

Evolution of public administration and its implication to management and business education

Evolución de la administración pública y su implicación en la educación en gestión y negocios

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ABSTRACT

The paper offers a thorough analysis of the historical development of public administration, aiming to gain deeper insights into the current challenges facing the discipline. Utilizing an evolutionary theoretical lens, the study sheds light on the transitional development of Public Administration (PA). Additionally, it discusses the New Public Administration (NPA) and its implications for the integrity of the public administration discipline. Through a comprehensive review of literature, the paper establishes that despite the logical progressions of public administration presented in literature, there is evidence of a recurring identity crisis within the discipline, with significant implications for business education. Furthermore, the paper proposes an ideal concept of a lesson on Public Administration based on current literature, while examining the notion of the dichotomy between political science and public administration. It also argues that the theoretical framework underpinning the development of public administration is likely to evolve due to the dynamic societal consciousness that shapes this discipline. Ultimately, the paper suggests a theoretical framework that may gain traction in management and business education by combining the founding principles of public administration with the contemporary emerging needs of a transitional industrial order.

Keywords. Policy driven, Results driven, politics-administration dichotomy, New public administration.

RESUMEN

El documento ofrece un análisis exhaustivo del desarrollo histórico de la administración pública, con el objetivo de obtener una comprensión más profunda de los desafíos actuales que enfrenta la disciplina. Utilizando una lente teórica evolutiva, el estudio arroja luz sobre el desarrollo transicional de la Administración Pública (AP). Además, discute la Nueva Administración Pública (NAP) y sus implicaciones para la integridad de la disciplina de la administración pública. A través de una revisión exhaustiva de la literatura, el documento establece que, a pesar de los avances lógicos de la administración pública presentados en la literatura, hay evidencia de una crisis de identidad recurrente dentro de la disciplina, con implicaciones significativas para la educación en negocios. Además, el documento propone un concepto ideal de una lección sobre Administración Pública basado en la literatura actual, mientras examina la noción de la dicotomía entre la ciencia política y la administración pública. También argumenta que el marco teórico que sustenta el desarrollo de la administración pública probablemente evolucione debido a la conciencia social dinámica que moldea esta disciplina. En última instancia, el documento sugiere un marco teórico que podría ganar tracción en la educación en gestión y negocios al combinar los principios fundacionales de la administración pública con las necesidades emergentes contemporáneas de un orden industrial transicional.

Palabras clave. orientación por políticas, orientación por resultados, dicotomía política-administración, nueva administración pública, educación

INTRODUCTION

According to Jana, Qualified and Mahavidyalaya (2021) there is no scientific and systematic scholarly work on public administration prior to 1887. The afore mentioned trio further maintain that public administration was established as a separate discipline through an essay that was written by Wilson (1887). Milenković, (2023), further isolates three critical subjects that were established by Wilson (1887) under his administrative science perspective. He (Milenković) identifies the following as the 3 key critical differentials of public administration: politics and administration

dichotomy, politics and administrative sciences, and politicians and civil servants. The three dichotomies still present a contested ideological foundation. Furthermore, Weber (1996) laments that the immense contributions that were made by White (1926) to the emergence of public administration as a discipline are visibly absent in literature and significantly ignored. Furthermore, Weber (1996) maintains that White (1926) made contributions that gave rise to subsequent key areas like impact of the economy on public administration, contextual issues which includes the social context and human factors. The social antecedents raised by White (1926) provide a broader context to business education that has been largely driven by the notion of economic benefits at the expense of the sociological antecedents that underpin human existence. The work of white brought a clear distinction between the function of humans and machines within the productive sphere. This intellectual heritage is priceless in respect to the broader context that it provides to public administration as a discipline and to business education. The prior position clearly indicates that public administration has inherent potential of going beyond systems and procedures. In alignment with White (1926), Parlack and Caner (2021) clearly demonstrate that public administration is a discipline that augments the mandate of the state and aspirations of the public through administrators that execute the constitutional mandate of the state.

More importantly, Olojede and Fayonyomi (2007) drawing from Akpan (1982:2) define public administration as a practice of conducting government business. The duo (Olojede and Fayonyomi) further drawing from Adamolekun (1983:7); Basu (2003:13) posit that the seminal work of Wilson (1887) provide elaborate grounds for establishing public administration as an academic discipline. In accordance with the aforementioned standpoint, the research will scrutinize the evolution of the academic facet of public administration and expand upon the proposition of formulating an optimal contemporary public administration curriculum.

LITERATURE REVIEW

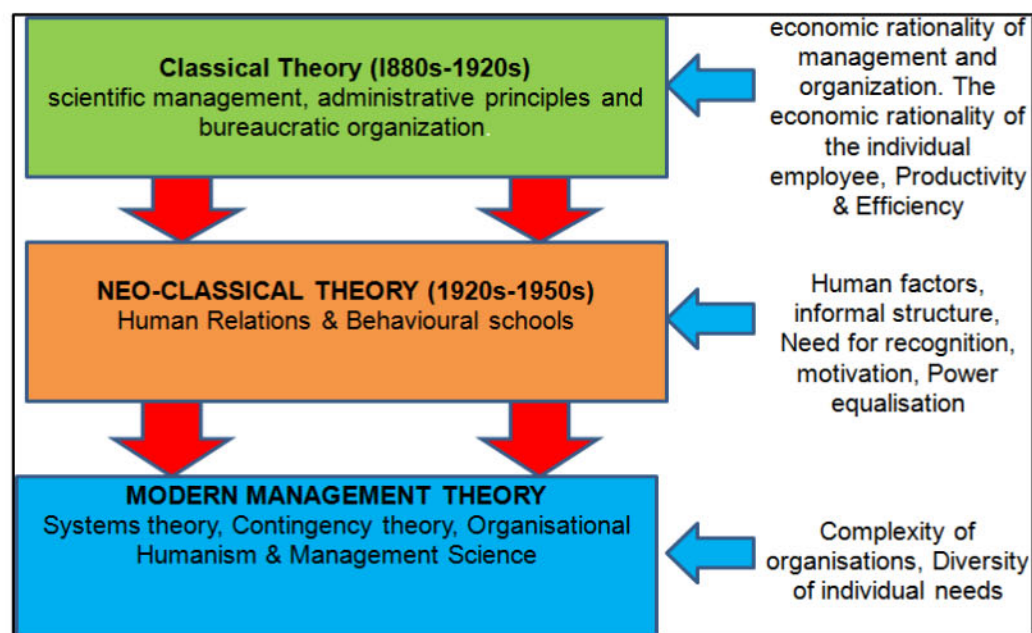
Jana, Qualified and Mahavidyalaya (2021) drawing from Wilson (1887) (Father of Public Administration) assert that there is a clear distinction between politics and public administration. The trio further state that politics is associated with making of policies whilst public administration is concerned with implementation of policies. However, Selepe and Mehlape (2023) state that the dichotomy of politics and public administration is much easier in theory than in practice. Furthermore, Scott and Wanna (2005) drawing from Raadschelders (1998) underscore the fact that prior public administration literature is founded on a normative or prescriptive approach that does not provide deeper insights into this emerging multi-disciplinary field. Prior literature presents steps and processes to be followed in order to manage the affairs of the public sector. More importantly Selepe and Mehlape (2023) drawing from Joensuu and Niiranen (2018) assert that the model given by Max Webber (1947) decisively demonstrates the boundaries of politics and public administration. Interestingly Lamidi (2015) drawing from Stillman (1980) posits that there is no clear indication and distinctive time frames that can mark the embryonic state of public administration but rather he argues that the discipline can be studied from the classical, neoclassical and postmodernism ideological transitions.

Public administration can be traced from classical theories which developed soon after the Second World War and inherently pursued a rebuilding agenda which led to the entrenchment of bureaucratic structures. The entrenchment of bureaucracy was meant to expedite productivity and efficiency for economic recovery after the second world war (Khorasani and Almasifard, 2017). The need to increase productivity and efficiency for profit motives undermined human factors that were later discussed in neo-classical theories (Hussain, Haque & Baloch, 2019). Furthermore, Neo classical theories contends that classical theories created a rigid organisation through inflexible boundaries which rendered impersonality to the social relationships within the organisation (Hussain, Haque & Baloch, 2019). These boundaries undermined the notion of agency which views

employees as free moral agents who possess innovative capabilities and function through social interaction (Parthemore & Whitby, 2013). The classical theories introduced tall hierarchical structures that emphasised line and staff functions and the same structures did not consider informal structures or social needs of employees (Nadrifar, Bandani and Shahryari, 2013). These insensitive boundaries introduced the concept of a bloodless organisation where human beings were seen as part of the machinery that was responsible for production.

This insensitive approach to human beings led to the development of neo-classical theories that unearthed the role and function of informal structures within the organisation. The neo-classical theories basing on Hawthorne studies by Mayo between 1924 and 1927 revealed the emotional side of human beings. The findings of the study confirmed the psychological and sociological nature of human behaviour mirrored by the natural existence of informal structures within organisations (Whetten and Rodgers, 2013). Gambo, Halima and Adam (2018) assert that neo classical school of thought established the importance of the physiological, sociological, and psychological needs of employees. However, the neo classical theories did not establish the influence of social needs on corporate strategy. The contemporary organisation theory perceives the organisation as an organism with interdependent parts functioning as a whole. Furthermore, contemporary organisation theory contends that the organisation is made up of numerous sub structures that should operate through synergy. Contemporary organisation theory advocates for elaborate communication and training in order to meet some of the critical needs of the informal structures (Khorasani, 2017). With the arguments made so far, the conversations around the development of public administration can be projected as illustrated below in Figure 1.

Figure 1. Conceptualisation of the evolution of public administration



Chronological Development of Public Administration

Lamidi (2015) drawing from Bartholomew (1972) presents five critical stages of public administration development as stated below.

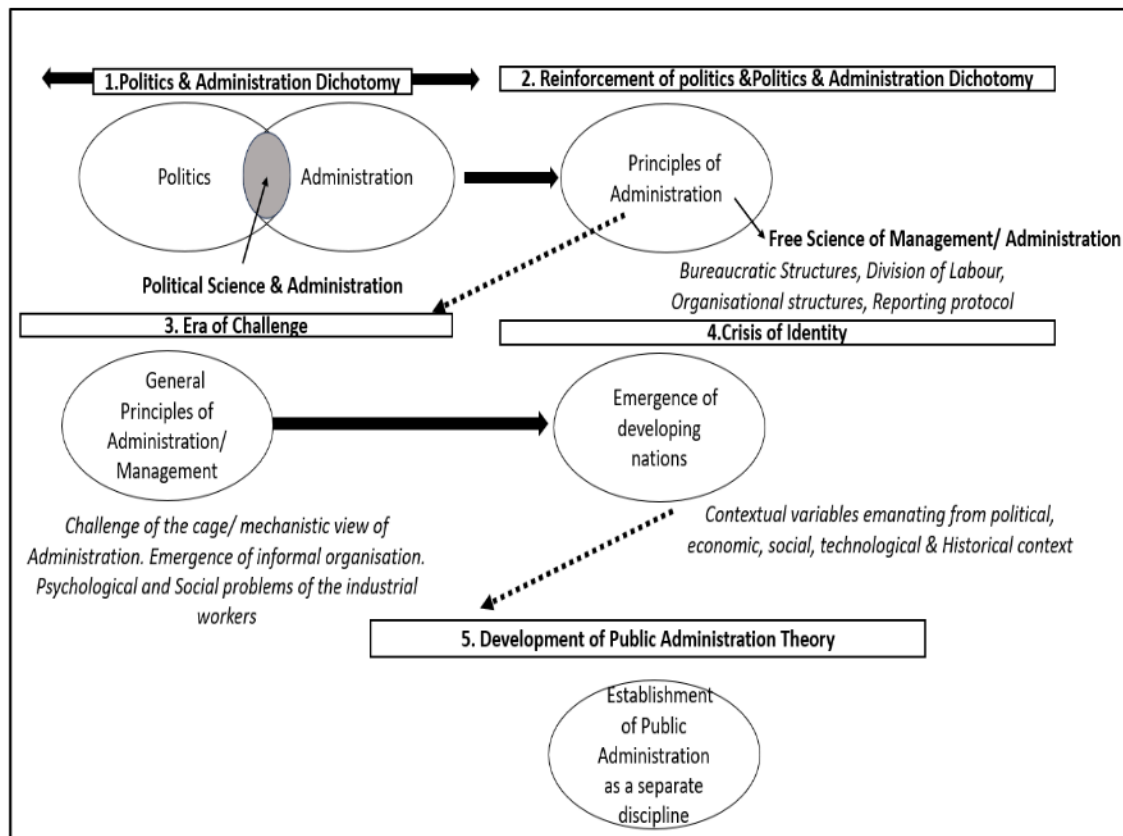
- Stage 1: politics administration dichotomy (1887-1926)
- Stage 2: principles of administration (1927-1937)
- Stage 3: era of challenge (1938-1947)
- Stage 4: crises of identity (1948-1970)
- Stage 5: public policy perspective (1971 onwards)

The first initial stage clearly demonstrates the close relatedness of politics and administration. However, Ongaro and Van Thiel (2017) clearly state that the elementary division of political science and public administration is anchored on division of labour. Furthermore, Ongaro and Van Thiel (2017) drawing from Bauer (2008) ; Whicker et al (1993) posit that Public administration deals with intra-organisational and procedural dynamics that expose the power and the capacity of the state while political science deals with the broader societal input and policy making processes. Interestingly Ojogwu (2021) in agreement with the second stage of the principles of administration he provides 6 key tenants to public administration:

1. Methods of co-operation
2. How workers are selected to do the job.
3. How workers are motivated or induced to put in their best
4. How the job is divided among the workers
5. How the workers are taught how to do the job
6. How the activities of various workers are co-ordinated.

In respect to the third transition Serpa and Ferreira (2019) contend that the classical theories introduced a rigid mechanistic view of the organisation which is often referred to as a bloodless organisation. The Neo-classical theories were heavily anchored on the social needs of employees and behavioural science perspective of employees and the same introduced the notion of informal organisation which was a clear break from the rigid boundaries set by the classical theories (Whetten, Rodgers & Kessler, 2015). Hafer (2016) drawing from the democratic and public value theory laments the fact that public administration is on a self-imposed identity crisis due to constant redefinition from dynamic public opinion. Commenting on the last transitional stage Martin and Hall (2021) anchor on Peters (2010) who posit that public policy perspectives are associated with what the government will directly do or achieve through its agents to better the life of the citizens. Figure 2 displays a subsequent development of the 5 transitional stages of public administration.

Figure 2. Transitional development of public administration



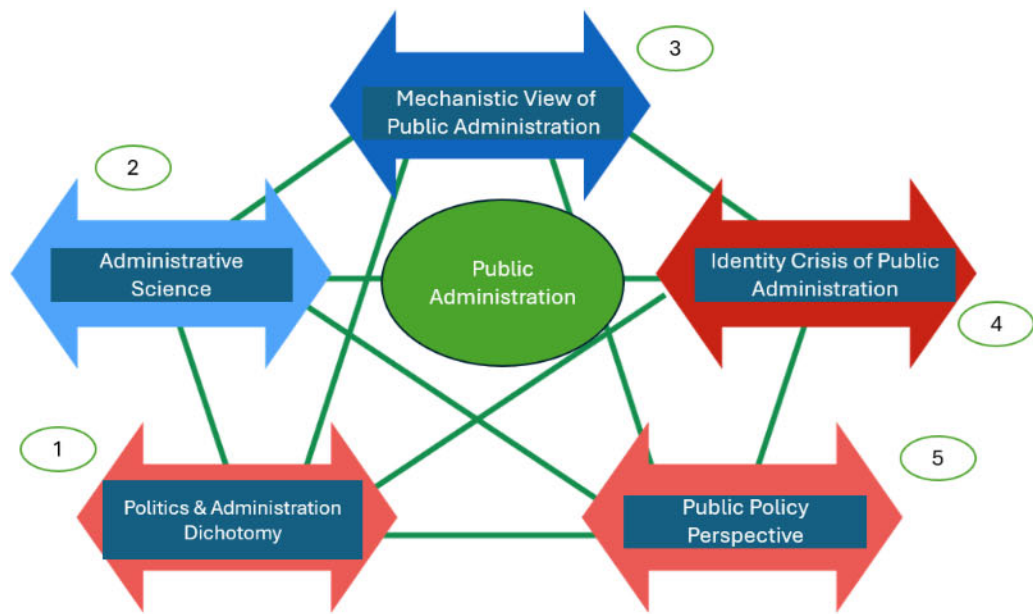
The above figure clearly illustrates the initial interconnectedness of politics and administration as argued by Ongaro and Van Thiel (2017). It also demonstrates how the emergence of management science and the administration school of thought led to the definition of administration as a distinct academic discipline and field of practice. Additionally, in line with the viewpoint of Ojogwu (2021), figure 2 indicates that increased social consciousness and awareness of human factors resulted in challenges due to employees protesting against inhumane treatment by industry owners. Furthermore, in relation to the stage of identity crisis, Martin and Hall (2021), drawing from Peters (2010), indicates that the differences in micro and macro environmental conditions of diverse states presented a crisis of identity in the application of public administration, rooted in Europe and America. Following the identity crisis, there was the development of public administration as a separate field and the emergence of the New Public Administration, which aimed to address all the variables that had not been addressed by Traditional Public Administration.

METHODOLOGY

According to Retolaza and San-Jose (2017) the sequence and logic in which a study addresses the research questions, research objectives and populates the data for the study is defined as the methodological design. The study used integrative literature as a method to draw from divergent global contexts. Dela and Gross (2017) drawing from Hambaloyi and Jordan (2015); Whittemore & Knafli (2005) posits that integrative literature allows researchers to thoroughly examine a phenomenon by synthesising information from various sources and contexts. This method fosters a comprehensive understanding by considering diverse perspectives and viewpoints, thereby providing a holistic view of the subject under study. More importantly, Torraco (2016) further states

that integrative literature enables the creation of new knowledge from existing knowledge. The study was able to expand on the existing knowledge using an evolution theoretical lens. Drawing from Ferreira da Silva *et al.* (2017) the study utilised the evolutionary theoretical lens to create a conceptual ecology which was used to analyse and interpret the development of public administration in a socio-political and ecological context. This approach provided a clear conceptual framework for understanding the nuanced interplay between societal and environmental factors in shaping public administration. For a visual representation of the evolutionary theoretical lens, please refer to figure 3 below.

Figure 3. Public administration conceptual ecology



The conceptual framework of public administration serves as a fundamental structure that delves into the intricate layers underpinning its functionality and development. These layers, although constrained by temporal boundaries, provide a rich understanding of the evolution of public administration as both a practical field and an academic discipline.

RESULTS

The data depicted in Table 1 provides an overview of the primary theoretical concepts distilled from a wide-ranging review of the literature on public administration.

Table 1. Summary of key findings from literature

Transitional Development of Public Administration	Ideological dispensation	Unique features of the transition
Politics & Administration	Bureaucratic (Tall hierarchical structure development)	Red tape and elaborate reporting protocols
Principles of Administration	Scientific Management perspective	Division of Labour, Efficiency, Performance management, Ergonomics
Era of Challenge	Mechanistic View of the organisation, Emergence of the need to deal with industrial unrest	Consideration of informal structures and noticeable growth of the human relations movement
Emergence of Developing Nations	Different emerging states started to adopt public administration practices	Public Administration practices shaped by the socio-ecological narratives of different emerging states
Development of Public Administration Theory	Transition of Public Administration into a separate discipline	Elaborate self-consciousness and a pronounced focus on democratic and public value theory.

The table provided offers a concise presentation of the key findings extracted from the reviewed literature. Its primary goal is to delineate the ideological evolution and development of public administration and to highlight its implications for management scholarship.

DISCUSSION

Five Transitional phases of public administration

The five transitional phases of public administration present a plausible, subsequent and ubiquitous appreciation of public administration however stage 3 and 4 appear to be relevant in the contemporary development of public administration. Hafer (2016) drawing from the democratic and public value theory argues that public administration is in the phase of identity crisis due to the dynamic democratic values espoused by the public. More importantly Lamidi (2015) drawing from Corson and Harris (1963) contends that the neo-classical theories unearthed the social and psychological needs of industrial workers between 1938-1947. The social and psychological needs of industrial workers or public continue to shape the landscape of public administration since the premises of public administration is drawn from societal consciousness. Waldo (1994) as cited in Lamidi (2015) exposes the concept of the 'New Public Administration' (NPA) emerged due to the redundancy of public administration theories. Indahsari and Raharja (2020) state that the NPA is results driven as opposed to the traditional public administration that is policy driven, furthermore, the NPA is founded on decentralised discretion, subcontracting and reorganisation of public administration. Indahsari and Raharja (2020) further state that public administration is a transitional discipline that borrows from various disciplines of management. However, the NPA has not managed to be a panacea of the public administration conundrum as argued by Essien (2015) that Public administration as a discipline did not address a number of country-specific contextual issues. The NPA adequately covers the developed states that have efficient administrative structures and policies. Essien (2015) further states that the major challenge with public administration is that it has no commonly accepted definition. Interestingly public administration is both an occupation and discipline that draws from multiple fields. Haque, van der Wal and van den Berg (2021) drawing from Drechsler (2013); Fitzpatrick et al. (2011);

Jreisat (2010); Riggs (1964) underscores the contextual gap that emanates from the comparative public administration that ignore the notion of country specific context.

Transitional nature of public administration

The constantly changing and fluid nature of public administration in today's society presents a complex and intricate academic challenge that requires a thorough and in-depth review of current paradigms, as argued by Uddin (2024). Drawing from the work of Nwanisobi and Christopher (2020) It can be ascertained that the complexity of the academic transition of public administration requires unpacking the complicated interaction between political influences and administrative processes, as well as the continuously changing dynamics of society. This highlights the crucial need for a perceptive and nuanced understanding of the theoretical principles that form the basis of public administration. Đulabić (2020) asserts that when dealing with this complexity requires a comprehensive and integrated approach that combines historical viewpoints with the changing requirements of the present, promoting a dynamic and flexible framework that can effectively tackle the numerous and complicated challenges that public administration faces in the current environment.

Jana (2021) argues that the evolution of public administration is challenging to trace due to the complexity and multifaceted nature of the discipline and its historical development. Over time, public administration has been influenced by various political, social, and economic factors, making it difficult to pinpoint a singular trajectory of evolution. Additionally, differing scholarly perspectives and interpretations further contribute to the complexity of tracing the evolution of public administration. More importantly, Eppel and Rhodes (2018) state that the discipline's evolution is also intricately linked to broader societal changes, which adds layers of complexity to understanding its development. Furthermore, the dynamic interplay between theory and practice in public administration adds another dimension of complexity, as the implementation of administrative principles often varies across different contexts and time periods.

Conundrum of the Civil Servant and Political appointee

The political environment is constantly changing, making public administration complex. Spiller and Urbizintondo (1994) ; Royal Norwegian Ministry of Local Government and Modernisation (2019) contend that political agendas and policies greatly influence administrative decisions, adding layers of complexity to program implementation. Managing these political influences while still fulfilling the public service mandate is challenging. Coordinating efforts across different government agencies and departments is difficult due to the diverse and interconnected nature of public administration. Upholding ethical standards and accountability while balancing the diverse needs and interests of the public adds to this complexity. Public administrators must navigate these intricacies while ensuring transparency and integrity in their decision-making processes. The legal and regulatory framework further complicates public administration, requiring adherence to legal requirements, navigating bureaucratic procedures, and ensuring compliance with regulatory standards. In summary, the complexities surrounding public administration arise from the interaction of political, organizational, ethical, and legal factors. Effectively addressing these complexities is crucial for the efficient and responsible functioning of public administration in serving the public and promoting the public good.

Implications of the study to business education

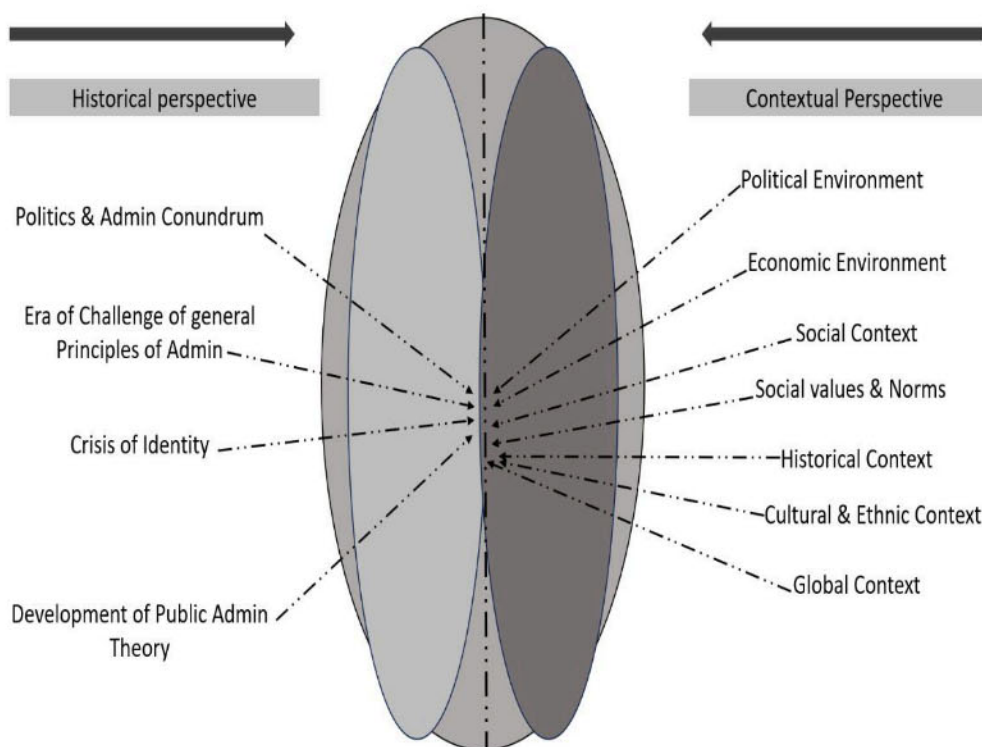
While management and business theories have focused intently on the notion of the NPA, the paper critically demonstrates that inherent and past challenges of PA remain of critical relevance in contemporary business education and it could be part of the future challenges in business education (Blanco-González et al, 2024). In support of the above mentioned Selepe and Mehlape

(2023) research is an attempt to clear the conundrum of politics and administration which is the initial dilemma in the evolution of PA.

The afore mentioned clearly demonstrates that management should not be deemed as a body of knowledge that progresses on a linear trajectory because the founding complexities of this field keep on resurfacing in various forms. Contrary to the views of a number of scholars as argued by Pfiffner (2004) that there is PA and NPA, the attempt to classify PA in this regard has demonstrated superficial analysis and interpretation of trends in this field. The literature analysis presented in this study clearly demonstrates that the division and chronological sequence used to define PA is more prudent in written form that it is in practice. In addition to the vexing resurfacing of inherent problems of PA, Rubakula (2014) clearly states that the NPA approach was largely incompatible with a lot of countries. The aforementioned position clearly emphasises the issue of contextual variation that requires attention within the realm of business education. Essien (2015) asserts that PA lacks a universally accepted definition which compounds the dimensional complexities of the field, the lack of convergence presents a critical casing point for business education. The transient and transitional nature of PA, as argued by Raharja (2020), that the field borrows from many different management fields and is constantly going through shape-shifting, has a direct impact on the established body of knowledge in management literature and theories.

While there are many areas of focus that apply to business education and management theories the paper has succeeded in making a case for two critical areas. The paper demonstrates with fatal precision the historical and contextual perspective. The two perspectives are demonstrated in a proposed theoretical lens given below.

Figure 4. Public Administration Conceptual Perspective



The diagram presented above serves as an illustrative representation of the complex and multifaceted historical and contextual perspectives that have played a pivotal role in shaping the

development of public administration. These perspectives encompass a wide range of practical applications and theoretical frameworks, showcasing the intricate interplay between historical influences and the evolving nature of administrative practices.

What would a contemporary lesson in public administration look like

Drawing from the literature review and identified concepts, the study contends that a contemporary lesson on public administration should reflect a conceptual ecology that encompasses the socio-political undercurrents of any given state. It argues that an effective lesson on public administration should be grounded in an anthropological narrative that reflects the socio-cultural inclinations of the populace in a specific country.

Furthermore, a robust lesson on public administration should explicitly articulate that the discipline draws from various other fields such as political science, management, and policy studies. This lucidity will assist students in avoiding inadvertently conflating the subsidiary fields with public administration.

Additionally, an effective lesson on public administration should aim to demonstrate that political science primarily concerns politicians, while public administration is primarily concerned with civil servants. It should address the challenges associated with the gradual transition of civil servants into politicians by political office bearers, which is closely linked to the dichotomy of political science and public administration.

A sound lesson on public administration should utilise insights from the social needs of citizens outlined in the literature to underscore the vital need to provide social amenities and services that enhance the quality of life for the citizenry.

CONCLUSION

The paper provides a comprehensive analysis of the historical development of public administration and its implications for management and business education. It delves into the transitional development of public administration, discusses the New Public Administration (NPA), and examines the recurring identity crisis within the discipline. The paper also proposes an ideal concept of a lesson on Public Administration based on current literature and suggests a theoretical framework for management and business education. Drawing from various reputable sources such as Jana, Qualified and Mahavidyalaya (2021), Milenković (2023), Weber (1996), White (1926), and Akpan (1982), the article aims to scrutinize the evolution of the academic facet of public administration and expand upon the proposition of formulating an optimal contemporary public administration curriculum.

The realm of public administration is significantly influenced by intricate and perpetually shifting societal factors, making it challenging to confine its evolution to a particular time frame. The period from 1948 to 1970 marked a substantial crisis of identity in public administration, resulting in a divergence in social contexts between developed and developing nations. This transformation spurred the emergence of the New Public Administration (NPA), placing emphasis on the challenges within the field and creating a schism among scholars between NPA and traditional public administration. The demarcation between public administration and politics remains ambiguous, with no universally accepted definition among scholars. It is imperative for future studies to delve into the contextual disparities between developed and developing nations and to tackle the identity crisis and the delineation between politics and administration. In the future, rigorous academic exploration can further substantiate the findings delineated in this paper by incorporating practical case studies. This will enable a more profound comprehension of the transitional development of public administration and its far-reaching implications for the field of management scholarship. Employing practical case studies will facilitate methodological

triangulation, thereby providing a comprehensive approach to substantiate and scrutinize theoretical assertions.

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