of Job Satisfaction

Indicators	SD	Mean	D.E.
Sense of Work Achievement	0.497	4.51	Very High
Remuneration Satisfaction	0.761	4.11	High
Superior Satisfaction	0.686	4.34	Very High
Work Support	0.588	4.32	Very High
Colleague Support	0.571	4.46	Very High
Promotion Opportunity	0.727	4.08	High
Overall	0.505	4.30	Very High

The overall very high response shows that teachers feel valued regarding salary, perceive school heads as caring, experience safe work environments, and enjoy current work with promotion opportunities. These high scores point to a workplace where leadership effectively eases administrative burdens, supporting Hassan and Wright (2025), who observe that strategic management merging supportive leadership, fair pay, and professional growth boosts Public Service Motivation and staff

retention. Genuine and considerate school heads foster better teamwork and stronger engagement (Guhao & Quines, 2021), while supportive workplaces actively acknowledging teacher efforts reinforce dedication to the public sector's mission (Caballero & Guhao, 2020). The difference between intrinsic and extrinsic job satisfaction is essential; while intrinsic fulfillment is deep, extrinsic rewards like pay and promotions require structural backing (Alutaya & Guhao, 2023), and their motivational effect may fade over time (Otto et al., 2022). Consequently, sustained support and social integration reduce isolation (Melzak et al., 2025), fostering an atmosphere where high satisfaction leads to lower turnover intentions and institutional expenses (Hur & Abner, 2024). Ultimately, when teachers find satisfaction and administrative support (Songcog & Guhao, 2024), their dedication to civic duty remains strong (Ragmac & Labitad, 2025), and connecting these frameworks with national policy efforts provides the mechanisms needed to mitigate burnout and safeguard the delivery of quality public education.

Level of Public Service Motivation

Described in Table 4 is the summary of the level of public service motivation of public secondary school teachers. The overall mean score is 4.56 with a standard deviation of 0.371, which is described as very high, indicating that public service motivation is often evident. In terms of indicators, attraction to public service obtained a mean of 4.76 with a standard deviation of 0.393 or very high; commitment to public values have a mean of 4.79 with a standard deviation of 0.400 or very high; compassion recorded a mean of 4.76 with a standard deviation of 0.421 or very high; and self-sacrifice acquired a mean of 3.94 with a standard deviation of 0.886 or high.

Table IV: Level of Public Service Motivation

Indicators	SD	Mean	D.E.
Attraction to Public Service	0.393	4.76	Very High
Commitment to Public Values	0.400	4.79	Very High
Compassion	0.421	4.76	Very High
Self-Sacrifice	0.886	3.94	High
Overall	0.371	4.56	Very High

The overall very high response indicates that teachers recognize the importance of meaningful public service, ethical behavior, and caring about others' welfare. Rooted in a desire to contribute to society, high PSM provides the psychological mechanism driving ethical outcomes and sustained dedication (Wang & Li, 2024), with such individuals showing more grit and persistence against bureaucratic obstacles (Vandenabeele & Ritz, 2024). Because educators enter the field to promote societal welfare (Aydın et al., 2022; Bednarczuk, 2024), this intrinsic motivation lowers turnover intentions, reducing institutional expenses for hiring and training (Hur & Abner, 2024). However, high self-sacrifice and altruism must be weighed against administrative burdens, as excessive workloads and unsupportive environments can undermine autonomous motivation and increase amotivation (Consigna & Doronio, 2025; Geronimo & Olegario, 2020). When self-sacrifice results in severe work-life imbalance, the perceived cost of service exceeds its value, leading to burnout and cognitive fatigue (Guiao & Baguio, 2025; Heine et al., 2022). Ultimately, when institutions foster strong work engagement, supportive leadership, and a collaborative sense of community, they create the structural mechanisms necessary to protect teacher well-being (Boyd & Nowell, 2022; Ragmac & Labitad, 2025).

Significance of the Relationship between Work Engagement and Public Service Motivation

The table presents the data on the results of correlations between work engagement and public service motivation. The overall r-value obtained is 0.687 with a p-value of 0.000, which is less than the 0.05 significance level; hence, the relationship is significant, thereby rejecting the null hypothesis. Moreover, vigor ($r = 0.636$, $p < 0.001$), dedication ($r = 0.640$, $p < 0.001$), and absorption ($r = 0.457$, $p < 0.001$), as indices of work engagement, all showed significant positive relationships with public service motivation. Every specific dimension, including attraction to public service, commitment to public values, compassion, and self-sacrifice, yielded p-values of 0.000, confirming that all aspects of work engagement are positively and significantly linked to public service motivation.

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Table V: Significance on the Relationship between Levels of Work Engagement and Public Service Motivation

Work Engagement	Public Service Motivation			
	Attraction to Public Service	Commitment to Public Values	Compassion	Overall
Vigor	.457* (0.000)	.372* (0.000)	.370* (0.000)	.636* (0.000)
Dedication	.462* (0.000)	.415* (0.000)	.439* (0.000)	.640* (0.000)
Absorption	.331* (0.000)	.189* (0.000)	.194* (0.000)	.457* (0.000)
Overall	.481* (0.000)	.375* (0.000)	.385* (0.000)	.687* (0.000)

*Significant at 0.05 significance level

The significant association between work engagement and public service motivation leads to the rejection of the null hypothesis, indicating that physical, cognitive, and emotional energy investment in teaching directly reinforces educators' intrinsic dedication to public service. These findings align with Ding and Wang (2023) and Yaseen et al. (2025), who showed that elevated PSM leads to increased work engagement, helping teachers remain enthusiastic, committed, and tenacious despite systemic obstacles. When schools offer meaningful tasks and genuine leadership (Guhao & Quines, 2021), educators gain energy, connect to their purpose, and stay deeply engaged, responding to favorable conditions by strengthening their dedication and willingness to make personal sacrifices (Caballero & Guhao, 2020; Perry, 1996). However, as Maquidato and Bayani (2024) observed, excessive workloads directly lower engagement, particularly absorption, while bureaucratic friction can erode autonomous motivation and heighten amotivation (Consigna & Doronio, 2025; Geronimo & Olegario, 2020). Conversely, targeted professional support can bolster PSM and sustain high performance (Alkan et al., 2022), underscoring that work engagement and PSM are mutually reinforcing constructs essential to public-sector efficiency and retention (Hur & Abner, 2024).

Significance of the Relationship between Sense of Community and Public Service Motivation

Table 6 presents the results of correlations between Sense of Community and Public Service Motivation. The overall r-value attained is .615 with a p-value of 0.000; hence, significant, therefore rejecting the null hypothesis. Further, when the indicators of reinforcement of needs ($r = .606$, $p < 0.001$), membership ($r = .466$, $p < 0.001$), influence ($r = .543$, $p < 0.001$), and shared emotional connection ($r = .562$, $p < 0.001$) were correlated with public service motivation, all yielded significant positive results.

Table VI: Significance on the Relationship between Levels of Sense of Community and Public Service Motivation

Sense of Community	Public Service Motivation				Overall
	Attraction to Public Service	Commitment to Public Values	Compassion	Self-Sacrifice	
Reinforcement of Needs	.439* (0.000)	.394* (0.000)	.388* (0.000)	.457* (0.000)	.606* (0.000)
Membership	.306* (0.000)	.201* (0.000)	.213* (0.000)	.453* (0.000)	.466* (0.000)
Influence	.371* (0.000)	.253* (0.000)	.311* (0.000)	.483* (0.000)	.543* (0.000)
Shared Emotional Connection	.372* (0.000)	.319* (0.000)	.358* (0.000)	.463* (0.000)	.562* (0.000)
Overall	.420* (0.000)	.328* (0.000)	.356* (0.000)	.527* (0.000)	.615* (0.000)

*Significant at 0.05 significance level

The notable link between Sense of Community (SOC) and Public Service Motivation (PSM) suggests that personal altruism is deeply rooted in a cohesive work environment where educators' dedication is boosted by a strong reinforcement of needs, membership, influence, and shared emotional connection. These results support Ragmac and Labitad (2025), who pointed

out that a strong sense of community guards against amotivation (Geronimo & Olegario, 2020) and reduces burnout. As Boyd and Nowell (2022) demonstrated, PSM's conversion into long-term well-being depends on a robust SOC and Sense of Community Responsibility (SOC-R). When schools encourage shared leadership (Espirituoso & Carreon, 2025) and establish an environment of common objectives and mutual trust, educators' intrinsic motivation is bolstered (Geolina & Guhao, 2021). Conversely, professional isolation and insufficient recognition diminish teachers' sense of belonging and organizational commitment (Melzak et al., 2025; Caballero & Guhao, 2020), meaning that when work-life imbalances and administrative pressures occur in isolation (Consigna & Doronio, 2025), the perceived costs of service outweigh its benefits (Guiao & Baguio, 2025). Ultimately, fostering collaborative professional learning communities provides the structural basis to link personal altruism to institutional efficacy (Hassan & Wright, 2025), protecting altruistic drive, reducing turnover intention (Hur & Abner, 2024), and ensuring quality education.

Significance of the Relationship between Job Satisfaction and Public Service Motivation

Table 7 presents the results of correlations between Job Satisfaction and Public Service Motivation. The overall r-value attained is .544 with a p-value of 0.000, indicating a significant relationship that rejects the null hypothesis. Furthermore, significant positive correlations were found when public service motivation was correlated with work achievement sense ($r = .597, p < 0.001$), remuneration satisfaction ($r = .431, p < 0.001$), superior satisfaction ($r = .386, p < 0.001$), work support ($r = .479, p < 0.001$), colleague support ($r = .377, p < 0.001$), and promotion opportunity ($r = .357, p < 0.001$).

Table VII: Significance of the Relationship between Job Satisfaction and Public Service Motivation

Job Satisfaction	Public Service Motivation				
	Attraction to Public Service	Commitment to Public Values	Compassion	Self-Sacrifice	Overall
Sense of Work Achievement	.515* (0.000)	.471* (0.000)	.477* (0.000)	.332* (0.000)	.597* (0.000)
Remuneration Satisfaction	.255* (0.000)	.231* (0.000)	.153* (0.002)	.432* (0.000)	.431* (0.000)
Superior Satisfaction	.285* (0.000)	.250* (0.000)	.255* (0.000)	.286* (0.000)	.386* (0.000)
Work Support	.336* (0.000)	.272* (0.000)	.259* (0.000)	.407* (0.000)	.479* (0.000)
Colleague Support	.404* (0.000)	.293* (0.000)	.244* (0.000)	.205* (0.000)	.377* (0.000)
Promotion Opportunity	.206* (0.000)	.150* (0.002)	.169* (0.000)	.358* (0.000)	.357* (0.000)
Overall	.404* (0.000)	.337* (0.000)	.311* (0.000)	.431* (0.000)	.544* (0.000)

*Significant at 0.05 significance level

The statistically significant positive relationship between job satisfaction and public service motivation indicates that fulfilling professional needs directly strengthens intrinsic dedication to the public good. When educators experience high satisfaction across domain indicators, their commitment to social equity and student welfare is significantly heightened, consistent with evidence that PSM is a key factor in overall job satisfaction, psychological capital, and sense of belonging (Songcog & Guhao, 2024; Alutaya & Guhao, 2023, 2024). Additionally, supportive leadership and equitable treatment compel staff to respond with greater prosocial dedication (Hassan & Wright, 2025), while genuine supervisory leadership enhances organizational commitment (Caballero & Guhao, 2020; Guhao & Quines, 2021). However, the distinction between intrinsic fulfillment and extrinsic rewards is crucial; while teachers find deep fulfillment in their work, extrinsic factors like promotions exhibit adaptation effects over time (Otto et al., 2022). When administrative overloads remain unaddressed (Consigna & Doronio, 2025), the perceived cost of service starts to outweigh intrinsic rewards (Guiao & Baguio, 2025), heightening the risk of amotivation (Geronimo & Olegario, 2020). Ultimately, strategic management regarding fair promotion tracks and equitable pay is crucial for preserving job satisfaction and sustaining PSM (Hassan & Wright, 2025).

Best-Fit Path Model on Public Service Motivation

The model initially proposed in Figure 1 required adjustments to better match the observed data. Consequently, the study generated and assessed three alternative models. To identify the path model that fits best, all goodness-of-fit indices must consistently satisfy the acceptable thresholds. In particular, the chi-square statistic should be between 0 and 2, with a corresponding p-value above 0.05. The root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) must remain under 0.05, and the P-close value should be greater than 0.05. Moreover, other fit indices—such as the normed fit index (NFI), Tucker-Lewis index (TLI), comparative fit index (CFI), and goodness-of-fit index (GFI)—should each exceed 0.95.

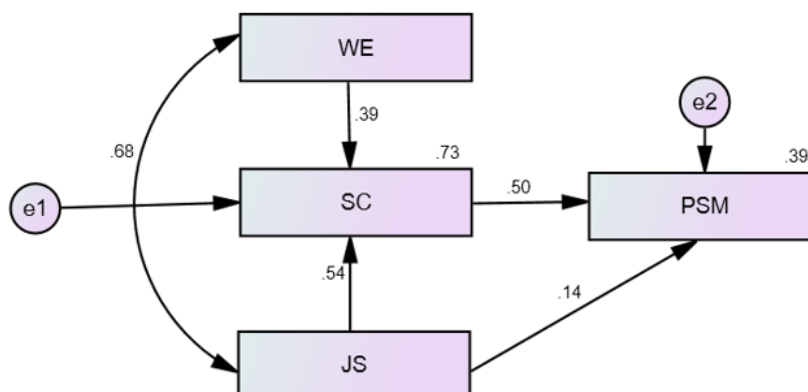


Figure 2: Path Analysis Model 1 in Standardized Solution

Legend: WE – Work Engagement
SC – Sense of Community
JS – Job Satisfaction
PSM – Public Service Motivation

Generated Model 1. Figure 2 displayed the generated path analysis model 1, which depicts the connections among work engagement, sense of community, and job satisfaction, as well as their causal impacts on public service motivation. However, every fit index in Table 8 was outside acceptable ranges, suggesting that the model did not fit well. Nevertheless, the findings indicate that work engagement is significantly correlated with job satisfaction, and both have direct and indirect effects on public service motivation, with a sense of community serving as a key mediator.

Table VIII: Goodness of Fit Measures of Path Analysis Model 1

INDEX	CRITERION	MODEL FIT VALUE
P-Close	> 0.05	.000
CMIN/DF	0 < value < 2	64.930
P-Value	> 0.05	.000
GFI	> 0.95	.933
CFI	> 0.95	.940
NFI	> 0.95	.940
TLI	> 0.95	.642
RMSEA	< 0.05	.391

Legend:

CMIN/DF	-	Chi-Square/Degrees of Freedom
NFI	-	Normed Fit Index
TLI	-	Tucker-Lewis Index
CFI	-	Comparative Fit Index
GFI	-	Goodness of Fit Index
RMSEA	-	Root Means Square of Error Approximation
Pclose	-	P of Close Fit
P-value	-	Probability Level

Overall, the goodness-of-fit indices consistently indicate that Path Analysis Model 1 does not provide an acceptable fit to the observed data. Most fit indices failed to meet their recommended criteria, particularly CMIN/DF (64.930), TLI (0.642), RMSEA (0.391), P-value (0.000), and P-Close (0.000), while GFI (0.933), CFI (0.940), and NFI (0.940) were only marginally below the required thresholds. These findings suggest that the hypothesized model requires re-specification or modification before it can be considered an adequate representation of the relationships among the study variables.

Generated Model 2. Shown in Figure 3 is the generated path analysis model 2. It displayed the interrelationships of the exogenous variables (work engagement, sense of community, and job satisfaction) and their causal relationship on the endogenous variable, public service motivation. Moreover, Figure 3 showed that work engagement has a significant relationship with job satisfaction; the two exogenous variables influenced the sense of community, and additionally, work engagement and job satisfaction directly influenced public service motivation.

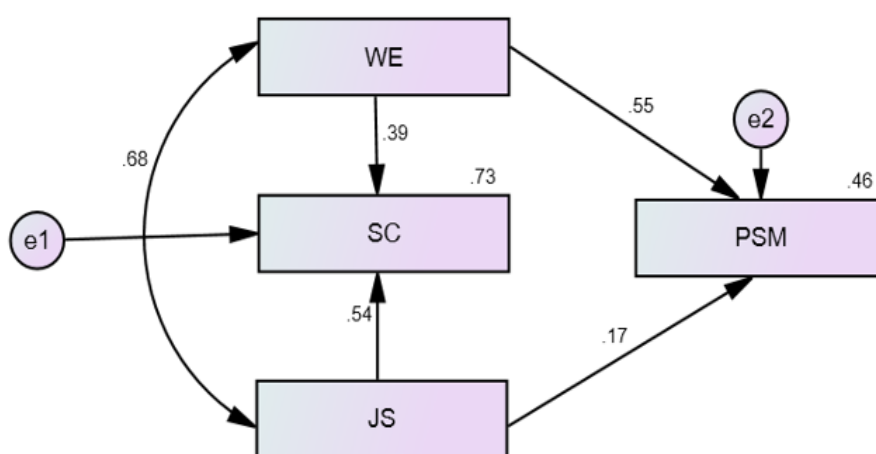


Figure 3: Path Analysis Model 2 in Standardized Solution

Legend: WE – Work Engagement
 SC – Sense of Community
 JS – Job Satisfaction
 PSM – Public Service Motivation

While Model 2 showed some acceptable indices, such as GFI (.987), CFI (.991), and NFI (.990), it ultimately failed to provide an adequate fit. The P-Close value (.012), CMIN/DF (10.848), P-value (.001), TLI (.945), and RMSEA (.153) all fell outside their acceptable criterion ranges, indicating that the discrepancies between the observed data and the model-implied covariance matrix were too large and that the model requires substantial improvement to accurately reproduce the observed covariance matrix.

Additionally, when comparing Model 2 to Model 1, there was a noticeable improvement in all the indexes, such as GFI (from .933 to .987), CFI (from .940 to .991), NFI (from .940 to .990), TLI (from .642 to .945), and RSMEA (from .391 to .153). The P-close improved from .000 to .012; CMIN/DF from 64.930 to 10.848; and P-value from .000 to .001. However, the model was still found not to fit because several criteria failed to reach desired values, as shown in Table 9, making Model 2 a poor fit.

Table XI: Goodness of Fit Measures of Path Analysis Model 2

INDEX	CRITERION	MODEL FIT VALUE
P-Close	> 0.05	.012
CMIN/DF	0 < value < 2	10.848
P-Value	> 0.05	.001
GFI	> 0.95	.987
CFI	> 0.95	.991

NFI	> 0.95	.990
TLI	> 0.95	.945
RMSEA	< 0.05	.153

Legend:

CMIN/DF	-	Chi-Square/Degrees of Freedom
NFI	-	Normed Fit Index
TLI	-	Tucker-Lewis Index
CFI	-	Comparative Fit Index
GFI	-	Goodness of Fit Index
RMSEA	-	Root Means Square of Error Approximation
Pclose	-	P of Close Fit
P-value	-	Probability Level

Generated Model 3. Lastly, the generated Model 3 exhibited in Figure 4, which showed the interrelationships of the exogenous variables and their causal relationship on the endogenous variable, was a modified version of Models 1 and 2.

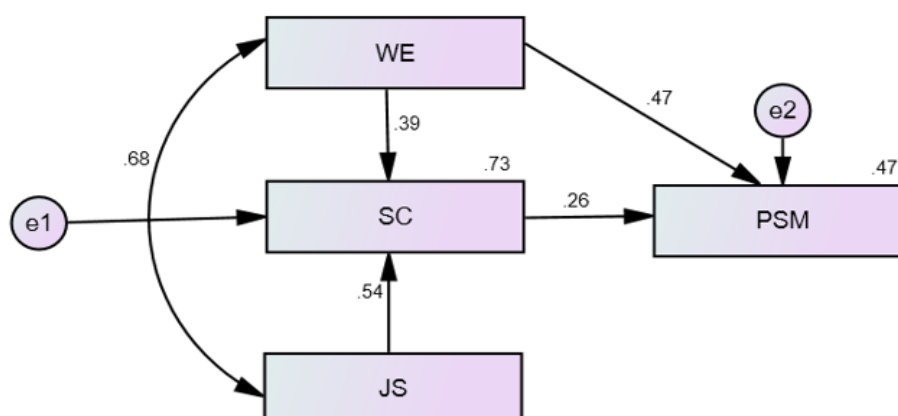


Figure 4: Path Analysis Model 3 in Standardized Solution

Legend:

WE	–	Work Engagement
SC	–	Sense of Community
JS	–	Job Satisfaction
PSM	–	Public Service Motivation

The modifications revealed that work engagement has a significant relationship with job satisfaction; the two exogenous variables influence the sense of community, and work engagement and sense of community directly influence public service motivation. Since all indices in Model 3 meet the criteria listed in Table 10, it was determined that Model 3 consistently provides an excellent fit to the data, disproving the null hypothesis that there was no best-fit model. Furthermore, substantial improvements among indexes were manifested in Model 3 when compared to Model 2, specifically: P-Close (.012 to .641), CMIN/DF (10.848 to .577), P-value (.001 to .448), GFI (.987 to .999), CFI (.991 to 1.000), NFI (.990 to .999), TLI (.945 to 1.002), and RMSEA (.153 to .000), which all fall within acceptable ranges.

Table X: Goodness of Fit Measures of Path Analysis Model 3

INDEX	CRITERION	MODEL FIT VALUE
P-Close	> 0.05	.641
CMIN/DF	0 < value < 2	.577
P-Value	> 0.05	.448
GFI	> 0.95	.999

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CFI	> 0.95	1.000
NFI	> 0.95	.999
TLI	> 0.95	1.002
RMSEA	< 0.05	.000

Legend:

CMIN/DF	-	Chi-Square/Degrees of Freedom
NFI	-	Normed Fit Index
TLI	-	Tucker-Lewis Index
CFI	-	Comparative Fit Index
GFI	-	Goodness of Fit Index
RMSEA	-	Root Means Square of Error Approximation
Pclose	-	P of Close Fit
P-value	-	Probability Level

It can be concluded that a best-fit model exists for predicting public service motivation among public secondary school teachers in Region XI, clearly demonstrating the significance of work engagement, sense of community, and job satisfaction as predictors. Current research consistently confirms that work engagement is key to strengthening PSM, as engaged employees adopting public values align personal objectives with societal goals and demonstrate altruistic actions, supported by empirical evidence showing engagement mediates the relationship between supportive settings and public service values (Santosa, Purwanto, Noto & Utomo, 2025; Ding & Wang, 2023; Mazzetti, Schaufeli, & Guglielmi, 2023; Zhang & Xu, 2022; Levitats & Vigoda-Gadot, 2023; Kim & Park, 2024; Li, Chen, & Zhang, 2022). Furthermore, a sense of community is a critical factor that reinforces shared objectives and dedication to the public good, amplifying civic engagement and perceived meaningfulness of public service work (Nini & Guhao, 2026; Niu, 2025; Toubøl, Carlsen, Nielsen, & Brincker, 2023; van der Hoven & Staats, 2022; Palumbo, 2025; Guhao, 2022, 2023).

Finally, job satisfaction plays a vital role in shaping and strengthening PSM, reflecting positive views that drive organizational commitment and the adoption of public service values (Guhao, 2020; Nini & Guhao, 2026). Empirical evidence indicates that job satisfaction reduces turnover intention, helps sustain public-oriented attitudes, and serves as a key pathway alongside work engagement for cultivating PSM (Lu & Chen, 2022; Gutinyua & Chang, 2023; Lim & Moon, 2025; Silva & Rodrigues, 2025). Within educational settings, satisfied teachers demonstrate stronger PSM, as satisfaction boosts their sense of achievement, loyalty, and commitment to helping students and the wider community, confirming that job satisfaction is not just an outcome but a vital foundational factor for public sector professionals (Guhao, 2022, 2023).

IV. CONCLUSION

This study's empirical results demonstrate that public secondary school teachers in Region XI exhibit remarkably high baseline levels of Public Service Motivation (PSM), Work Engagement, Sense of Community, and Job Satisfaction. The significant positive correlations among all variables led to the rejection of every null hypothesis, confirming that work engagement, sense of community, and job satisfaction are closely linked to teachers' intrinsic desire to serve. Structural equation modeling revealed that the most parsimonious best-fitting path model (Model 3) operates through a unique dynamic: work engagement and job satisfaction together shape the sense of community, which subsequently serves both as a direct predictor of PSM and as the key structural link mediating job satisfaction's effect on PSM. However, targeted indicator analyses expose underlying weaknesses beneath these high overall scores—specifically, cognitive overload during heavy workloads (low Absorption), fragile peer trust and recognition (low Membership), stagnant salary growth and limited promotion prospects (low Remuneration/Promotion Satisfaction), and a reluctance to accept personal losses without sufficient institutional backing (low Self-Sacrifice). Grounded in Perry's (1996) Public Service Motivation Theory and Blau's (1964) Social Exchange Theory, these findings establish that while educators possess a strong prosocial calling, sustaining that altruistic motivation depends heavily on reciprocal organizational support, structural community building, and systemic administrative relief.

To protect the strong baseline psychological states of Region XI educators, the Department of Education (DepEd) and school heads must implement targeted administrative actions addressing these specific indicator-level weaknesses. To mitigate low Absorption scores stemming from cognitive overload, regional and division leaders must strictly enforce

DepEd Order No. 002, s. 2024 to eliminate non-teaching administrative duties, thereby restoring instructional time and reducing workplace distractions. To address the lowest Sense of Community indicator (Membership), principals should establish structured peer mentoring, open dialogue circles, and clear recognition systems to build mutual trust among faculty. Furthermore, addressing lower satisfaction with Remuneration and Promotion requires DepEd policymakers to implement clear, merit-based, and predictable career advancement routes, such as DepEd Order No. 024, s. 2024, ensuring progression is tied to professional development. Finally, to address low Self-Sacrifice scores among teachers reluctant to endure personal losses, school leaders should eliminate the expectation of unpaid personal sacrifices in school operations by providing sufficient institutional resources, physical materials, and explicit work-life boundaries.

Because Model 3 positions the Sense of Community as the crucial link converting Job Satisfaction into PSM while Work Engagement directly influences PSM, educational leaders must intentionally reshape professional interactions to foster team cohesion. Division supervisors and principals should establish Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) and collaborative decision-making structures that reduce pedagogical isolation, operationalizing the perspectives of Morales (2024) and Boyd and Nowell (2022) that community is central to sustaining public service motivation. Teachers can leverage this structural guide by engaging in peer support networks and PLCs (Songcog & Guhao, 2024) to build collective resilience. By deliberately managing their energy and dedication to avoid burnout, educators can maintain a "sustainable self" (Ragmac & Labitad, 2025), turning everyday workplace satisfaction and engagement into a lasting dedication to the public good. Future researchers should extend the structural boundaries of the validated path model (Model 3) by employing longitudinal designs across various geographical settings to confirm the causal stability of these path relationships over time. Exploring other exogenous variables—such as organizational culture, digital burden, leadership styles, and specific compensation structures—is recommended to account for the remaining variance in teacher stress and motivation, alongside investigating possible moderating or mediating mechanisms between Job Satisfaction and PSM in cases where the Sense of Community may be weak.

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