

The ETHOS Model: Servant Leadership, Ethical Climate, and Workplace Spirituality in Teachers' Public Service Motivation

Von Lloyd L. Loren ¹, Jose M. Ocampo Jr. ¹, Tessil Joy L. Sotoniel ²

¹Philippine Normal University, Philippines,

²North Eastern Mindanao State University – Lianga Campus, Philippines

ABSTRACT

The present study examines the effects of servant leadership, workplace spirituality, and ethical climate on public school teachers' public service motivation (PSM) in the Philippines. Drawing on Servant Leadership and Self-Determination theories, the research employs a quantitative descriptive-correlational design. It applies Covariance-Based Structural Equation Modeling (CB-SEM) to data collected from 2,962 teachers across Caraga Region. Findings reveal that workplace spirituality shows the strongest positive association with PSM, while ethical climate also significantly influences motivation. In contrast, servant leadership was negatively associated with PSM, but strongly and positively associated when mediated by workplace spirituality and ethical climate structures. These findings inform the development of the "ETHOS Model," a comprehensive PSM framework that aligns with professional compliance standards, including the Philippine Professional Standards for Teachers (PPST). The model provides practical recommendations for teacher retention, educational policy reform, and leadership development in response to domestic attrition challenges.

Keywords: ETHOS, public service motivation, servant leadership, workplace spirituality, ethical climate

ARTICLE INFORMATION

Article History

Received: December 19, 2025

Revised: June 14, 2026

Accepted: June 23, 2026

Editor-in-Chief

Watsatree Diteeyont, PhD

Managing Editor

Marie Paz E. Morales, PhD

Assistant Managing Editor

Adonis P. David, PhD

Introduction

Maintaining a motivated public school teaching workforce is essential for delivering quality education, as Public Service Motivation (PSM) drives commitment to the public good (Rodriguez & Cudiamat, 2021). However, Filipino public school educators face systemic challenges—such as administrative overload, limited career advancement, and dissatisfaction with policies—that fuel an annual migration of teachers abroad (Balatero & Bauyot, 2024). This structural attrition signals a concerning decline in baseline PSM, underscoring the urgent need for empirical analysis to identify organizational mechanisms to restore professional commitment and improve teacher retention (Trazo & Peñas, 2024).

This study utilizes Covariance-Based Structural Equation Modeling (CB-SEM) to assess how school heads' servant leadership, workplace spirituality, and institutional ethical climate relate to teachers' PSM (Hair et al., 2014). The conceptual framework integrates Robert Greenleaf's servant leadership theory (van Dierendonck & Nuijten, 2011) and self-determination theory (Krishnani, 2023). Under this motivational framework, fulfilling core psychological needs—autonomy, competence, and relatedness—serves as the primary mechanism linking individual actions to internal beliefs.

Within this framework, servant leadership acts as the primary environmental catalyst, cultivating trust, strengthening teamwork, and enhancing the school climate (Kilag et al., 2023). This approach activates internal psychological mechanisms: a strong ethical climate establishes organizational accountability, while a vibrant spiritual culture unites educators under a shared vision (Shaquela & Lyndon, 2022). Concurrently,

workplace spirituality and a supportive ethical climate fulfill teachers' underlying psychological needs, transforming teaching from a bureaucratic obligation into an intrinsic calling that elevates PSM (Hassan et al., 2021).

Although the Philippine Professional Standards for Teachers (PPST) establish clear competency expectations, public school teachers face persistent institutional challenges. In this context, a strong PSM framework addresses a critical gap by fostering civic commitment and vocational identity, which enhances teacher engagement (Serrano & Fallado, 2025). Mapping these pathways offers an essential approach to examining how personal values and institutional structures converge to sustain teacher motivation despite systemic pressures (Trazo & Peñas, 2024).

Literature Review

This section examines the empirical literature on PSM, servant leadership, workplace spirituality, and ethical climate to identify exogenous factors influencing teachers' commitment and to establish theoretical connections among these variables.

Public Service Motivation and Self-Determination Theory

In the Philippines, PSM forms a cohesive professional identity characterized by self-sacrifice, an attraction to policymaking, and a commitment to the public interest (Trazo & Peñas, 2024), aligning with the multi-dimensional framework established by Perry (1996). Grounded in self-determination theory and workplace spirituality, Filipino public servants maintain a deep vocational passion driven by autonomy, competence, and

relatedness despite facing severe institutional challenges (Krishnani, 2023). While leadership-driven opportunities further reinforce this motivation (Balatero & Bauyot, 2024), long-term employee retention remains heavily threatened by bureaucratic hurdles, inadequate health programs, and limited pathways for career advancement (Kilag et al., 2023).

Servant Leadership and Teacher Engagement

Servant leadership in school administration—characterized by humility, empathy, honesty, and fairness—fosters collaboration, trust, higher job satisfaction, and improved academic outcomes by empowering teachers and emphasizing accountability (Kilag et al., 2023). According to van Dierendonck and Nuijten (2011), this leadership model comprises eight specific dimensions: empowerment, standing back, accountability, forgiveness, courage, authenticity, humility, and stewardship. Consistently reinforcing these behavioral dimensions enhances organizational citizenship, teaching effectiveness, and institutional commitment, ultimately enabling principals to drive active teacher participation and improve the overall learning environment, thereby strengthening the institutional framework supporting PSM (Çayak & Eskici, 2023).

The Role of Workplace Spirituality

Workplace spirituality enhances employee motivation, performance, and commitment by giving work meaning and value, while its integration into education improves staff well-being, job satisfaction, resilience, and vocational passion (Hassan et al., 2021). According to Pradhan et al. (2017), this construct comprises four core dimensions—inner meaning, altruism, meaningful work, and values—that collectively

encourage educators to go beyond their basic duties, reduce stress, build institutional trust, and align individual goals with the institution's mission. Ultimately, fostering these spiritual dimensions in educational settings is a critical driver of elevating educators' PSM.

The Ethical Climate

An organization's ethical climate shapes employee experiences by fostering organizational loyalty and responsibility, while its alignment with institutional goals strengthens both PSM and mission valence (Erten & Türkmen, 2024). This environment operates through the framework established by Victor and Cullen (1988), which identifies dimensions of ethical climate such as self-interest, efficiency, friendship/team interest, social responsibility, personal morality, rule adherence, and law compliance. Collectively, these components cultivate psychological safety, encourage conformity to norms, reduce turnover intentions, and guide professionals, such as teachers, to make high-integrity decisions (Ricaplaça & Quines, 2022). Consequently, administrators must regularly evaluate this dynamic climate to sustain ongoing institutional transparency and integrity (Francisco, 2022).

Integrated Framework

Integrating servant leadership, workplace spirituality, and an ethical climate fosters PSM and sustains teacher commitment. Servant leadership builds the trust and cooperation necessary to enhance school performance and establish a moral foundation for decision-making (Çayak & Eskici, 2023). Simultaneously, workplace spirituality gives civic duties deeper meaning by aligning educators' personal values with their professional roles (Hassan et al., 2021), while an ethical climate focused

on responsibility strengthens institutional culture and elevates overall teacher motivation (Ricaplaza & Quines, 2022).

Research Objectives

The primary objective of this study is to evaluate the ETHOS Model by examining the structural influence of school heads' servant leadership, workplace spirituality, and institutional ethical climate on public school teachers' PSM within the DepEd in the Caraga Region. The specific aims are as follows:

1. To determine the descriptive profiles, means, standard deviations, and standardized factor loadings for all variables.
2. To examine the bivariate correlations among teachers' perceptions of servant leadership, workplace spirituality, ethical climate, and PSM domains.
3. To evaluate the joint and relative predictive influence of servant leadership, workplace spirituality, and ethical climate on teachers' PSM.
4. To establish the structural validity of the final ETHOS model that best explains PSM.

Hypotheses

Rooted in SDT and Greenleaf's Servant Leadership Theory, leadership serves as an environmental resource that fulfills teachers' psychological needs, shifting motivation from transactional to autonomous. To test these

structural paths via SEM, the following null hypotheses are formulated:

H₀1: School heads' servant leadership does not significantly predict public school teachers' PSM.

H₀2: School heads' servant leadership does not significantly predict teachers' experienced workplace spirituality.

H₀3: Workplace spirituality does not significantly predict public school teachers' PSM.

H₀4: School heads' servant leadership does not significantly predict the institutional ethical climate.

H₀5: The ethical climate does not significantly predict public school teachers' PSM.

H₀6: Workplace spirituality does not significantly mediate the relationship between servant leadership and teachers' PSM.

H₀7: The institutional ethical climate does not significantly mediate the relationship between servant leadership and teachers' PSM.

Participants

The study used a sample of 2,962 teachers from the 27,397 teachers in the DepEd Caraga Region (Department of Education Caraga Region, 2023). A priori power analysis showed that a minimum sample size of 2,551 was needed for achieving a statistical power of 0.80 with a model that included 25 latent and 135 observed variables. Stratified random sampling

with proportional allocation was used across 12 School Division Offices to ensure the proper representation of the population. It included only permanent staff, and all procedures were conducted in accordance with ethical guidelines from the PNU Research Ethics Board.

Methodology

This study employed a quantitative, non-experimental, cross-sectional descriptive-correlational design using CB-SEM to analyze structural paths (Hair Jr. et al., 2014). A sample of 2,962 full-time public school teachers was selected via multi-stage stratified random sampling across 12 Schools Division Offices in the Caraga Region, Philippines. Data were collected using a four-part structured 5-point Likert scale adapted from international measures. Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) executed in IBM SPSS AMOS version 23 established robust construct and convergent validity; all standardized factor loadings exceeded the strict threshold of $\lambda \geq .50$, resulting in zero item eliminations (Hair Jr. et al., 2014). The measurement models demonstrated superior global fit, meeting rigorous international standards with a favorable chi-square ratio, an *RMSEA* below .05, and *CFI*, *GFI*, *NFI*, and *TLI* values all exceeding .95, thereby establishing a highly reliable methodological framework for examining organizational variables such as PSM.

The internal consistency and reliability of the empirical metrics were outstanding across all latent dimensions. Specifically, the instrumentation yielded high reliability coefficients, including the 30-item Servant Leadership Scale ($\alpha=.989$) adapted from van Dierendonck and Nuijten (2011), the 30-item Workplace Spirituality Questionnaire ($\alpha=.992$)

adapted from Pradhan et al. (2017), the 35-item Ethical Climate Questionnaire ($\alpha=.990$) adapted from Victor and Cullen (1988), and the 40-item PSM Scale ($\alpha=.996$) adapted from Perry (1996). All psychometric properties and factor loading structures met the necessary criteria for subsequent structural equation modeling.

Findings and Discussion

Baseline Profiles and Construct Validation

To address the first research objective, baseline descriptive profiles and standardized factor loadings (λ) confirmed the validity of the four core constructs. Servant leadership demonstrated strong construct validity across all eight dimensions, supporting its role as a primary driver of teacher job satisfaction, institutional trust, and collaborative school culture through traits like accountability, humility, and empowerment (Kilag et al., 2023). Concurrently, workplace spirituality fostered a strong vocational identity, with high ratings for meaningful work and altruism. This alignment of personal values drives job satisfaction and well-being (Hassan et al., 2021), while structural validation confirmed that recognizing educators' inner meaning enhances resilience, enthusiasm, and the institutional trust required to meet organizational demands (Pradhan et al., 2017).

For the remaining constructs, ethical climate assessments revealed that complex institutional dimensions scored highest, reflecting a rigid ethical environment aligned with public education norms, whereas self-interest scored lowest (Ricapla & Quines, 2022). This alignment mitigates individualistic orientations, fosters psychological safety,

Table 1*Descriptive Statistics and Standardized Factor Loading for the Study Variables (N = 2,962)*

Construct	Indicators	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	Standardized Factor Loading (λ)
Servant Leadership				
	Empowerment	0.84	3.95	.855
	Standing Back	0.88	3.71	.897
	Accountability	0.93	3.84	.970
	Forgiveness	0.93	3.82	.946
	Courage	0.97	3.77	.866
	Authenticity	0.91	3.85	.952
	Humility	0.92	3.90	.943
	Stewardship	0.95	4.00	.910
Workplace Spirituality				
	Inner Meaning and Purpose	0.87	3.88	.955
	Altruism	0.90	3.94	.928
	Meaningful Work	0.93	3.95	.927
	Alignment of Values	0.88	3.90	.863
Ethical Climate				
	Self-Interest	0.93	3.38	.678
	Efficiency	0.82	3.82	.944
	Friendship and Team Interest	0.86	3.90	.934
	Social Responsibility	0.87	3.99	.932
	Personal Morality	0.86	3.90	.940
	Rules and Procedures	0.88	3.99	.938
	Legal and Professional Codes	0.89	4.04	.907
Public Service Motivation				
	Attraction to Policy Making	1.03	3.63	.927
	Commitment to the Public Interest	1.08	3.71	.978
	Social Justice	1.13	3.72	.973
	Civic Duty	1.10	3.70	.970
	Compassion	1.09	3.69	.974
	Self-Sacrifice	1.10	3.67	.966

Note. *M* = Mean; *SD* = Standard Deviation. All factor loadings are statistically significant at $p < .001$.

guides high-integrity decision-making, and reduces turnover intentions (Erten & Türkmen, 2024). Finally, PSM metrics highlighted social justice and public interest as primary motivators, demonstrating that teachers heavily anchor their identities in civic responsibility (Rodriguez & Cudiamat, 2021). Structurally,

public service behavior proved multifaceted and deeply intertwined with vocational identity, framing teaching as a moral duty that empowers educators to navigate challenges, improve student outcomes, and bolster institutional credibility (Serrano & Fallado, 2025).

Bivariate Correlations: Predictors and Teacher Motivation

To fulfill the second research objective, Table 2 presents a Pearson bivariate correlation matrix that evaluates how public school teachers' PSM

relates to school heads' servant leadership, workplace spirituality, and the institutional ethical climate. The first segment revealed a strong, positive, and statistically significant correlation between overall Servant Leadership and PSM ($r = .591, p < .001$), justifying the rejection of the

Table 2

Correlations Between Teachers' PSM Domains and School Heads' Servant Leadership, Workplace Spirituality, and Institutional Ethical Climate

Exogenous Variables & Dimensions	Public Service Motivation						
	Attraction to Policy Making	Commitment to Public Interest	Social Justice	Civic Duty	Compassion	Self-Sacrifice	Overall PSM
Servant Leadership							
Empowerment	.572** .001	.550** .001	.540** .001	.536** .001	.555** .001	.526** .001	.561** .001
Standing Back	.505** .001	.478** .001	.471** .001	.476** .001	.499** .001	.474** .001	.497** .001
Accountability	.600** .001	.584** .001	.567** .001	.560** .001	.584** .001	.557** .001	.591** .001
Forgiveness	.590** .001	.575** .001	.559** .001	.559** .001	.579** .001	.552** .001	.584** .001
Courage	.525** .001	.499** .001	.484** .001	.500** .001	.513** .001	.495** .001	.516** .001
Authenticity	.540** .001	.529** .001	.512** .001	.530** .001	.540** .001	.524** .001	.544** .001
Humility	.539** .001	.527** .001	.515** .001	.534** .000	.541** .000	.523** .000	.544** .000
Stewardship	.547** .001	.534** .001	.519** .001	.531** .001	.546** .001	.520** .001	.547** .001
Overall Servant Leadership	.595** .001	.576** .001	.561** .001	.569** .001	.587** .001	.562** .001	.591** .001
Workplace Spirituality							
Altruism	.616** .001	.606** .001	.583** .001	.595** .001	.609** .001	.591** .001	.616** .001
Meaningful Work	.591** .001	.579** .001	.570** .001	.578** .001	.588** .001	.575** .001	.596** .001
Alignment of Values	.582** .001	.576** .001	.562** .001	.569** .001	.577** .001	.565** .001	.588** .001
Overall Workplace Spirituality	.647** .001	.632** .001	.615** .001	.622** .001	.635** .001	.617** .001	.645** .001

Ethical Climate

Self-Interest	.399** .001	.341** .001	.323** .001	.332** .001	.348** .001	.347** .001	.357** .001
Efficiency	.648** .001	.598** .001	.577** .001	.578** .001	.600** .001	.580** .001	.613** .001
Friendship and Team Interest	.632** .001	.585** .001	.572** .001	.577** .001	.602** .001	.587** .001	.608** .001
Social Responsibility	.675** .001	.641** .001	.629** .001	.626** .001	.650** .001	.623** .001	.658** .001
Personal Morality	.624** .001	.589** .001	.574** .001	.579** .001	.596** .001	.575** .001	.605** .001
Rules and Procedures	.634** .001	.598** .001	.583** .001	.589** .001	.609** .001	.584** .001	.616** .001
Legal and Professional Codes	.624** .001	.584** .001	.567** .001	.572** .001	.600** .001	.575** .001	.603** .001
Overall Ethical Climate	.660** .001	.613** .001	.595** .001	.600** .001	.624** .001	.603** .001	.632** .001

first null hypothesis. This confirms that servant leadership practices successfully cultivate teacher motivation, trust, and collaboration, shifting professional drive toward autonomous commitment and boosting job satisfaction through accountability, humility, and empowerment (Kilag et al., 2023). These correlational links establish an essential foundation for subsequent structural modeling by proving that active leader guidance directly shapes teacher engagement (Balatero & Bauyot, 2024).

The second segment demonstrated that Workplace Spirituality had the strongest overall association with teachers' PSM ($r = .645, p < .001$), leading to the rejection of the third null hypothesis and confirming that an employee's core beliefs directly link to daily work actions (Krishnani, 2023). When institutions integrate spiritual culture and value alignment, teachers find deep meaning in their work, experience enhanced well-being, and shift from a sense of duty to a resilient passion that prompts them to exceed basic occupational requirements in order to serve others (Hassan et al., 2021).

Finally, the third segment verified a strong, positive, and significant relationship between overall Ethical Climate and overall PSM ($r = .632, p < .001$), rejecting the fifth null hypothesis and reinforcing that organizational moral atmospheres strongly shape internal public service forces (Çayak & Eskici, 2023). Conversely, the self-interest dimension yielded a much weaker correlation ($r = .357, p < .001$), confirming that rules, legal frameworks, and benevolent climates reduce individualistic behaviors, foster psychological safety, and embed collective expectations that sustain long-term dedication to the public good (Erten & Türkmen, 2024).

Regression Analysis and Primary Motivational Drivers

To address the third research objective, Table 3 presents multiple linear regression metrics assessing the joint and relative influence of school heads' servant leadership, workplace spirituality, and ethical climate on teachers' PSM. The overall model is highly significant ($F = 782.007, p < .001, R = .667$), with a coefficient

of determination ($R^2 = .445$) indicating that these predictors collectively account for 44.5% of the total variance in teachers' PSM in the Caraga Region. Workplace Spirituality emerged as the strongest positive driver ($\beta = .461$, $Sig. < .001$), confirming that when teachers experience inner meaning, altruism, and value alignment, their actions form a deep vocational identity that enhances job satisfaction, well-being, resilience, and institutional trust (Hassan et al., 2021). Ethical Climate was the second most potent positive predictor ($\beta = .313$, $Sig. < .001$), proving that principled and benevolent environments foster psychological safety, cultivate collective responsibility, guide high-integrity decision-making, and reduce turnover intentions (Erten & Türkmen, 2024).

Conversely, the direct effect of Servant Leadership on teachers' PSM revealed a weak, statistically significant, but negative path ($\beta = -.085$, $Sig. = .020$). While this formally rejects the first null hypothesis, it indicates

that within highly centralized public education systems, direct servant leadership behaviors can paradoxically yield adverse effects due to intense administrative demands, non-instructional workloads, and localized burnout if practiced in isolation (Kilag et al., 2023). This negative parameter suggests that servant leadership does not operate effectively as an isolated direct path; rather, its true utility is indirect, functioning as an environmental catalyst that must operate through workplace spirituality and an ethical climate to successfully elevate and sustain long-term PSM.

Structural Model Evolution and Path Analysis

To address the study's fourth research objective, Table 4 establishes the structural validity of the final SEM that best explains PSM. An iterative modeling process was executed to transition from poorly fitting generic frameworks (Models 1 through 4), which consistently failed to meet standard thresholds, to a structurally sound architecture. Conversely, Model 5 (designated as

Table 3

Significance of the Influence of Servant Leadership, Workplace Spirituality, and Ethical Climate on PSM

Public Service Motivation				
(Variables)	<i>B</i>	β	<i>t</i>	<i>Sig.</i>
Constant	.213		2.869	.004
Servant Leadership	-.107	-.085	-2.328	.020
Workplace Spirituality	.582	.461	11.353	.001
Ethical Climate	.416	.313	12.367	.001
<i>R</i>	.667			
<i>R</i> ²	.445			
<i>F</i> (3,2926)	782.007			
ρ	.001			

Table 4

Summary of Goodness of Fit Measures of the Five Generated Models

Model	<i>P-value</i> (<i>>0.05</i>)	<i>CMIN / DF</i> (<i>0 < value < 2</i>)	<i>GFI</i> (<i>>0.95</i>)	<i>CFI</i> (<i>>0.95</i>)	<i>NFI</i> (<i>>0.95</i>)	<i>TLI</i> (<i>>0.95</i>)	<i>RMSEA</i> (<i><0.05</i>)	<i>P-close</i> (<i>>0.05</i>)
1	.000	6.763	.714	.861	.859	.847	.151	.000
2	.000	4.928	.772	.910	.908	.900	.122	.000
3	.000	3.436	.789	.932	.930	.925	.106	.000
4	.000	2.983	.798	.942	.935	.931	.099	.000
5 (ETHOS Model)	.096	1.641	.997	.999	.999	.999	.035	.925

Legend: *CMIN/DF* – Chi Square/Degrees of Freedom

NFI – Normed Fit Index

GFI – Goodness of Fit Index

TLI – Tucker-Lewis Index

RMSEA – Root Mean Square of Error Approximation

CFI – Comparative Fit Index

the final ETHOS Model) exhibits an exemplary, globally accepted fit across all parameters. The model achieved a non-significant chi-square probability value of $p = .096$, an ideal *CMIN/DF* ratio of 1.641 ($0 < \text{value} < 2$), flawless descriptive fit statistics ($GFI = .997$; $CFI = .999$; $NFI = .999$; $TLI = .999$), an exceptionally low error approximation rate ($RMSEA = .035$), and a significant *P-close* value of .925. These strong indices conclusively validate the structural framework of the ETHOS model, confirming its superior capacity to mirror the empirical data collected from public school teachers.

The empirical pathways map delineated in Figure 1 provides a statistical basis for making definitive decisions regarding the formulated null hypotheses through the lens of SDT. School heads' Servant Leadership exerts a strong, positive direct effect on both Workplace Spirituality ($\beta = .67$) and Ethical Climate ($\beta = .88$), leading to the outright rejection of the second and fourth null hypotheses as leadership acts as a catalyst for workplace culture (Kilag

et al., 2023). In turn, Workplace Spirituality ($\beta = .40$) and Ethical Climate ($\beta = .81$) positively and significantly predict PSM, thereby rejecting the third and fifth null hypotheses and confirming that supportive work atmospheres strongly optimize teacher commitment and dedication (Pradhan et al., 2017).

The direct path from Servant Leadership to PSM yields a negative coefficient ($\beta = -.67$), which rejects the first null hypothesis but signals a suppression effect when isolated. Notably, this latent variable structural path weight ($\beta = -.67$) differs from the isolated Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) regression weight reported in Table 3 ($B = -.107$; standardized $\beta = -.085$). While Table 3 captures the direct linear predictive variance in an isolated matrix, the structural path coefficient in Figure 1 reflects the fully integrated network. The shift to a more pronounced negative path in the final structural model reveals a classic suppression effect, as the massive indirect influence of servant leadership is funneled entirely through the two mediators, leaving a

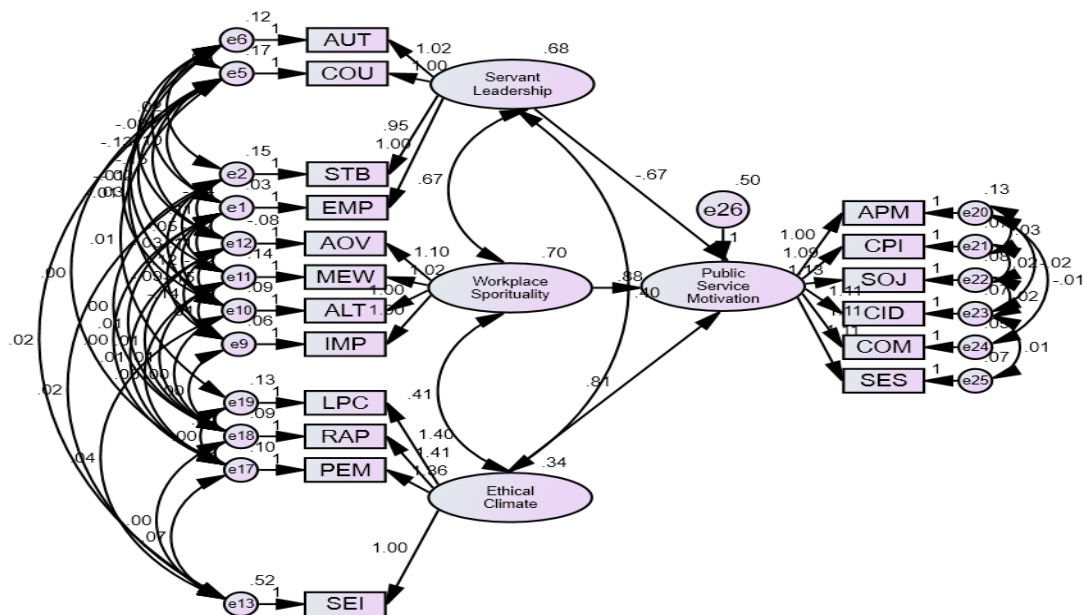
weak, residual direct path once those intervening mechanisms are statistically controlled.

However, when examining total effects, Servant Leadership serves as a critical resource that indirectly drives PSM through its substantial structural influence on the two mediators. Because Workplace Spirituality and Ethical Climate function as intervening

mechanisms that transmit leadership into the public service drive, the mediation hypotheses in null hypotheses six and seven are supported. Ultimately, servant leadership satisfies teachers' psychological needs and autonomous motivation by cultivating a spiritual workplace and an ethical organizational climate (Ahmad et al., 2022).

Figure 1

Best Fit Model of the Study or the ETHOS Model



Legend:

EMP	Empowerment	APM	Attraction to Policy Making
STB	Standing Back	CPI	Commitment to the Public interest
ACC	Accountability	SOJ	Social Justice
FOR	Forgiveness	CID	Civic Duty
COU	Courage	COM	Compassion
AUT	Authenticity	SES	Self-sacrifice
HUM	Humility	LCP	Laws and Professional Codes
STE	Stewardship	RAP	Rules and Standard Operating Procedures
AOV	Altruism	PEM	Personal Morality
MEW	Meaningful Work	SOR	Social Responsibility
ALT	Alignment of Values	FTI	Friendship and Team Interest
IMP	Inner Meaning and Purpose	EFF	Efficiency and Team Interest
		SEI	Self-Interest

Implications

To cultivate collaborative public education environments, institutional assessments must shift from individual competencies toward a sustained culture of leadership support. School heads should prioritize building an ethical culture through transparent, rule-governed, and socially responsible behavior. Rather than developing servant leadership in isolation, educational authorities must recognize workplace spirituality and ethical climate as the primary structural vehicles that activate PSM (Francisco, 2022). Utilizing this framework reinforces internal motivators—such as civic commitment, compassion, and community focus—while preventing isolated leadership behaviors from paradoxically exacerbating bureaucratic strain and administrative burnout (Shaquela & Lyndon, 2022).

School leaders who intentionally leverage these pathways elevate their staff and foster an authentic appreciation for teaching as a service (Rodriguez & Cudiamat, 2021). To align the preparation of future administrators with contemporary teacher education policies, leadership training programs should include explicit modules on workplace spirituality, professional ethics, and servant leadership. This strategy will develop a new generation of leaders who are both technically proficient and ethically grounded (Trazo & Peñas, 2024).

Conclusion and Recommendations

The structural validation of the ultimate model provides significant information about the processes underlying teachers' PSM in the public education system. The results indicate that the extent to which a school principal fosters

an individual's internal desire to provide public service is dependent on how they construct the operational environment. In SEM, servant leadership has a weak negative direct effect on PSM, but a strong positive indirect effect through workplace spirituality and ethical climate, which is fully mediated. This means that while servant leadership does not motivate solely by its nature, it must also be a component of a principal's action within an organizational structure, creating shared moral values and providing a level of vocational satisfaction (Kilag et al., 2023).

When a school principal uses servant leadership to foster a strong ethical climate and support workplace spirituality, teachers will no longer consider their job as just a contract to serve the community (Ahmad et al., 2022). Ultimately, the framework identifies servant leadership as the driver, but workplace spirituality along with the ethical climate are the power sources for transitioning administrative leadership into true, mission-driven PSM (Pradhan et al., 2017).

To ensure sustained teacher commitment and institutional resilience, targeted structural and policy changes must be implemented across key organizational levels. Educational policymakers should shift their priority from individual compliance to a leadership-based culture of support, stripping away redundant clerical burdens to redirect teachers toward core instructional delivery. Furthermore, national pre-service curricula and teacher education programs should integrate explicit modules on workplace spirituality, professional ethics, and servant leadership to build technical and ethical competencies.

At the regional and division levels, Department of Education (DepEd) regional

directors should design transparent appraisal and promotion systems that eliminate favoritism, while division superintendents should mandate continuous ethical capacity building and transparent governance to safeguard institutional fairness and foster an equitable ethical climate (Erten & Türkmen, 2024). Finally, school leaders must transition from top-down administrative surveillance to relational support through ethical leadership coaching and collaborative problem-solving training. School heads can actively operationalize workplace spirituality by introducing values-alignment workshops and peer-support wellness programs, balancing teacher empowerment with emotional and professional backing to mitigate isolation and reduce educator burnout (Francisco, 2022).

Limitations and Future Directions

Although this study utilized a substantial sample ($N = 2,962$) across 12 Schools Division Offices, several limitations offer directions for future research. First, the cross-sectional survey design captures organizational perceptions and motivation only at a single point in time. Because PSM and workplace contexts are fluid and sensitive to socio-political shifts, future studies should employ longitudinal designs to track the stability and developmental trajectories of these structural paths over time. Second, the geographical focus on public schools in the Caraga Region of the Philippines introduces localized bureaucratic and socio-economic variables, meaning caution is warranted when generalizing these findings to private schools, higher education, or other cultural regions. Future researchers should replicate this structural analysis across diverse public school districts, private school

networks, and international education systems to evaluate the model's cross-cultural validity and invariance.

■ ■ ■

Statements and Declarations

1. **Funding details.** No funding
2. **Disclosure statement.** No company conflicts exist.
3. **Acknowledgment:** The completion of this research would not have been possible without the vital organizational support from the NEAP, PNU Manila, and the Department of Education.
4. **Ethical Approval:** An extensive ethics review was completed on this research based on its PNU REC Code: 2025-306.
5. **Declaration of Generative AI in Scientific Writing:** The authors used Grammarly as a language editing tool and used Google Gemini to prepare drafts and conduct editing. The author checked all AI-generated text before final submission for ethical and scholarly compliance.

References

- Ahmad, S., Batool, A., & Abdullah, N. A. (2022). Perceived servant leadership style of principals correlates with job satisfaction of secondary school teachers in Pakistan. *International Journal of Educational Leadership and Management*, 11(1), 62-88. <https://doi.org/10.17583/ijelm.9169>
- Balatero, M. F. T., & Bauyot, M. M. (2024). Enhancing teacher motivation: Leadership strategies in Panabo City public senior high schools. *Asian Journal of Education and Social Studies*, 50(7), 286-299. <https://doi.org/10.9734/ajess/2024/v50i71463>
- Çayak, S., & Eskici, M. (2023). The relationship between teachers' perceptions of organizational ethical climate and accountability tendencies. *International Journal on Social and Education Sciences*, 5(1), 111-131. <https://doi.org/10.46328/ijonses.505>
- Department of Education Caraga Region. (2023). *Submission of plantilla allocation lists (PAL) for FY 2024 and application for teachers' upgrading of positions through equivalents record forms (ERF)* (Regional Memorandum No. 1275, s. 2023). <https://caraga.deped.gov.ph/rm-no-1275-s-2023-submission-of-plantilla-allocation-lists-pal-for-fy-2024-and-application-for-teachers-upgrading-of-positions-through-equivalents-record-forms-erf/>
- Erten, Ş., & Türkmen, İ. (2024). How does the ethical climate affect public service motivation and mission value? *Public Administration Issues*, (6), 23-44. <https://doi.org/10.17323/1999-5431-2024-0-6-23-44>
- Francisco, C. D. (2022). Servant leadership: Its influence on collaborative school culture and organizational trust. *Cosmos An International Journal of Art & Higher Education*, 11(1), 12-26. <https://doi.org/10.46360/cosmos.ahe.520221003>
- Hair, J. F., Jr., Gabriel, M. L. D. D. S., & Patel, V. K. (2014). Modelagem de equações estruturais baseada em covariância (cb-sem) com o amos: Orientações sobre a sua aplicação como uma ferramenta de pesquisa de marketing. *Revista Brasileira de Marketing*, 13(2), 44-55. <https://doi.org/10.5585/remark.v13i2.2718>
- Hassan, S., Ansari, N., Rehman, A., & Moazzam, A. (2021). Understanding public service motivation, workplace spirituality and employee well-being in the public sector. *International Journal of Ethics and Systems*, 38(1), 147-172. <https://doi.org/10.1108/IJOES-06-2021-0135>
- Kilag, O. K. T., Diano, F. M., Malbas, M. H., Mansueto, D. P., Villar, S. P., & Sasan, J. M. (2023). The role of servant leadership in creating a positive school climate. *International Journal of Integrative Sciences*, 2(11), 1773-1782. <https://doi.org/10.55927/ijis.v2i11.6900>
- Krishnani, H. (2023). Workplace spirituality: Exploring the meaning and purpose of

- life through work. *Journal of Advanced Research in Social Sciences*, 6(2), 48–58. <https://doi.org/10.33422/jarss.v6i2.939>
- Perry, J. L. (1996). Measuring public service motivation: An assessment of construct reliability and validity. *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory*, 6(1), 5–22. <https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordjournals.jpart.a024303>
- Pradhan, R. K., Jenar, L. K., & Soto, C. M. (2017). Workplace spirituality in Indian organisations: Construction of reliable and valid measurement scale. *Business: Theory and Practice*, 18, 43–53. <https://doi.org/10.3846/btp.2017.005>
- Ricaplaaza, M. C. B., & Quines, L. A. (2022). The mediating effect of work ethics on the relationship between authentic leadership of school heads and task performance of public school teachers. *American Journal of Multidisciplinary Research and Innovation*, 1(6), 13–29. <https://doi.org/10.54536/ajmri.v1i6.1006>
- Rodriguez, R., & Cudiamat, M. (2021). Motivational factors influencing the teaching performance of teachers in Tuy District Batangas, Philippines. *International Multidisciplinary Research Journal*, 3(2), 10–15. <https://doi.org/10.54476/iimrj281>
- Serrano, D. M. L., & Fallado, J. G. (2025). Assessing the extent of PPST implementation and teacher challenges in elementary schools. *International Journal of Scientific Research and Management (IJSRM)*, 13(05), 4113–4125. <https://doi.org/10.18535/ijssrm/v13i05.e106>
- Shaquela, D. S., & Lyndon, A. Q. (2022). The mediating effect of normative commitment on the relationship between ethical climate and quality of work life among public elementary school teachers. *American Journal of Multidisciplinary Research and Innovation*, 1(4), 150–159. <https://doi.org/10.54536/ajmri.v1i4.616>
- Trazo, S. P., & Peñas, J. M. U. (2024). Predictors of teachers' tendency to leave the profession. *European Journal of Education Studies*, 11(9), 294–308. <https://doi.org/10.46827/ejes.v11i9.5508>
- van Dierendonck, D., & Nuijten, I. (2011). The servant leadership survey: Development and validation of a multidimensional measure. *Journal of Business and Psychology*, 26(3), 249–267. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10869-010-9194-1>
- Victor, B., & Cullen, J. B. (1988). The organizational bases of ethical work climates. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 33(1), 101–125. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2392857>

Bionote

Von Lloyd L. Loren is a Master Teacher I at Lianga National Comprehensive High School. A PhD scholar with an MA in Educational Leadership and Management, he focuses his research on leadership styles, public service motivation, and teacher professional development.

Jose M. Ocampo, Jr., Ph.D. is a full professor and former Philippine Normal University (PNU)-Department of Behavioral Sciences Chair. His scientific studies focus on behaviors and special needs of learners from preschool to higher education. Currently, he is a faculty of the College of Advanced Studies of PNU-Manila.

Tessil Joy L. Sotoniel, DBA, is a faculty member at North Eastern Mindanao State University with a decade of teaching experience. A University of Mindanao alumna, she is published in IJBMT and IASPER, focusing on business, management, and educational research.