

**PERCEPTIONS OF EMPLOYERS ABOUT THE MASTER OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION  
(MPA) PROGRAM AT TEXAS STATE UNIVERSITY**

By

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## **Abstract**

The purpose of this research is to describe the perceptions and opinions of employers about the graduates of the Master of Public Administration (MPA) program at Texas State University in regard to their knowledge, skills, and abilities. This research benefits the MPA program at Texas State University by knowing how the labor market perceives its graduates. An employer assessment survey was created to examine how effectively MPA graduates of Texas State University demonstrated their acquired knowledge, skills, and abilities at their respective workplace by surveying the perceptions and opinions of their employers. The employer assessment survey included four major categories, which were the MPA program mission statement, MPA program student learning outcomes, NASPAA accreditation standards for MPA program on student learning, and other relevant skill sets. Survey results revealed that most sub-categories in each of the four major categories achieved more than 80% of agreement percentages, which indicated that MPA graduates are meeting most of the expectations of these categories at their workplaces. This research study provided several recommendations for future study.

*Keywords:* employer assessment, public administration, abilities, knowledge, skills

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## Chapter 1: Introduction

Consider the following two scenarios:

In scenario one, Jennifer graduated from X University and is currently working for the California State Government. Jennifer was assigned to create a spreadsheet on cost and benefit analysis for the Department of Transportation. However, Jennifer was not able to complete the task because she did not know how to use the SPSS Statistics software.

In scenario two, Thomas graduated from Y University and is currently working for the federal government. Thomas was assigned to formulate a public policy on health and sanitation. However, Thomas did not have any knowledge about drafting a public policy and did not know how to draft policy memos.

To address such issues, educational institutions have developed various assessment methods to measure the performance of different programs to ensure that their graduates are better prepared to adapt to such situations. There is a need to seek feedback from stakeholders as a way to assess performance and create improvement. Stakeholders of higher education include governors, legislators, higher education policy makers, accrediting bodies, faculty, parents and students (Apostolou 1999, 178). Additionally, educational institutions use employer assessment of graduates to strengthen their educational programs.

There have been increased demands from government, accrediting bodies and the society at large in regard to the accountability of institutions for student learning. “Pressures to adopt assessment systems to demonstrate that an institution is achieving its educational goal hit public universities hardest; sensitive to political pressure and dependent on public opinion, state schools are an easy target” (Spangehl 1987, 35).

Many graduate programs have developed employer assessment surveys to obtain feedback from employers to gauge the level of competency and work performance of their graduates. For example, in nursing programs, since nurses respond to the needs of the community each day, feedback from the stakeholders about changing needs, the amount of preparation of nurses, and how nurses work along with other health care professionals to meet these needs is critical (Ryan & Hodson 1992, 198). Similarly, in chemical engineering programs, since engineers have to design and conduct research in laboratory as well as to conduct presentations and seminars on their projects, feedback from stakeholders about the skills of IT, numeracy, communication and problem solving is important (Grant & Dickson 2006, 25). Likewise, graduate programs of public administration need to assess the quality of their graduates because public administrators are required to work in an ever-changing working environment. Public administrators have the responsibility to think critically and respond effectively to new challenges and shortcomings. As public administrators, it is necessary to develop an understanding of different worldviews, values, and cultures related to diverse groups of people (White 2004, 111).

Therefore, this research concentrates on the perceptions and opinions of employers about the graduates of the Master of Public Administration (MPA) program at Texas State University in regard to their knowledge, skills, and abilities. According to Moore (2009), it is important to obtain the perceptions and opinions of employers because they are the stakeholders empowered to hire the alumni with the necessary knowledge and skills, which are the final product of the educational institutions.



## **Research Purpose**

The purpose of this research is to describe the perceptions and opinions of employers about the graduates of the Master of Public Administration (MPA) program at Texas State University in regard to their knowledge, skills, and abilities.

This research will use an employer assessment survey to examine how effectively MPA graduates of Texas State University demonstrated their acquired knowledge, skills, and abilities at their respective workplace by surveying the perceptions and opinions of their employers.

According to Moore (2009), it is important to gather data from employers of MPA graduates because the graduates and their employers are the ultimate users of the acquired knowledge and skills of the program. In addition, it is necessary to understand what consumers of educational outcomes anticipate in order to effectively provide a desired program outcome (Apostolou 1999, 193).

According to Castleberry (2006), outcomes assessment is an effective and persuasive method to inform donors, consumers, and the community that an organizational program is effective and impactful. In addition, the Council for Higher Education Accreditation describes the learning outcomes of students as "the knowledge, skills, and abilities that a student has attained at the end of his or her engagement in a particular set of higher education experiences" (CHEA 2003, 5).

## **Research Contributions**

This research benefits the MPA program at Texas State University by providing information about how the labor market perceives its graduates. This research presents what employers expect MPA graduates to know, and how MPA graduates of Texas State University present themselves in the eyes of their employers.

Besides that, this research will contribute to the accreditation process for the MPA program of Texas State University. The National Association of Schools of Public Affairs and Administration (NASPAA) accredits MPA programs (NASPAA, n.d.). The data obtained from this research can be used as part of the information needed for the next NASPAA reaccreditation process.

### **Summary of Chapters**

This research study is organized into six chapters. Chapter two explores the scholarly literature regarding the educational program assessment efforts, the assessment in higher education and Master of Public Administration programs, assessments that focus on students, alumni, and employers. Chapter three presents the conceptual framework of the employer assessment survey for the MPA program at Texas State University using categories from its mission statement, NASPAA standards of curriculum components, MPA program student learning outcomes, and other skill sets employers expect. Chapter four describes the methodology of the research and operationalizes the conceptual framework. Chapter five discusses the results of the employer assessment survey using simple descriptive statistics. Chapter six presents a conclusion and summary of the results, as well as recommendations for future research.

## **Chapter 2: Literature Review**

### **Chapter Purpose**

The purpose of this chapter is to present a review of the scholarly literature that relates to employer assessment of graduates. In particular, this chapter reviews literature on some specific categories, which are the 1) mission statement of the MPA program, 2) student learning outcomes of the MPA program, 3) NASPAA accreditation standards for MPA program on student learning, and 4) other relevant skill sets. This chapter concludes with the presentation of a conceptual framework.

### **1. Mission Statement of the MPA Program**

A mission statement is defined as statement of goals and objectives or statement of purpose (Meacham 2008, 21). In many organizations, the mission statement guides the strategic planning of the entire organization, from allocating resources and planning for the future to holding administrators accountable or building the skills needed for its people. A clear mission statement prevents employees in an organization from developing competing missions or using resources that are conflicting to the mission (Emery 1996, 51). Similarly, in higher education, mission statements provide distinctive guidelines for departments, colleges and the university. According to Meacham (2008, 21), “mission statements are declarations of a campus's rationale and purpose; its responsibilities toward students and the community; and its vision of student, faculty, and institutional excellence.”

In higher education, the mission statement reflects the critical challenges of programs and the core competencies of faculty. It serves as a guideline to address problems, move conversations among faculty and administrators forward, and provide effective and sustainable solutions (Meacham 2008, 21). A program that clearly understands its mission can identify

among competing goals and establish better priorities than those who are uncertain about their mission (Dominick 1990, 30). The mission statement also shapes the perspectives of external stakeholders. In recent years, colleges and universities are increasingly being held accountable by many groups, such as the federal government, taxpayers, and accrediting bodies (Palmer & Short 2008, 455).

The mission statement is also required by accreditation agencies to assess a program and ensure that educational goals are met. For example, the mission statement for MPA and MPP programs required by the National Association of Schools of Public Affairs and Administration (NASPAA) as part of the accreditation process. In many past research studies on employers' assessment of a program, the mission statement has been assessed to ensure that graduates possess the required knowledge, skills, and abilities that align with its mission statement (Escobar, 2008; Cavazos, 2000; Hermes, 2002; Moore, 2009).

The current mission statement of the MPA program at Texas State University is “to cultivate practical, research-oriented students for careers as reflective practitioners guided by democratic values, integrity, and service” (Texas State University MPA Program Mission, n.d.). MPA graduates are expected to translate the mission statement into action at each individual's working environment.

### **1.1 Integrate theoretical and applied approaches of public management in public service**

According to Denhardt (2018, 149), it has become increasingly clear throughout the past several decades that certain elements of knowledge, skills, and abilities required in the public sector cannot be fully developed through theoretical approaches. Learning through experience has proven to be significantly beneficial to graduates (Denhardt 2018, 149; Knouse & Fontenot,

2008, 61). For example, learning about communications is inadequate; an individual must learn to communicate. Similarly, learning about leadership is insufficient; an individual must learn to lead. An abstract understanding of a concept, supplemented by an experience, will allow graduates to achieve a wholistic learning outcome.

An example of an applied approach is an internship program. A research study conducted by Ko and Sidhu (2012) revealed that interns working in the public sector were exposed to a variety of working experiences, such as research and information support (25.79%), operations (12.10%), human resource management (6.32%), finance and corporate services (5.79%), and public affairs management (5.79%). Besides that, internship programs expose students to the inner workings of public service. These exposures remove unnecessary negative stereotypes of public service that may hinder excellent graduates from pursuing a career in the public sector (Holzer & Rabin 1987, 5).

## **1.2 Conduct research**

Public administrators rely on information to make effective decisions, to monitor results, and to examine effects. By mastering the skill of conducting research, public administrators will be able to gather, use, and analyze information appropriately. Since public administrators are accountable to politicians, citizens, recipients of program services and funding agencies, it is important for them to be competent in conducting research to learn about a group of people, to know how much a program will cost, and what can be accomplished for every dollar spent (O'Sullivan, Rassel, Berner & Taliaferro 2017, 1).

Therefore, the MPA program at Texas State University includes the Applied Research Project (ARP) as part of the core requirements of this program. The ARP experience helps students understand the research process and develop key research skills. To complete the ARP,

students are required to complete three courses, which include “Applied Research Methodology”, “Research Design & Proposal Development for Public Administration”, and “Applied Research Project”.

### **1.3 Uphold democratic values in public service**

In public service, the value of democracy is crucial because it is inadequate to only use charisma and tactics to convince the public to adopt new approaches that a public administrator perceives to be beneficial (Denhardt & Campbell 2006, 569). It is deemed to be a failure if the goals being pursued are not moral, not based on the public interest, and not rooted in the values of democracy and citizenship (Denhardt & Campbell 2006, 569).

In addition, it is also crucial to understand workplace democracy in the public sector. According to Cheney (1995, 170), workplace democracy includes efforts made to provide employees greater control and autonomy in decision-making within the organization. Bachrach and Botwinick (1992, 163) emphasized that employees should be given an equal opportunity in decision making at all levels of the organization in which they work.

### **1.4 Uphold integrity in public service**

“Integrity is the corner stone of good governance” (Evans 2012, 97). According to Nieuwenburg (2007, 215), the integrity of a government institution relates to how its employees think, feel, and act in certain ways. Public administrators who uphold integrity in their daily work by being consistent in their beliefs, words, and actions will eventually breed trust from the people. Good governance is achieved when the people trust their government.

The MPA program at Texas State University includes “Public Management and Ethics” as a core course to educate students on the importance to uphold integrity in public service. In

addition, the MPA program also emphasizes the “University Honor Code” is each course syllabus to ensure that students are trained to be honest and truthful.

### **1.5 Commit to public service**

Commitment at work is highly required in public service because public administrators are often faced with highly complex problems with limited funding and high expectations from the public (Nyhan 1999, 58). In the United States, the public sector is the primary provider of public and social services. Therefore, public administrators are expected to be committed at work to deliver worthwhile services to the people (Rainey 1982, 289).

## **2. Student Learning Outcomes of the MPA Program**

According to the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA 2003, 5), student learning outcomes are defined as "the knowledge, skills, and abilities that a student has attained at the end (or as a result) of his or her engagement in a particular set of higher education experiences." The elements of the student learning outcomes are important to the government, students and the public as these stakeholders are the “judges” of the quality of an institution or program with the evidence of graduates’ academic excellence (CHEA 2002, 1). Hoole (2005, 6) stressed that the assessment of student learning outcomes is an effective way to allow stakeholders to know that the program has made a significant difference in the academic success of graduates.

For more than 50 years, the Master of Public Administration (MPA) has become the central degree program in public service (NASPAA, 2009). As such, the emphasis on assessing the skills that MPA graduates should acquire become even stronger, especially when the MPA program is known to be a skill-based education (Powell 2009, 269). Each MPA program is

responsible for constantly reviewing and reevaluating their student learning outcomes to ensure that graduates are prepared well for the working world.

The student learning outcomes of the MPA program at Texas State University were retrieved from the website of the MPA program (Texas State University, n.d.). The program website states that:

“Students will be prepared for careers as managers and leaders in public service if they are able to meet the following objectives.

Student Learning Outcomes:

1. Students can demonstrate ability to communicate effectively in writing.
2. Students will demonstrate comprehension of public policy and program formation as well as the institutional and legal framework of public policy and management.
3. Students can demonstrate the ability to communicate effectively orally.
4. Students can demonstrate the ability to see patterns and classify information, concepts and theories in public policy and administration.
5. Students can demonstrate the ability to use reasoned arguments to judge evidence in public policy and management.”

Assessment of the student learning outcomes is a reliable method to determine whether the MPA program has been effective in educating its students to become managers and leaders in the field of public service (Moore, 2009).

### **2.1 Be a manager in public service**

The role of a public administrator can vary from being responsible for the development and management of a community, to the management of the environment, crises, public safety and so on. Besides that, public administrators are responsible for managing public policies such as to determine suitable policies, compute the costs and benefits, and analyze consequences and



externalities that may result from different choices made. This is because many elected representatives, especially from local levels, may not understand practical consequences of proposed policies (Anderson 2012, 560).

## **2.2 Be a leader in public service**

Leadership is a process where a person persuades and guides the members of a group or organization towards achieving certain objectives (Yukl, 1989; Greenburg and Baron, 1997). Effective leaders are essential to the success of an organization because these leaders enhance positive organizational cultures, increase motivation, clarify mission and objectives, and eventually bring the organization to achieve greater heights (Ingraham & Getha-Taylor 2004, 95). In public service, effective leaders contribute to the development and sustenance of the federal, state and local governments.

The MPA program at Texas State University organizes engagement and networking workshops with local government leaders each semester to allow students to learn about public sector leadership from the senior officials of local governments. These leaders share their knowledge and experience about working in the public sector, which include tips for being successful as a public administrator. This experience allows students to understand leadership expectations in public service.

## **2.3 Communicate effectively in writing**

Manns and Waugh (1989, 891) stressed that “no ability is as important to the public manager as the ability to speak and write effectively.” The ability of a student to synthesize concepts and experience is demonstrated by the student’s capability to communicate effectively in writing (Koliba 2004, 304). This skill is important in the public sector because public

administrators are required to communicate with different stakeholders, such as governmental agencies and to the public, on issues related to public affairs and safety of the public.

According to Lee (2006, 35), the skills of writing in public administration can affect how successful a policy will be formulated and how a public manager can deliver detail and sensitive messages to subordinates using email or memos. A research study conducted by Sinclair (2005) revealed that 95% of city managers regard writing skills in public administration as a very important skill to master. This is because politicians, government agencies, the media, and the public frequently request letters from public administrators regarding particular issues.

#### **2.4 Comprehend public policy and program formation**

Public administrators are required to comprehend public policy and program formation because they are responsible to government officials in creating and implementing policy (Lee 2006, 24). In addition, Sinclair (2005) emphasized that understanding public policy and program formation is important to ensure that the delivery of government programs and services to the public are conducted effectively. Public administrators must be able to formulate policy and foresee possible consequences that may happen during the implementation and evaluation stages of policy and programs (Lee 2006, 26). Therefore, the MPA program of Texas State University includes “Public Policy Processes” as a core course requirement to ensure that graduates are trained to present their analysis with objectivity and professionalism.

## **2.5 Comprehend institutional and legal framework of public policy and management**

According to Lee (2006, 29), public administrators must comprehend the basic structure of institutional and legal framework of public policy and management of their organization as well as their role within the organization. This is because public administrators are constantly bargaining and negotiating in order to receive funds and pass legislation to endorse policy.

In addition, public administrators must constantly be aware of the legal processes that apply to their organization or agency to avoid lawsuits. The institutional and legal framework of public policy and management serve to maintain the public trust by delivering services effectively to the public and maintaining the rule of law (Lee 2006, 29). To ensure that graduates are able to comprehend the above skills at their workplace, the MPA program at Texas State University includes “Public Law” and “Applied Research Project” as core course requirements.

## **2.6 Communicate effectively orally**

According to Morreale, Osborn, & Pearson (2000, 1), competence in oral communication, which includes speaking and listening, is a requirement for success in academic, personal, and professional life. In many occupations, strong communication skills are required. Employers identify communication as one of the basic competencies every graduate should have, emphasizing that the ability to communicate is valuable to obtain employment and maintain excellence job performance.

Public administrators are often required to speak before public audiences, the media, interest groups, politicians, and other stakeholders. Denhardt (2001, 529) stated that “administrators not only need to know about communications, they need to be able to communicate.” Therefore, the ability and confidence to speak before large crowds and get the message across are essential skills that public administrators must possess.

## **2.7 See patterns and classify information, concepts, and theories in public policy and administration**

The ability to recognize patterns and categorize information, concepts, and theories in public policy and administration is crucial because these skills are essential in the public sector. For example, when several robbery cases have been reported in a particular city, public administrators should have the capability to identify patterns and underlying concepts of these robbery cases, categorize the similarities together, and analyze the differences, in order to understand the pattern of the crime and inform the public.

As such, these skills are being taught in the Applied Research Project (ARP) course of the MPA program at Texas State University. MPA students are required to learn to identify patterns and information related to a particular research topic of their choice. For example, students are taught to understand patterns of scholarship and recognize key concepts related to an area, as well as to know which mode of data collection was used.

## **2.8 Use reasoned arguments to judge evidence in public policy and management**

Reasoning is a valuable skill. Reasoning involves the ability to understand an issue through critical, analytical, and creative reasonings. For example, scientists have to reason logically to understand the causes of phenomena. Similarly, public administrators are expected to justify their rationale for adopting and implementing programs with the right policies (Thomson 2009, 2).

To reason an argument effectively, public administrators should include substantive evidence. According to Sanderson (2002), evidence-based policy ensures more reliable knowledge of ‘what works’ in public policy and management and retains its relevance and importance. Evidence found in public policy are gathered by applied research from inside or outside of government agencies. These include general evidence about trends and explanations

of administrative and social environments, as well as specific evidence gathered through performance indicators and the evaluations of programs (Nutley, Davies and Walter 2003; Oakley, Gough, & Thomas, 2005).

### **3. NASPAA Accreditation Standards for MPA Program on Student Learning**

The Network of Schools of Public Policy, Affairs, and Administration (NASPAA), is the global standard in public service education. NASPAA is a nonprofit 501(c)(3) membership association with more than 300 institutional member schools at U.S. and non-U.S. universities that award degrees in public administration, public policy, public affairs, nonprofit and related fields. NASPAA is the recognized global accreditor of master's degree programs in these fields (NASPAA, n.d.).

According to NASPAA Accreditation, “the purpose of these standards for professional master’s degree programs in public affairs/policy/administration is to promote and maintain educational quality” (NASPAA Accreditation, n.d.). The required competencies, as retrieved from NASPAA Accreditation Standards for master’s degree programs, are as follow:

- Ability to lead and manage in public governance;
- Ability to participate in and contribute to the policy process;
- Ability to analyze, synthesize, think critically, solve problems and make decisions;
- Ability to articulate and apply a public service perspective;
- Ability to communicate and interact productively with a diverse and changing workforce and citizenry.

#### **3.1 Lead and manage in public governance**

Public administrators are responsible for effective and efficient management of an organization. Elmore (1986, 70) revealed that although analysis and economy theory are still the

primary focus in public sector programs, there is an increased number of programs which have begun to prepare students for managerial roles in public administration. Lee (2006) stressed that public administration students must acquire an extensive knowledge in organizational and management concepts in order to effectively lead and manage public organizations. According to Neumann (1996, 412), students in public administration programs must comprehend “the nature of a public organization, how is the public organization related to its environment, and what does it mean to manage or to administer the public organizations.”

### **3.2 Participate in and contribute to the policy process**

According to Dunn (2015), public policy is derived from decisions made by government institutions. The process of formulating a policy is complex because it involves multiple stakeholders, such as government agencies, professionals, and educators. In the public sector, public administrators are expected to comprehend different policies and know how policies affect their organization.

The comprehension of policies is important because public administrators are responsible to government agencies in creating and implementing policy. “Government agencies have evolved from small, single-function operations with relatively simple unitary structures and direct lines of political control into large, multi-division agencies with multiple channels of accountability” (Elmore 1986, 74). Therefore, the MPA program at Texas State University includes “Public Policy Processes” as a core course requirement to ensure graduates are well-versed in public policy processes, and offers several electives in environmental policy, transportation policy, and water policy.

### **3.3 Analyze, synthesize, think critically, solve problems and make decisions**

Careers in public administration involve the ability to analyze, synthesize, think critically, solve problems and make decisions. As such, the core competencies of an MPA program include communication, analytical, information management, financial management, performance management, management of change, decision-making, and group interaction skills (Roberts & Pavlak, 2002).

Sinclair (2005) emphasized that the ability to analyze information precisely enables public administrators to solve problems effectively. In addition, public administrators who comprehend the theoretical and practical concepts associated with decision-making will enable easier resolution of problems.

### **3.4 Articulate and apply a public service perspective**

A public service perspective involves the ability to understand an issue from the viewpoint of the people. The ability to articulate and apply a public service perspective is crucial to the well-being of the people. This skill emphasizes the ability of public administrators to put the interest of people first and to constantly review how present and future resources can benefit the people at a maximum level. For example, when a foreign investor would like to contribute to the development of the city, public administrators should have the ability to ensure that the contributions do benefit the people, and not just the interest of the investor.

As such, public administrators are expected to critically evaluate how the program, policy, or potential collaborations with organizations can benefit the people. In cities with a diverse community, public administrators should also demonstrate understanding of the importance of diverse perspectives and recognize the barriers for inclusion of some perspectives. In addition, they should also have the ability to critically evaluate political environments and

identify strategies to ensure positive development towards the city and its people (Upper Iowa University MPA Program, n.d.).

### **3.5 Communicate and interact productively with a diverse and changing workforce and citizenry**

With the increasingly changing demographics of the US population, increased opportunities in effective public sector arise. As such, this requires public sector organizations “to develop more inclusive work cultures that have a better understanding of the many ways people are different from one another and/or different from the organizations” (White 2004, 114; White & Rice 2005, 3). Cultural competency skills within the public sector enable increased effectiveness of the public sector and the public it serves (Carrizales 2010, 593).

The National Center for Cultural Competence (NCCC) defines cultural competency as “having the knowledge, skills, and values to work effectively with diverse populations and to adapt institutional policies and professional practices to meet the unique needs of client populations” (Satterwhite & Teng 2007, 2). Social issues such as justice, fairness, and equality are central in public administration. Therefore, public administrators are required to be culturally competent to effectively redress injustice, reallocate resources, and improve the environment in which people live and work. On many occasions, public administrators are expected to interact productively with a diverse and changing workforce and citizenry.

### **4. Other Relevant Skill Sets**

Past research studies have emphasized other knowledge, skills, and abilities that employers believe MPA graduates should possess. A research study conducted by Karakaya and Karakaya (1996, 14) revealed that employers expect MPA graduates to possess research skills, interpersonal skills, oral and written communication skills, and knowledge of subject area.



Sinclair (2005, 57) and Lee (2006, 53) note that employers perceive the skills to think through ethical dilemmas, bargaining and negotiation skills, program assessment skills, project management skills, quantitative analysis skills, and communication skills are very important in public administration.

Therefore, other relevant skills that are elaborated in this section are (1) program assessment skills, (2) quantitative analysis skills, (3) project management skills, (4) interpersonal skills with superiors, subordinates, and peers, (5) bargaining and negotiation skills, and (6) ability to think through ethical dilemmas.

#### **4.1 Program assessment skills**

The decision to implement a program and the process of assessing the program can either strengthen or destroy the public administrator's career (Lee 2016, 26). This is because implementation of a policy or program creates an environment of uncertainty. Polivka and Stryker (1983, 255) emphasized that public administrators are expected to provide elected officials with justification for decisions using "objective, rational criteria drawn from data-oriented policy analyses and program evaluations." In many situations, public administrators must be aware of the political pressures involved in the program assessment stage. To acquire these skills, students of the MPA program at Texas State University can take courses "Program Evaluation", "Public Performance Management", and a research practicum course.

#### **4.2 Quantitative analysis skills**

According to Lee (2006, 27), qualitative and quantitative analysis skills are required in the decision-making process of the public sector. Besides case studies and past experience which enable public managers to make important decisions, statistics and data analysis provide more accuracy and assurance in decision-making that impact policy and regulation in the public sector.

In order to create effective policy which leads to successful implementation, public administrators must be competent in qualitative and quantitative techniques of analysis. The capability to analyze information in detail enables public administrators to solve problems successfully (Sinclair, 2005). Therefore, the MPA program at Texas State University includes “Statistics” as a pre-requisite course that students must take if they do not have prior knowledge in statistics.

#### **4.3 Project management skills**

Project management is defined as “the application of knowledge, skills, tools, and techniques to project activities to meet the project requirements” (Richman 2012, 7). Project management can be classified into several functions, such as planning, directing, organizing, staffing, and coordinating. Project management skills are important in the public sector because public administrators are often expected to lead and manage various projects, such as projects to improve the transportation system in a city or projects to repair water leaking in a particular town.

#### **4.4 Interpersonal skills with superiors, subordinates, and peers**

Interpersonal skills are associated with skills that people use each day to connect with each other, both at the personal and professional levels. These skills include verbal communication, non-verbal communication, listening skills, negotiation skills, problem solving, and assertiveness (Ibrahim & Jaafar 2017, 935). Past studies have revealed that graduates with excellent interpersonal skills attract employers across the country and around the world because effective collaboration and participation with co-workers, which produces solid teamwork, is the key to be successful in any industry (Humburg, van der Velden, & Verhagen, 2013; Omar, Manaf, Mohd, Kassim, & Aziz, 2012).

#### **4.5 Bargaining and Negotiation skills**

Bargaining and negotiation skills are critical in many fields such as business, diplomacy, and customer service. According to Roloff, Putnam, and Anastasiou, (2003, 801), effective negotiators often manage to obtain resources, prepare contracts, and close challenging agreements in situations that might have been otherwise. In addition, effective negotiators are able to manage conflicts successfully and able to adapt, analyze, and address complex problems.

In the public sector, bargaining and negotiation skills are common, especially in contract bargaining and negotiation. When the government bids out jobs to the private sector, this allows companies to compete for service delivery (Wistrich 1998). Government contracts often provide rewarding offers for private companies, which can lead to misappropriations of public funds, corruption, and poor service delivery. Therefore, public administrators must be competent in working with private sectors to ensure that work is accomplished in a professional and timely manner.

#### **4.6 Ability to think through ethical dilemmas**

The ability to think through ethical dilemmas is vital as a public administrator because public administrators are confronted with ethical dilemmas on a routine basis. According to Bowman and Williams (1997, 522), ethical dilemmas in public management are pervasive because the very nature of the political system creates the possibility for public servants to be open to corruption. Simon and Eitzen (1990, 209) defined corruption in government as “any illegal or unethical use of governmental authority for personal or political gain.” Gilman and Lewis (1996, 517) emphasized that public administrators must constantly remain intellectually open to dialogues on shared values, norms, and structures.

Menzel (1997) revealed that programs that include the study of ethics in their core curricula have a positive impact on the profession of public administration. Undeniably, the ability to understand and manage ethical dilemmas is a skill that every public administrator should have. Therefore, the MPA program at Texas State University includes “Public Management and Ethics” as a core course requirement.

### Conceptual Framework Linked to Literature Review

**Table 2.1 Conceptual Framework Linked to Literature Review**

Descriptive Categories and Subcategories Literature	Sources
<p><b>1. Mission Statement of the MPA Program</b>            MPA graduates of Texas State University demonstrate the ability to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1.1 Integrate theoretical and applied approaches of public management in public service</li> <li>1.2 Conduct research</li> <li>1.3 Uphold democratic values in public service</li> <li>1.4 Uphold integrity in public service</li> <li>1.5 Commit to public service</li> </ul>	Haq, 2011; Hermes, 2002; Moore, 2009; Texas State University MPA Program Mission, n.d.; Texas State University NASPAA Self-Study Report, 2002; Whitaker & Berner, 2018.
<p><b>2. Student Learning Outcomes of the MPA Program</b>            MPA graduates of Texas State University demonstrate the ability to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2.1 Be a manager in public service</li> <li>2.2 Be a leader in public service</li> <li>2.3 Communicate effectively in writing</li> <li>2.4 Comprehend public policy and program formation</li> <li>2.5 Comprehend institutional and legal framework of public policy and management</li> <li>2.6 Communicate effectively orally</li> <li>2.7 See patterns and classify information, concepts, and theories in public policy and administration</li> <li>2.8 Use reasoned arguments to judge evidence in public policy and management</li> </ul>	Astin, 1993; Castleberry, 2006; Escobar, 2008; Garza, 2001; Hermes, 2002; Joseph & Gardner, 1999; NASPAA Accredited, 2009; Sembor, 1993; Symth, 2010; Texas State University MPA Program Mission, n.d.
<p><b>3. NASPAA Accreditation Standards for MPA Program on Student Learning</b>            MPA graduates of Texas State University demonstrate the ability to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3.1 Lead and manage in public governance</li> <li>3.2 Participate in and contribute to the policy process</li> </ul>	Aristigueta & Gomes, 2006; Blake & Paulette, 2005; Castleberry, 2006; Cavazos, 2000; Escobar, 2008;

<p>3.3 Analyze, synthesize, think critically, solve problems and make decisions</p> <p>3.4 Articulate and apply a public service perspective</p> <p>3.5 Communicate and interact productively with a diverse and changing workforce and citizenry</p>	<p>Hermes, 2002;  Lee, 2006;  NASPAA Accredited, 2009;  Petak, 1985;  Sinclair, 2005;  Texas State University NASPAA Self-Study Report, 2002.</p>
<p><b>4. Other Relevant Skill Sets</b></p> <p>MPA graduates of Texas State University demonstrate:</p> <p>4.1 Program assessment skills</p> <p>4.2 Quantitative analysis skills</p> <p>4.3 Project management skills</p> <p>4.4 Interpersonal skills with superiors, subordinates, and peers</p> <p>4.5 Bargaining and negotiation skills</p> <p>4.6 Ability to think through ethical dilemmas</p>	<p>Arthur, Brennan, &amp; Weert, 2007;  Bailey &amp; Mayer, 1992;  Crewson &amp; Fisher, 1997;  Haq, 2011;  Hermes, 2002;  Holzer &amp; Weiwei, 2007;  HY, Waugh, &amp; Nelson, 1987;  Karakaya &amp; Karakaya, 1996;  Kerrigan &amp; Hinton, 1980;  Kirlin, 2002;  Texas State University NASPAA Self-Study Report, 2002;  Westberg, Hallgren, &amp; Setterwall, 2010;  Whitaker &amp; Berner, 2018;  Zhang, Lee, &amp; Yang, 2018.</p>

**Chapter Summary**

This chapter provided a review of the scholarly literature that relates to employer assessment of graduates which developed the conceptual framework. The conceptual framework consists of four distinctive categories: 1) mission statement of the MPA program, 2) student learning outcomes of the MPA program, 3) NASPAA accreditation standards for MPA program on student learning, and 4) other relevant skill sets. In the next chapter, the methodology of the employer assessment survey is discussed.

## **Chapter 3: Methodology**

### **Chapter Purpose**

The purpose of this chapter is to present information on the methodology used to gather data on the perceptions of employers about the graduates of the Master of Public Administration (MPA) program at Texas State University in regard to their knowledge, skills, and abilities. This chapter includes descriptions of the research setting, research participants, survey as a method of data collection, strengths and weaknesses of survey, research procedure, and human subject protection. This chapter also presents the operationalization table.

### **Research Setting**

Texas State University is a public university in Texas with its main campus located in San Marcos and a recently developed campus in Round Rock. The city of San Marcos is located between San Antonio and Austin. As of 2017, San Marcos has an estimated population of 63,071, with an annual growth rate of 2.62% (San Marcos TX Population, 2019). On the other hand, the city of Round Rock is located north of Austin. As of 2017, Round Rock has an estimated population of 123,678 with an annual growth rate of 2.34% (Round Rock TX Population, 2019).

Texas State University opened its doors in 1903 to 303 students. As of 2018, the enrollment of students has significantly increased to 38,661 (Texas State University, 2019). Texas State University serves a very diversified student body, which includes domestic and international students. The spring 2019 enrollment included 45% White, 37% Hispanic, 11% African-American, and 5% Others (Texas State University, 2019). In addition, the population of international students has grown significantly throughout the years. As of fall 2018, 754 international students from 85 countries were represented from around the world at Texas State

University (Office of International Affairs, 2018). As of spring 2019, Texas State University offers 98 bachelor's, 93 master's, and 14 doctoral degree programs. The motto of the university is "The rising Star of Texas" (Texas State University, 2019).

The Master of Public Administration (MPA) program at Texas State University is offered through the Department of Political Science. The MPA program was established in 1973 (Texas State University Public Administration Program 2002, 7) and was certified in 1982 by NASPAA, the accrediting agency for public administration and affairs programs. The program was accredited for the first time in 1989 (Texas State University Public Administration Program 2002, 7). Later on, the program was reaccredited in 1996, 2002, 2009, and 2016. It is due for another reaccreditation in 2023.

The MPA program is a 39-credit-hour program. The program consists of 30 core credit hours, including a 3-hour capstone project called an Applied Research Project (ARP), and nine elective credit hours (Texas State University MPA Program Requirements, n.d.). In addition, students are required to pass a comprehensive oral examination, based on their ARP, during the final semester of their studies. Beyond that, there are two prerequisite courses in this program: a statistics course for students who do not have prior knowledge in statistics; and an internship course for students who do not have public sector working experience (Texas State University MPA Program Requirements, n.d.).

### **Research Participants**

The research participants are employers of MPA graduates of Texas State University. Generally, these employers work in local and state governments, government agencies, and nonprofit organizations. Employers must fulfill the criteria below to participate in this research study.

1. Direct supervisor of an MPA graduate
2. Have more than six months of direct supervision with an MPA graduate
3. Experience working on different projects with an MPA graduate

### **Operationalizing the Conceptual Framework**

The operationalization table includes the descriptive categories of the conceptual framework in the first column and the survey questions that correspond to each category in column two. Respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement with the statements presented in column two of the operationalization table. Table 3.1 presents the operationalization of the conceptual framework.

**Table 3.1 Operationalization of Conceptual Framework**

<b>Descriptive Categories and Subcategories</b>	<b>Survey Agreements</b>
<p><b>1. Mission Statement of the MPA Program</b> MPA graduates of Texas State University demonstrate the ability to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1.1 Integrate theoretical and applied approaches of public management in public service</li> <li>1.2 Conduct research</li> <li>1.3 Uphold democratic values in public service</li> <li>1.4 Uphold integrity in public service</li> <li>1.5 Commit to public service</li> </ol>	<p>* In your organization, MPA graduate(s) of Texas State University demonstrate(s) the ability to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Integrate theoretical and applied approaches of public management in public service</li> <li>• Conduct research</li> <li>• Uphold democratic values in public service</li> <li>• Uphold integrity in public service</li> <li>• Commit to public service</li> </ul>
<p><b>2. Student Learning Outcomes of the MPA Program</b> MPA graduates of Texas State University demonstrate the ability to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2.1 Be a manager in public service</li> <li>2.2 Be a leader in public service</li> <li>2.3 Communicate effectively in writing</li> <li>2.4 Comprehend public policy and program formation</li> <li>2.5 Comprehend institutional and legal framework of public policy and management</li> <li>2.6 Communicate effectively orally</li> </ol>	<p>* In your organization, MPA graduate(s) of Texas State University has/have the ability to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Be a manager in public service</li> <li>• Be a leader in public service</li> <li>• Communicate effectively in writing</li> <li>• Comprehend public policy and program formation</li> <li>• Comprehend institutional and legal framework of public policy and management</li> <li>• Communicate effectively orally</li> </ul>



<p>2.7 See patterns and classify information, concepts, and theories in public policy and administration</p> <p>2.8 Use reasoned arguments to judge evidence in public policy and management</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• See patterns and classify information, concepts, and theories in public policy and administration</li> <li>• Use reasoned arguments to judge evidence in public policy and management</li> </ul>
<p><b>3. NASPAA Accreditation Standards for MPA Program on Student Learning</b></p> <p>MPA graduates of Texas State University demonstrate the ability to:</p> <p>3.1 Lead and manage in public governance</p> <p>3.2 Participate in and contribute to the policy process</p> <p>3.3 Analyze, synthesize, think critically, solve problems and make decisions</p> <p>3.4 Articulate and apply a public service perspective</p> <p>3.5 Communicate and interact productively with a diverse and changing workforce and citizenry</p>	<p>* In your organization, MPA graduate(s) of Texas State University demonstrate(s) the ability to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participate in and contribute to the policy process</li> <li>• Analyze, synthesize, think critically, solve problems and make decisions</li> <li>• Articulate and apply a public service perspective</li> <li>• Communicate and interact productively with a diverse and changing workforce and citizenry</li> </ul>
<p><b>4. Other Relevant Skill Sets</b></p> <p>MPA graduates of Texas State University demonstrate:</p> <p>4.1 Program assessment skills</p> <p>4.2 Quantitative analysis skills</p> <p>4.3 Project management skills</p> <p>4.4 Interpersonal skills with superiors, subordinates, and peers</p> <p>4.5 Bargaining and negotiation skills</p> <p>4.6 Ability to think through ethical dilemmas</p>	<p>* MPA graduate(s) of Texas State University demonstrate(s):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Program assessment skills</li> <li>• Quantitative analysis skills</li> <li>• Project management skills</li> <li>• Interpersonal skills with superiors, subordinates, and peers</li> <li>• Bargaining and negotiation skills</li> <li>• Ability to think through ethical dilemmas</li> </ul>
<p><b>5. Demographics of Respondent</b></p> <p>5.1 Gender</p> <p>5.2 Field of work</p> <p>5.3 Number of years working for public sector</p> <p>5.4 Number of MPA graduates supervised in general and specifically those from Texas State University</p> <p>5.5 Duration supervising an MPA graduate of Texas State University</p> <p>5.6 Position(s) of MPA graduate(s) of Texas State University under supervision</p> <p>5.7 Level of agreement on MPA graduates of Texas State University</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Male/ Female/ Non-binary</li> <li>• Federal/ State/ Municipal/ Nonprofit/ Private/ Others</li> <li>• Number of years working for public sector</li> <li>• Number of MPA graduates supervised in general and specifically those from Texas State University</li> <li>• Duration supervising an MPA graduate of Texas State University</li> </ul>

5.8 Other expected skill sets of a MPA graduate of Texas State University	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Position(s) of MPA graduate(s) of Texas State University under supervision</li> <li>• * Level of agreement on MPA graduates of Texas State University</li> <li>• Other expected skill sets of a MPA graduate of Texas State University</li> </ul>
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\* Respondents indicate level of agreement on a seven-point Likert type scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree

### **Survey as a Method of Data Collection**

This research study used the employer assessment survey as a method of data collection to obtain information regarding the perceptions and opinions of employers about graduates of the Master of Public Administration (MPA) program at Texas State University in regard to their knowledge, skills, and abilities. According to Scheuren (2004, 9), survey is a data collection method commonly used to gather information from a sample of individuals. This sample is usually drawn from the population of interest.

Past research studies revealed that surveys can be used as a data collection method to gather perceptions and opinions from stakeholders regarding the effectiveness a program. For example, a research study conducted by Roberts (2001, 19) showed that employer assessment surveys can be used to evaluate the effectiveness of the MPA program in shaping its students' performance for future work. Besides that, Jennings and Edward (1989, 438) also observed that surveys may be used to obtain information from MPA alumni and their employers to determine the effectiveness of MPA program in preparing students with necessary knowledge, skills, and abilities for future work. Shields (1998, 214) described the employer assessment survey as "attitudinal survey research" because this survey seeks the attitudes and opinions of respondents.

The employer assessment survey of this research study consists of questions derived from the descriptive categories in the conceptual framework. These questions include sections in the conceptual framework on the mission statement of the MPA program, student learning outcomes

of the MPA program, NASPAA accreditation standards for MPA program on student learning, and other relevant skill sets. In order to gather more wholistic information from the respondents, several open-ended questions were included in the survey.

### **Strengths of Survey Research**

Surveys are relatively easy to administer. In addition, web surveys are inexpensive to conduct and easy to disseminate to a large population (Babbie 2004, 278). As the cost of computers and electronic gadgets continue to decrease in today's world, more segments of the society are using the internet to communicate and receive information, which make surveys a common data collection method (Wright, 2005). Besides that, surveys help researchers save a lot of time as they allow researchers to reach thousands of people with common characteristics in a short amount of time, despite being separated by extensive geographic distances (Wright, 2005).

### **Weaknesses of Survey Research**

Surveys depend on the individual judgment of respondents and their ability to recall information. Hence, human errors may occur which decrease the validity of data obtained through surveys. Depending on how the survey is being distributed, it can result in low response rate (Babbie 2004, 261 & 278). Specifically, for this research study, it can be challenging for MPA graduates to ask their employers to complete the survey as some graduates might not feel comfortable doing so. In addition, many employers may be reluctant to complete the survey due to their busy workloads (Hermes, 2002).

### **Research Procedure**

The distribution of the survey was done through email as it is one of the most common ways for communication in today's world. The email, sent to selected MPA graduates to be forwarded to their employers, contained a Qualtrics web link where employers were required to

click on the web link to complete the survey. The survey contained questions derived from the operationalization table, as well as several open-ended questions.

The selection of MPA graduates was done using a systematic random sampling method from the master list of MPA graduates who graduated between 2009 – 2018. Every 3<sup>rd</sup> person on the master list was selected to participate in this research study. Selected MPA graduates received an email with Qualtrics web link to be forwarded to their employers to complete the survey. A deadline of four weeks was given to the respondents to complete the survey.

A seven-point Likert type scale was used to elicit responses to employer assessment survey questions related to each of the sub-categories. Respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement on a seven-point Likert scale, which ranged from “Strong Agree” to “Strong Disagree”.

### **Human Subjects Protection**

The employer assessment survey emailed to respondents included the contact information of the researcher as well as faculty advisor, Dr. Nandhini Rangarajan, the Director of MPA program at Texas State University.

Respondents were assured that participation in this research study was voluntary and did not bring any harm or risk to the respondents. Respondents were also informed that refusal to participate in this research study involved no penalty or loss of benefits. Respondents were allowed to discontinue participation at any time. The approximate time for survey completion was informed as well. In addition, information received from the respondents were kept confidential. Results of this study were reported in aggregate format without revealing any personal information about the respondents.

## **Chapter Summary**

This chapter provided information on the methodology used to gather data on the perceptions and opinions of employers about the graduates of the Master of Public Administration (MPA) program at Texas State University in regard to their knowledge, skills, and abilities. The next chapter analyzes and discusses the results of the employer assessment survey conducted by employers of MPA graduates of Texas State University.

## **Chapter 4: Results**

### **Chapter Purpose**

The purpose of this chapter is to present the results of the employer assessment survey completed by the employers of MPA graduates of Texas State University. This chapter provides details about the survey response rate, summaries of the demographics of respondents, and the results for each of the four major categories. This chapter concludes with a compilation of results pertaining to an open-ended question on other expected skill sets of MPA graduates of Texas State University.

### **Survey Response Rate**

Through a systematic random sampling method from the master list of MPA graduates at Texas State University, a total of 193 MPA graduates were selected to participate in this research study. The chosen sample of graduates were awarded the MPA degree from Texas State University between 2009 - 2018. A mass email was sent to these MPA graduates to request their employers to complete an online survey, which was open for four weeks.

Out of 193 emails sent, 35 emails were undelivered. As a result, only 158 emails were sent successfully. Several MPA graduates responded through emails that they could not participate in the research study due to different reasons, which include: two retired MPA graduates, three self-employed MPA graduates, and one MPA graduate whose employer went through a reorganization.

At the end of four weeks, a total of 38 survey responses (20% response rate) were received from the employers of MPA graduates of Texas State University. However, only 21 survey responses fulfilled the requirements of the survey. This is because 11 surveys were

incomplete while another six respondents stated that they did not supervise any MPA graduates of Texas State University.

**Demographics of Respondents**

Tables 4.1 to Table 4.8 present the demographics of respondents, which include employer’s gender, employer’s race, employer’s field of work, employer’s years of working experience in the public sector, number of MPA graduates supervised by the employer, number of MPA graduates of Texas State University supervised by the employer, number of years supervising a MPA graduate of Texas State University, and work positions of MPA graduates of Texas State University.

**Employer’s Gender**

Table 4.1 presents the gender distribution of respondents. All respondents identified themselves as either male or female. 57.1% of male employers and 42.9% of female employers completed the survey.

<b>Table 4.1 Employer’s Gender</b>		
<b>Gender</b>	<b>Percentage</b>	<b>Frequency</b>
Male	57.1%	12
Female	42.9%	9
Non-binary	0.0%	0
Prefer not to answer	0.0%	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>21</b>

**Employer’s Race**

Table 4.2 presents the race distribution of respondents. The majority were white (66.7%), followed by black or African American (23.8%). The minorities were American Indian or Alaska Native (4.8%) and Other (4.8%). There was no representation from either Asian or Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander.

<b>Table 4.2 Employer's Race</b>		
<b>Race</b>	<b>Percentage</b>	<b>Frequency</b>
White	66.7%	14
Black or African American	23.8%	5
American Indian or Alaska Native	4.8%	1
Asian	0.0%	0
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	0.0%	0
Other	4.8%	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>21</b>

**Employer's Field of Work**

Table 4.3 presents the field of work distribution of respondents. Overall, most respondents work in municipal government, state government, or the nonprofit sector. The highest percentage worked for municipal government (47.6%), followed by state government (23.8%), nonprofit sector (23.8%), and private sector (4.8%). There was no representation from the federal government. This result is understandable because many MPA graduates of Texas State University work in municipal government, state government, and the nonprofit sector.

<b>Table 4.3 Employer's Field of Work</b>		
<b>Field of Work</b>	<b>Percentage</b>	<b>Frequency</b>
Federal government	0.0%	0
State government	23.8%	5
Municipal government	47.6%	10
Nonprofit sector	23.8%	5
Private sector	4.8%	1
Other	0.0%	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>21</b>

**Employer's Years of Working Experience in Public Sector**

Table 4.4 presents respondents' years of working experience in the public sector. Most respondents fell between six to 20 years of working experience in the public sector, with 38.1% of respondents having between six to 10 years of experience, 23.8% of respondents having between 11 to 15 years of experience, and another 23.8% of respondents having between 16 to 20 years of experience. 9.5% of respondents have between 0 to 5 years of working experience in



the public sector while only 4.8% of respondents have more than 20 years of working experience in the public sector.

<b>Table 4.4 Employer's Years of Working Experience in Public Sector</b>		
<b>Years</b>	<b>Percentage</b>	<b>Frequency</b>
0-5	9.5%	2
6-10	38.1%	8
11-15	23.8%	5
16-20	23.8%	5
> 20	4.8%	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>21</b>

#### **Number of MPA Graduates Supervised by Employer**

Table 4.5 presents the number of MPA graduates supervised by the employer. 42.9% of employers supervised between one to two MPA graduates, 23.8% of employers supervised between three to four MPA graduates, 19.0% of employers supervised between five to six MPA graduates, while only 14.3% of employers supervised between seven to eight MPA graduates.

<b>Table 4.5 Number of MPA Graduates Supervised by Employer</b>		
<b>Number</b>	<b>Percentage</b>	<b>Frequency</b>
1-2	42.9%	9
3-4	23.8%	5
5-6	19.0%	4
7-8	14.3%	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>21</b>

#### **Number of MPA Graduates of Texas State University Supervised by Employer**

Table 4.6 presents the number of MPA graduates of Texas State University supervised by the employer. Most employers (80.9%) supervised between one to two MPA graduates of Texas State University. 14.3% of employers supervised between three to four MPA graduates. Only 4.8% of employers supervised between seven to eight MPA graduates.

<b>Table 4.6 Number of MPA Graduates of Texas State University Supervised by Employer</b>		
<b>Number</b>	<b>Percentage</b>	<b>Frequency</b>
1-2	80.9%	17
3-4	14.3%	3
5-6	0.0%	0
7-8	4.8%	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>21</b>

**Number of Years Supervising an MPA Graduate of Texas State University**

Table 4.7 presents the number of years the employer supervised an MPA graduate of Texas State University. The majority of the respondents (95.2%) spent between one to five years supervising MPA graduates of Texas State University, while only 4.8% of respondents spent between 16 to 20 years supervising MPA graduates of Texas State University.

<b>Table 4.7 Number of Years Supervising an MPA Graduate of Texas State University</b>		
<b>Years</b>	<b>Percentage</b>	<b>Frequency</b>
1-5	95.2%	20
6-10	0.0%	0
11-15	0.0%	0
16-20	4.8%	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>21</b>

**Work Positions of MPA Graduates of Texas State University**

Table 4.8 presents a compilation of work positions of MPA graduates of Texas State University. These work positions include Analyst, Assistant, Assistant to the City Manager, Assistant to the Manager, Communication Coordinator, Coordinator, Event Coordinator, Executive Assistant, Finance Manager, Manager, Marketing (Creative) and Loan Underwriting/Bank Management, Mid-Level, and Senior Planner. 14.3% of the respondents did not answer this question.

<b>Table 4.8 Work Positions of MPA Graduates of Texas State University</b>		
<b>Type of Work Positions</b>	<b>Percentage</b>	<b>Frequency</b>
Analyst	4.8%	1
Assistant	4.8%	1
Assistant to the City Manager	4.8%	1
Assistant to the Manager	4.8%	1
Communication Coordinator	4.8%	1
Coordinator	14.3%	3
Event Coordinator	4.8%	1
Executive Assistant	4.8%	1
Finance Manager	4.8%	1
Manager	14.3%	3
Marketing (Creative) and Loan Underwriting/Bank Management	4.8%	1
Mid-Level	9.5%	2
Senior Planner	4.8%	1
Did not answer	14.3%	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>21</b>

**Level of Agreement for Four Major Categories**

**Mission Statement of the MPA Program**

Table 4.9 presents the results of the level of agreement of employers on the mission statement of the MPA program. 90.5% of respondents agreed that MPA graduates are able to integrate theoretical and applied approaches of public management in public service. 85.7% of respondents agreed that MPA graduates can conduct research and uphold democratic values in public service. 80.9% of the respondents agreed that MPA graduates are able to uphold integrity in public service.

However, only 71.4% of respondents agreed that MPA graduates are committed to public service. This particular result was unexpected as public administrators should be committed to public service. Nevertheless, besides the statement on being committed to public service, the overall mission statement of the MPA program is well reflected among its graduates.

<b>Table 4.9 Level of Agreement: Mission Statement of the MPA Program</b>				
<b>Mission Statement</b>	<b>Count</b>	<b>% Disagree</b>	<b>% Neutral</b>	<b>% Agree</b>
Integrate theoretical and applied approaches of public management in public service	21	0.0%	9.5%	90.5%
Conduct research	21	0.0%	14.3%	85.7%
Uphold democratic values in public service	21	0.0%	14.3%	85.7%
Uphold integrity in public service	21	0.0%	19.1%	80.9%
Commit to public service	21	4.8%	23.8%	71.4%

### **Student Learning Outcomes of the MPA Program**

Table 4.10 presents the results of the level of agreement of employers on the student learning outcomes of the MPA program. More than 80% of the respondents agreed that MPA graduates are able to communicate effectively in writing (90.4%) and orally (85.7%), be a leader in public service (81.0%), see patterns and classify information, concepts, and theories in public policy and administration (80.9%), and use reasoned arguments to judge evidence in public policy and management (80.9%).

76.2% of the respondents agreed that MPA graduates are competent to be a manager in public service, comprehend public policy and program formation, and comprehend institutional and legal framework of public policy and management. Overall, the student learning outcomes of the MPA program are well reflected among its graduates.

<b>Table 4.10 Level of Agreement: Student Learning Outcomes of the MPA Program</b>				
<b>Student Learning Outcomes</b>	<b>Count</b>	<b>% Disagree</b>	<b>% Neutral</b>	<b>% Agree</b>
Be a manager in public service	21	9.5%	14.3%	76.2%
Be a leader in public service	21	9.5%	9.5%	81.0%
Communicate effectively in writing	21	4.8%	4.8%	90.4%
Comprehend public policy and program formation	21	9.5%	14.3%	76.2%
Comprehend institutional and legal framework of public policy and management	21	9.5%	14.3%	76.2%
Communicate effectively orally	21	4.8%	9.5%	85.7%

See patterns and classify information, concepts, and theories in public policy and administration	21	4.8%	14.3%	80.9%
Use reasoned arguments to judge evidence in public policy and management	21	14.3%	4.8%	80.9%

**NASPAA Accreditation Standards for MPA Program on Student Learning**

Table 4.11 presents the results of the level of agreement of employers on the NASPAA accreditation standards for MPA program on student learning. 85.7% of the respondents agreed that MPA graduates are able to participate in and contribute to the policy process, analyze, synthesize, think critically, solve problems and make decisions, and articulate and apply a public service perspective. 76.2% of respondents agreed that MPA graduates are competent in communicating and interacting productively with a diverse and changing workforce and citizenry. Overall, the NASPAA accreditation standards for MPA program on student learning are well reflected among MPA graduates.

<b>Table 4.11 Level of Agreement: NASPAA Accreditation Standards for MPA Program on Student Learning</b>				
<b>NASPAA Accreditation Standards</b>	<b>Count</b>	<b>% Disagree</b>	<b>% Neutral</b>	<b>% Agree</b>
Participate in and contribute to the policy process	21	4.8%	9.5%	85.7%
Analyze, synthesize, think critically, solve problems and make decisions	21	4.8%	9.5%	85.7%
Articulate and apply a public service perspective	21	4.8%	9.5%	85.7%
Communicate and interact productively with a diverse and changing workforce and citizenry	21	19.0%	4.8%	76.2%

**Other Relevant Skill Sets**

Table 4.12 presents the results of the level of agreement of employers on other relevant skill sets. Most respondents agreed that MPA graduates are competent in program assessment skills (95.2%), project management skills (95.2%), and quantitative analysis skills (90.5%). 81.0% of respondents agreed that MPA graduates are competent in interpersonal skills with

superiors, subordinates, and peers, while 76.2% of respondents agreed that MPA graduates are competent in bargaining and negotiation skills.

However, only 66.7% of respondents agreed that MPA graduates have the ability to think through ethical dilemmas. This result is alarming as public administrators often face ethical dilemmas at work. Nevertheless, besides the ability to think through ethical dilemmas, the overall relevant skill sets as discussed were reflected well among the MPA graduates.

<b>Skill Sets</b>	<b>Count</b>	<b>% Disagree</b>	<b>% Neutral</b>	<b>% Agree</b>
Program assessment skills	21	0.0%	4.8%	95.2%
Quantitative analysis skills	21	0.0%	9.5%	90.5%
Project management skills	21	0.0%	4.8%	95.2%
Interpersonal skills with superiors, subordinates, and peers	21	9.5%	9.5%	81.0%
Bargaining and negotiation skills	21	9.5%	14.3%	76.2%
Ability to think through ethical dilemmas	21	9.5%	23.8%	66.7%

Table 4.13 presents the level of agreement of employers on a statement on knowledge, skills, and abilities of MPA graduates of Texas State University. The result obtained was above average. 71.4% of respondents agreed that MPA graduates of Texas State University are equipped with the necessary knowledge, skills, and abilities to perform in the public sector.

<b>Statement</b>	<b>Count</b>	<b>% Disagree</b>	<b>% Neutral</b>	<b>% Agree</b>
MPA graduates of Texas State University are equipped with the necessary knowledge, skills, and abilities to perform in the public sector.	21	4.8%	23.8%	71.4%

### **Other Skill Sets**

Table 4.14 presents a compilation of results pertaining to other expected skill sets employers believe MPA graduates of Texas State University could bring into the workplace. These skill sets include additional accounting abilities, being part of a team and not just personal

interests, cultural awareness, customer service, diversity and inclusion, kindness, leadership, professionalism, public speaking and strategic thinking.

<b>Table 4.14 Other Skill Sets that MPA Graduates of Texas State University Could Bring into Workplace</b>	
<b>Skill Sets</b>	<b>Frequency</b>
Additional accounting abilities	1
Being part of a team and not just personal interests	1
Cultural awareness	1
Customer service	1
Diversity	1
Diversity and inclusion	1
Kindness	1
Leadership	1
Professionalism	1
Public speaking	1
Strategic thinking	1

### **Chapter Summary**

This chapter presents the results of the employer assessment survey completed by the employers of MPA graduates of Texas State University, which included the level of agreements of the mission statement of the MPA program, student learning outcomes of the MPA program, NASPAA accreditation standards for MPA program on student learning, and other relevant skill sets. Overall, MPA graduates of Texas State University in this research study are able to present themselves well at their workplaces. However, the results also revealed that they were less committed to public service and less competent in the ability to think through ethical dilemmas. Implications of these findings are discussed in Chapter 5.

## Chapter 5: Conclusion

### Chapter Purpose

The purpose of this chapter is to present a summary of findings for this research study and provide recommendations for future research study on employer assessment survey of MPA graduates of Texas State University.

### Summary of Findings

Table 5.1 Compilation of Level of Agreement Results for Four Major Categories							
Mission Statement of the MPA Program		Student Learning Outcomes of the MPA Program		NASPAA Accreditation Standards for MPA Program on Student Learning		Other Relevant Skills	
Integrate theoretical and applied approaches of public management in public service	90.5%	Be a manager in public service	76.2%	Participate in and contribute to the policy process	85.7%	Program assessment skills	95.2%
Conduct research	85.7%	Be a leader in public service	81.0%	Analyze, synthesize, think critically, solve problems and make decisions	85.7%	Quantitative analysis skills	90.5%
Uphold democratic values in public service	85.7%	Communicate effectively in writing	90.4%	Articulate and apply a public service perspective	85.7%	Project management skills	95.2%
Uphold integrity in public service	80.9%	Comprehend public policy and program formation	76.2%	Communicate and interact productively with a diverse and changing workforce and citizenry	76.2%	Interpersonal skills with superiors, subordinates, and peers	81.0%
Commit to public service	71.4%	Comprehend institutional and legal framework of public policy and management	76.2%			Bargaining and negotiation skills	76.2%
		Communicate effectively orally	85.7%			Ability to think through ethical dilemmas	66.7%
		See patterns and classify information, concepts, and theories in public policy and administration	80.9%				
		Use reasoned arguments to judge evidence in public policy and management	80.9%				



Table 5.1 presents a compilation of level of agreement results for four major categories, which include the mission statement of the MPA program, student learning outcomes of the MPA program, NASPAA accreditation standards for MPA program on student learning, and other relevant skills.

While most sub-categories under each of the four major categories achieved more than 80% of agreement percentages which revealed that MPA graduates are meeting the expectations of these categories at their workplaces, several sub-categories did not achieve it. These include:

- Commit to public service (71.4%)
- Be a manager in public service (76.2%)
- Comprehend public policy and program formation (76.2%)
- Comprehend institutional and legal framework of public policy and management (76.2%)
- Communicate and interact productively with a diverse and changing workforce and citizenry (76.2%)
- Bargaining and negotiation skills (76.2%)
- Ability to think through ethical dilemmas (66.7%)

Only 71.4% of respondents agreed with the statement that “MPA graduates of Texas State University are equipped with the necessary knowledge, skills, and abilities to perform in the public sector.” Respondents provided other expected skill sets that MPA graduates of Texas State University should have at work, which include additional accounting abilities, being part of a team and not just personal interests, cultural awareness, customer service, diversity and inclusion, kindness, leadership, professionalism, public speaking and strategic thinking. One could speculate that if these expected skill sets are strengthened among MPA graduates, the agreement percentage of all four major categories would achieve at least 80%.

## **Research Limitations and Suggestions for Future Research**

This research study relied on MPA graduates of Texas State University to request their employers to complete an online survey. Depending on the working relationships between the MPA graduates and the employers, there is a possibility that not all MPA graduates forwarded the online survey link to their employer. It is suggested that MPA programs could develop and maintain a database of immediate supervisors of MPA graduates for future research purposes.

Besides that, there were only 38 survey responses received, where only 21 survey responses fulfilled the survey requirements. As such, the results generated might be biased and do not represent the entire population of MPA graduates of Texas State University. One reason is because participants of this research study were selected based on the systematic random sampling method from the master list of MPA graduates at Texas State University who graduated in the past 10 years, where only about 193 were selected out of 581 MPA graduates in the master list. Future research study could include all MPA graduates to enhance survey response rates.

In addition, the mass email list included retired MPA graduates and self-employed MPA graduates who did not fulfill the requirements of survey respondents. As a result, these reduced the number of eligible research participants which eventually decreased the number of survey responses. Hence, it is suggested that MPA programs could develop and maintain a database of work information and age group of MPA graduates.

Six survey responses indicated that the respondents did not supervise any MPA graduates of Texas State University. There is a possibility that some of the respondents were the MPA graduates themselves and not the employers of these MPA graduates. It is suggested that MPA

programs could develop and maintain a database of immediate supervisors of MPA graduates so that future online survey links could be sent directly to these employers.

Not all respondents answered the open-ended question on expected skill sets of MPA graduates. This question is useful to the MPA program as it allows employers to comment on skills that MPA graduates should have at workplace. Future research study could consider requiring respondents to include at least three skills that MPA graduates should have or could improve on. This would help MPA programs to identify effective ways to enhance the quality of MPA graduates.

To improve the agreement percentages of sub-categories which achieved below 80%, such as commit to public service, be a manager in public service, comprehend public policy and program formation, comprehend institutional and legal framework of public policy and management, communicate and interact productively with a diverse and changing workforce and citizenry, bargaining and negotiation skills, and the ability to think through ethical dilemmas, it is recommended that the MPA program at Texas State University periodically invite leaders and experts from the government sector to conduct workshops and dialogue sessions for MPA students. This will enable MPA students to constantly obtain knowledge and practical experience on how to be successful public administrators at current workplaces that meet today's workplace expectations. It is also recommended that the MPA program at Texas State University constantly review all course contents to ensure that students are equipped with the latest information.

## **Conclusion**

Although several limitations were found in this research study, the findings of the study are important to the Master of Public Administration (MPA) program at Texas State University as the findings reveal how the current labor market perceives its graduates, which serve as a

guideline for program improvement. MPA and other related programs are highly encouraged to conduct similar research studies to help programs prepare quality graduates for today's ever-changing work environment.

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**Appendix A: Documentation of IRB Approval and Letter of Consent**



In future correspondence please refer to 6481

May 14, 2019

Immanuel Zhen Miin Tan  
Texas State University  
601 University Drive  
San Marcos, TX 78666

Dear Immanuel:

Your IRB application titled "Perceptions of Employers about the Master of Public Administration (MPA) Program at Texas State University" was reviewed and approved by the Texas State University IRB. It has been determined that risks to subjects are: (1) minimized and reasonable; and that (2) research procedures are consistent with a sound research design and do not expose the subjects to unnecessary risk. Reviewers determined that: (1) benefits to subjects are considered along with the importance of the topic and that outcomes are reasonable; (2) selection of subjects is equitable; and (3) the purposes of the research and the research setting is amenable to subjects' welfare and producing desired outcomes; that indications of coercion or prejudice are absent, and that participation is clearly voluntary.

1. In addition, the IRB found that you need to orient participants as follows: (1) informed consent is required; (2) Provision is made for collecting, using and storing data in a manner that protects the safety and privacy of the subjects and the confidentiality of the data; (3) Appropriate safeguards are included to protect the rights and welfare of the subjects. (4) Compensation is not provided for participation.

**This project is therefore approved at the Exempt Review Level  
Category 2 Surveys, Interviews, or Public observation**

2. Please note that the institution is not responsible for any actions regarding this protocol before approval. If you expand the project at a later date to use other instruments, please re-apply. Copies of your request for human subjects review, your application, and this approval, are maintained in the Office of Research Integrity and Compliance.

**Report any changes to this approved protocol to this office. All unanticipated events and adverse events are to be reported to the IRB within 3 days.**

Sincerely,

Monica Gonzales  
IRB Specialist  
Office of Research Integrity and Compliance

CC: Dr. Nandhini Rangarajan

OFFICE OF THE ASSOCIATE VICE PRESIDENT FOR RESEARCH  
601 University Drive | JCK #489 | San Marcos, Texas 78666-4616  
Phone: 512.245.2314 | fax: 512.245.3847 | WWW.TXSTATE.EDU

*This letter is an electronic communication from Texas State University-San Marcos, a member of The Texas State University System.*



Immanuel Tan Zhen Miin, a graduate student at Texas State University, is conducting a research study to understand the perceptions and opinions of employers about the graduates of the Master of Public Administration (MPA) program at Texas State University. You are being asked to complete this survey because you are an employer of an MPA graduate of Texas State University.

Participation is voluntary. The survey will take approximately 20 minutes or less to complete. You must be at least 18 years old to take this survey.

This study involves no foreseeable serious risks. We ask that you try to answer all questions; however, if there are any items that make you uncomfortable or that you would prefer to skip, please leave the answer blank. Your responses will be confidential.

This research benefits the MPA program of Texas State University by knowing how the labor market perceives its graduates. This research presents what employers expect MPA graduates to know, and how MPA graduates of Texas State University present themselves in the eyes of their employers.

Reasonable efforts will be made to keep the personal information in your research record private and confidential. No identifiable information will be reported, and all results of this study will be reported in aggregate format. The members of the research team and the Texas State University Office of Research Compliance (ORC) may access the data. The ORC monitors research studies to protect the rights and welfare of research participants.

Your name will not be used in any written reports or publications which result from this research. Data will be kept for three years (per federal regulations) after the study is completed and then destroyed.

If you have any questions or concerns, feel free to contact Immanuel Tan Zhen Miin, or his faculty advisor, Dr. Nandhini Rangarajan:

**Immanuel Tan Zhen Miin, Graduate Student**  
**Department of Political Science**  
**646-344-9302**  
**[i\\_t59@txstate.edu](mailto:i_t59@txstate.edu)**

**Dr. Nandhini Rangarajan, Professor**  
**Department of Political Science**  
**512-245-3285**  
**[nr11@txastate.edu](mailto:nr11@txastate.edu)**

This project (IRB Reference Number #6481) was approved by the Texas State IRB on May 14, 2019. Pertinent questions or concerns about the research, research participants' rights, and/or research-related injuries to participants should be directed to the IRB chair, Dr. Denise Gobert 512-716-2652 – ([dgobert@txstate.edu](mailto:dgobert@txstate.edu)) or to Monica Gonzales, IRB Regulatory Manager 512-245-2334 - ([meg201@txstate.edu](mailto:meg201@txstate.edu)).

If you would prefer not to participate, please do not fill out a survey.

If you consent to participate, please complete the survey.





## **Appendix B: Employer Assessment Survey**

## Welcome to the research study!

Immanuel Tan Zhen Miin, a graduate student at Texas State University, is conducting a research study to understand the perceptions and opinions of employers about the graduates of the Master of Public Administration (MPA) program at Texas State University. You are being asked to complete this survey because you are an employer of a MPA graduate of Texas State University.

Participation is voluntary. **The survey should take no more than 10 minutes to complete.** You must be at least 18 years old to take this survey.

This study involves no foreseeable serious risks. We ask that you try to answer all questions. However, if there are any items that make you uncomfortable or that you would prefer to skip, please leave the answer blank. Your responses will be confidential.

This research benefits the MPA program of Texas State University by knowing how the labor market perceives its graduates. This research presents what employers expect MPA graduates to know, and how MPA graduates of Texas State University present themselves in the eyes of their employers.

Reasonable efforts will be made to keep the personal information in your research record private and confidential. No identifiable information will be reported, and all results of this study will be reported in aggregate format. The members of the research team and the Texas State University Office of Research Compliance (ORC) may access the data. The ORC monitors research studies to protect the rights and welfare of research participants.

Your name will not be used in any written reports or publications which result from this research. Data will be kept for three years (per federal regulations) after the study is completed and then destroyed.

**If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact Immanuel Tan Zhen Miin (i\_t59@txstate.edu), or his Faculty Advisor, Dr. Nandhini Rangarajan (nr11@txstate.edu).**

This project #6481 was approved by the Texas State IRB on May 14, 2019. Pertinent questions or concerns about the research, research participants' rights, and/or research-related injuries to participants should be directed to the IRB chair, Dr. Denise Gobert 512-716-2652 - (dgobert@txstate.edu) or to Monica Gonzales, IRB Regulatory Manager 512-245-2334 - (meg201@txstate.edu).

**By clicking the button below, you acknowledge that your participation in the study is voluntary, you are 18 years of age, and that you are aware that you may choose to terminate your participation in the study at any time and for any reason.**

Please note that this survey will be best displayed on a laptop or desktop computer. Some features may be less compatible for use on a mobile device.

I consent.

I do not consent.

**Demographics of Respondent**

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Your race is:

White

Black or African American

American Indian or Alaska Native

Asian

Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander

Other

---

**Demographics of Respondent**

---

I work for the:

Federal government

State government

Municipal government

Nonprofit sector

Private sector

Other, please specify:

---

**Demographics of Respondent**

---

How many years have you been working for the public sector?

---

How many MPA graduates have you supervised in your entire career?

---

Among all, how many MPA graduates of Texas State University have you supervised?

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On average, how many years did you spend in supervising a MPA graduate of Texas State University?

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What type of position(s) did the MPA graduate(s) of Texas State University has/ have under your supervision?

**MPA Program Mission Statement**

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Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements.

In your organization, MPA graduate(s) of Texas State University demonstrate(s) the ability to:

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree
Integrate theoretical and applied approaches of public management in public service	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Conduct research	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Uphold democratic values in public service	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Uphold integrity in public service	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Commit to public service	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**MPA Program Student Learning Outcomes**

---

Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements.

In your organization, MPA graduate(s) of Texas State University has/have the ability to:

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree
Be a manager in public service	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Be a leader in public service	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Communicate effectively in writing	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Comprehend public policy and program formation	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Comprehend institutional and legal framework of public policy and management	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Communicate effectively orally	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
See patterns and classify information, concepts, and theories in public policy and administration	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Use reasoned arguments to judge evidence in public policy and management	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**NASPA Accreditation Standards for MPA Program on Student Learning**

Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements.

In your organization, MPA graduate(s) of Texas State University demonstrate(s) the ability to:

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree
Participate in and contribute to the policy process	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Analyze, synthesize, think critically, solve problems and make decisions	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Articulate and apply a public service perspective	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Communicate and interact productively with a diverse and changing workforce and citizenry	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**Other Relevant Skill Sets**

Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements.

MPA graduate(s) of Texas State University demonstrate(s):

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree
Program assessment skills	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Quantitative analysis skills	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Project management skills	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Interpersonal skills with superiors, subordinates, and peers	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Bargaining and negotiation skills	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Ability to think through ethical dilemmas	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**Level of Agreement**

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Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statement.

	Strongly disagree	disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree
MPA graduates of Texas State University are equipped with the necessary knowledge, skills, and abilities to perform in the public sector.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

What other skill sets could MPA graduates of Texas State University bring into the workplace?

**END**