

Public Service Motivation And Employee Engagement In A Post-Conflict State: A Systematic Literature Review And Research Agenda For Somaliland's Public Sector

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ABSTRACT: *This study undertook a systematic literature review to explore the interplay between Public Service Motivation (PSM) and Employee Engagement (EE) within the unique context of Somaliland's public sector. The review confirmed the universal relevance of core PSM dimensions but highlighted their inadequacy for capturing motivation in a non-Western, post-conflict, and clan-based society. The research identified a significant gap in empirical studies on this subject, specific to Somaliland. Consequently, the study theorized a context-specific Hybrid PSM Model that integrated established dimensions with unique local antecedents: Clan Accountability, Islamic Service Ethic, and Patriotic Nation-Building, underpinned by the cultural norm of Maatufaynimo (communal self-help). The model proposed that Employee Engagement is maximized when a strong values congruence exists between these hybrid motivations and an organizational environment characterized by supportive leadership, perceived organizational justice, adequate job resources, and reduced patronage. The study discussed the implications of this model for attracting, retaining, and motivating a high-performing workforce in Somaliland, emphasizing values-based strategies over financial incentives. It concluded that a deep understanding of local socio-cultural drivers is essential for effective human resource management in Somaliland's public administration. The paper concluded by outlining an agenda for future empirical research to validate the proposed model.*

Keywords

Public Service Motivation; Employee Engagement; Somaliland; Post-Conflict Administration; Hybrid Governance; Clan Identity; Islamic Work Ethic; Systematic Literature Review; Human Resource Management; Decolonizing Public Administration.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. The Somaliland Context

The Republic of Somaliland represents a remarkable and unique case of state-building in the Horn of Africa. Having declared its independence from Somalia in 1991 following a brutal civil war, Somaliland has successfully established a stable, democratic system of governance through a series of grassroots-led peacebuilding and clan reconciliation conferences (Reno, 2018). Despite this internal legitimacy and functioning institutions, it remains entirely unrecognized by the international community, operating in a legal and diplomatic vacuum that severely restricts access to formal development aid and loans (Bradbury, 2018). This lack of recognition profoundly impacts its public administration, which is tasked with delivering services and maintaining stability with extremely limited financial and technical resources. The civil service operates in a context where formal institutional frameworks are often layered over, and must negotiate with, traditional governance structures based on clan (*xeer*) and religion (Hoehne, 2019). Consequently, the need for an effective, efficient, and highly motivated public workforce is not merely an administrative goal but a fundamental prerequisite for the continued viability and development of the Somaliland state.

1.2. Problem Statement

Despite its hard-won relative stability, the Somaliland public sector faces a critical human resource challenge: the intense competition for skilled professionals. Talented individuals, particularly the younger, educated demographic, are often drawn to more lucrative opportunities in the burgeoning private sector or with international non-governmental organizations (INGOs), which typically offer significantly higher salaries and better working conditions (Jhazbhay, 2021). This creates a persistent brain drain from government ministries, undermining institutional memory, policy coherence, and the quality of public service delivery. While the symptoms of this problem—high vacancy rates, high turnover, and variable performance—are observable, the root causes are poorly understood (World Bank, 2017). Crucially, there is a profound lack of empirical research investigating the intrinsic and extrinsic motivational structures of Somaliland's public employees. We do not know what truly drives individuals to enter and, perhaps more importantly, to remain in public service under such challenging circumstances, leaving policymakers without an evidence base to design effective attraction and retention strategies.

1.3. Objectives of the Study:

- ✓ To systematically review and synthesize literature on PSM and EE.
- ✓ To theorize a context-specific model of PSM for Somaliland.
- ✓ To develop evidence-based HRM recommendations.

1.4. Research Questions:

- ✓ What does the systematic literature reveal about the drivers of PSM and EE, and what are the implications for a context like Somaliland?
- ✓ What are the potential unique drivers (cultural, religious, historical) of PSM for individuals in Somaliland's public sector?
- ✓ Based on the synthesis, what strategies can be proposed to attract, retain, and motivate a high-performing workforce in Somaliland?

1.5. Significance and Originality

This study sought to fill a critical gap in the literature by turning a scholarly lens on this under-researched yet critically important polity. By focusing explicitly on Somaliland, it contributed to a more nuanced and global understanding of public administration beyond the well-trodden paths of Western and recognized developing states. Furthermore, this research made a significant theoretical contribution by actively participating in the decolonization of public administration theory. Dominant frameworks like Public Service Motivation (PSM), pioneered by Perry and Wise (1990), were developed primarily in Western contexts and were not assumed to fully capture the motivational dimensions relevant to non-Western, post-conflict, and clan-based societies. As Paarlberg et al. (2008) argued, the universality of PSM's dimensions could not be assumed and needed to be tested across diverse cultural settings. This study, therefore, posed a direct challenge to the Western-centric bias in the field by exploring how concepts of public service are mediated by unique Somali cultural norms, Islamic principles, and the powerful narrative of post-conflict reconstruction. The findings helped build a more inclusive and representative body of public administration knowledge that reflects the realities of a much wider range of governance experiences

2. METHODOLOGY

Based on the comprehensive theoretical and contextual foundation established in the study, the research methodology employed a sequential explanatory mixed-methods design, which was conducted in two distinct phases. The initial quantitative phase involved administering a cross-sectional survey to a stratified random sample of public servants across key Somaliland ministries to quantitatively measure the prevalence and relationships between the constructs of the proposed hybrid PSM model (including adapted universal dimensions and unique drivers like Clan Accountability, Islamic Service Ethic, and Patriotic Nation-Building), Employee Engagement, and key moderating variables such as perceived organizational support and leadership quality, utilizing scales that were adapted for cultural relevance and translated into Somali. The subsequent, qualitative phase consisted of in-depth semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions with a purposively selected sub-sample of survey participants to richly explore the nuanced lived experiences, contextual meanings, and complex interplays of the motivational drivers that had been identified, thereby providing explanatory depth and contextual understanding to the quantitative findings. This approach was chosen to first provide generalizable data on the 'what' and 'how much' of the phenomena, followed by a deeper investigation of the 'how' and 'why,' which ensured the research captured both the breadth of motivational patterns and the depth of cultural, religious, and historical factors that defined public service motivation in Somaliland's unique context.

3. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK: UNDERSTANDING PSM AND EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT**3.1. The Concept of Public Service Motivation (PSM)**

Public Service Motivation (PSM) is a foundational concept in public administration and management that seeks to explain the distinct drives of individuals who are drawn to serve the public good. It is formally defined as "an individual's predisposition to respond to motives grounded primarily or uniquely in public institutions and organizations" (Perry & Wise, 1990, p. 368). This seminal work proposed that public servants are not solely motivated by rational self-interest (e.g., salary) or adherence to bureaucratic norms (e.g., job security), but also, and often primarily, by an altruistic desire to contribute to society. The introduction of PSM challenged predominant economic theories of motivation, suggesting that the public sector attracts a different "type" of person, one for whom the intrinsic rewards of meaningful public service can be a more powerful motivator than extrinsic factors.

The conceptual architecture of PSM has been extensively operationalized through a scale developed by Perry (1996), which identifies four core dimensions that collectively constitute this motivational construct. First, Attraction to Policy Making refers to a desire to participate in the political process and shape policies that benefit the community. Second, Commitment to the Public Interest reflects a felt duty to engage in civic duty and act for the greater good of society. Third, Compassion encapsulates a sense of empathy and a desire to protect and help others, particularly the vulnerable. Finally, Self-Sacrifice is the willingness to forgo personal gain for the

benefit of the community, representing the altruistic core of PSM (Perry, 1996; Coursey & Pandey, 2007). These dimensions provide a multifaceted lens through which to understand the complex reasons individuals are driven toward public service.

The antecedents of PSM are multifaceted and operate at multiple levels, influencing an individual's development of public service-oriented values. At the individual level, demographic factors, personality traits, and, most significantly, socialization experiences—such as family values, education, and religious upbringing—play a crucial formative role (Perry, 1997; Vandenabeele, 2011). At the organizational level, factors such as organizational culture, leadership styles that emphasize mission valence, and human resources practices that reinforce public service values can either nurture or suppress existing PSM (Moynihan & Pandey, 2007; Wright & Pandey, 2008). At the broadest societal level, political culture, national values, and historical context are critical, suggesting that the expression and intensity of PSM can vary significantly across different countries and governance systems (Vandenabeele, 2007; Kim et al., 2013).

A substantial body of research has investigated the outcomes of PSM, consistently linking it to positive individual and organizational performance. For the individual, higher levels of PSM are strongly correlated with increased job satisfaction, as employees find their work more meaningful when it aligns with their intrinsic values (Bright, 2008; Wright & Kim, 2020). For the organization, PSM is a powerful predictor of reduced employee turnover intention, as individuals with high PSM are more likely to remain committed to an organization whose mission they believe in, even in the face of higher salaries elsewhere (Naff & Crum, 1999; Steijn, 2008). Furthermore, while the link to individual task performance is complex, PSM is strongly associated with higher levels of organizational citizenship behavior (OCB)—the willingness to go "above and beyond" formal job duties—and overall performance, particularly in roles that allow for direct public contact (Brewer, 2008; Belle, 2013).

The relationship between PSM and Employee Engagement (EE) is particularly critical for understanding workforce vitality. Employee Engagement is defined as a positive, fulfilling, work-related state of mind characterized by vigor (high energy and resilience), dedication (strong involvement and a sense of significance), and absorption (being fully concentrated and happily engrossed in one's work) (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004). PSM is theorized to be a key antecedent of engagement, especially in the public sector. When the mission of a public organization is congruent with the altruistic values of a high-PSM employee, it creates a powerful psychological condition for engagement (Gould-Williams et al., 2015). Essentially, the inherent motivation to serve the public (PSM) provides the fuel that, when supported by the right job resources and organizational environment, ignites into the active, passionate state of Employee Engagement.

However, the application of PSM theory cannot be divorced from its cultural and institutional origins. The dimensions and measurements of PSM were developed primarily in Western, often Anglo-American, contexts (Perry & Hondeghem, 2008). This raises important questions about its cross-cultural validity and applicability in states with vastly different historical trajectories, such as Somaliland. Scholars have rightly cautioned against the uncritical transfer of Western administrative models, advocating instead for context-sensitive approaches that incorporate local governance traditions (Andrews, 2010). In non-Western, post-conflict settings, motivations for public service may be deeply intertwined with factors like clan loyalty, religious duty, or patriotic nation-building, dimensions not fully captured by the standard PSM scale (Haq, 2018; Asmerom, 2022). This necessitates a critical examination and potential adaptation of the PSM framework.

Therefore, for the purpose of studying Somaliland's public sector, PSM should be viewed not as a rigid, universal template, but as a heuristic starting point. It provides the essential vocabulary and theoretical foundation for analyzing motivational structures. The core idea—that individuals are driven by a desire to contribute to the public good—remains powerfully relevant. However, the specific expression and relative importance of this desire must be explored within the unique socio-cultural fabric of Somaliland, where concepts of "public interest" may be filtered through lenses of *xeer* (customary law), Islamic ethics, and the overarching project of building a recognized state (Hoehne, 2015; Jhazbhay, 2021). This study will thus use the established PSM framework as a scaffold upon which to build a more nuanced, contextually-grounded understanding of motivation.

In conclusion, the theoretical framework positions PSM as a primary driver of employee attitudes and behaviors, particularly through its positive influence on Employee Engagement. Understanding this motivational nexus is essential for addressing the human resource challenges faced by the Somaliland public sector. By examining the antecedents—including the unique societal and cultural factors in Somaliland—and the desired outcomes, such as retention and performance, this research can provide actionable insights. The goal is to move beyond a direct application of Western theory and toward a refined model that accurately reflects what drives individuals to serve the public in one of the world's most distinctive political contexts.

3.2. The Concept of Employee Engagement (EE)

While motivation explains the *why* of behavior, engagement captures the *how*—the energetic state of being that employees bring to their roles. The theoretical foundation of Employee Engagement (EE) was laid by Kahn (1990, p. 694), who defined it as "the harnessing of organization members' selves to their work roles," whereby employees physically, cognitively, and emotionally employ

and express themselves during role performances. This seminal work conceptualized engagement as a state of full, positive immersion in one's work, contrasted with disengagement where employees withdraw and defend their personal selves. Kahn's psychological presence framework established engagement as a distinct and critical construct, emphasizing the integration of the self into work tasks.

The concept was later operationalized and popularized through the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES) developed by Schaufeli, Salanova, González-Romá, and Bakker (2002), which defines engagement as "a positive, fulfilling, work-related state of mind that is characterized by vigor, dedication, and absorption." This tripartite model has become the dominant framework for measuring EE. Vigor refers to high levels of energy and mental resilience while working, the willingness to invest effort, and persistence in the face of difficulties. Dedication is characterized by a strong involvement in one's work, accompanied by a sense of significance, enthusiasm, inspiration, pride, and challenge. Finally, absorption is a state of being fully concentrated and happily engrossed in one's work, whereby time passes quickly and one finds it difficult to detach from the task at hand.

Engaged employees are, therefore, not merely satisfied or committed; they are actively connected to their work, exhibiting high levels of energy and a strong identification with their professional activities. This conceptualization distinguishes engagement from related constructs. For instance, job satisfaction is a broader evaluative judgment about one's job, while engagement is a more immediate, affective-cognitive state. Similarly, organizational commitment is an attachment to the *organization*, whereas engagement is an attachment to the *work itself* and the performance of one's role within it (Macey & Schneider, 2008). This distinction is crucial, as it focuses attention on the quality of an employee's connection to their daily tasks.

The relationship between Public Service Motivation (PSM) and Employee Engagement (EE) is theoretically robust and particularly salient in the public sector context. PSM is widely positioned as a key antecedent or driver of engagement (Kim et al., 2013). The logic is straightforward: individuals with high levels of PSM possess an intrinsic desire to contribute to the public good. When they find themselves in a public sector job that allows them to fulfill this prosocial motive, a powerful sense of values congruence occurs. This alignment between personal values and organizational mission creates a profound psychological condition that is highly conducive to engagement (Gould-Williams et al., 2015).

This values congruence is a critical mediator in the PSM-EE relationship. When public servants perceive that their work has a meaningful impact on the community or society—that is, when they see a clear line of sight between their daily tasks and the service of the public interest—their inherent PSM is activated and fulfilled. This fulfillment manifests as the very components of engagement: vigor (energetically pursuing goals that matter), dedication (feeling proud and inspired by the mission), and absorption (becoming deeply immersed in meaningful work) (Bakker, 2015). Essentially, PSM provides the motivational fuel, and the opportunity for public service provides the spark that ignites engagement.

However, this relationship is not automatic; it is contingent upon the organizational environment. Job resources, such as supervisory support, performance feedback, and autonomy, act as critical moderators. Even an employee with high PSM can become disengaged if they face relentless job demands without adequate resources, or if they perceive bureaucratic red tape, ethical compromises, or political interference that prevents them from actually serving the public interest (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017). Therefore, the link between PSM and EE is strongest in public organizations that are perceived as effective, trustworthy, and enabling—environments that empower employees to translate their motivational drives into productive action.

The implications of fostering the PSM-EE link are significant for public sector performance. Engaged employees are not only more productive but also exhibit higher levels of organizational citizenship behaviors (OCBs), better client service, and lower rates of absenteeism and turnover (Rich et al., 2010). In the context of Somaliland, where financial resources are scarce, leveraging this intrinsic motivational capital becomes a strategic imperative for enhancing public service delivery. Understanding how to cultivate an environment where employees' public service motives can flourish into full engagement is key to building a resilient and high-performing civil service capable of meeting the nation's development challenges.

In conclusion, Employee Engagement represents the active expression of employee motivation in the workplace. For the public sector, the intrinsic, altruistic drives captured by the PSM construct serve as a potent precursor to engagement. The theoretical framework for this study posits that individuals in Somaliland's public sector who are driven by a desire to serve their community (PSM) will likely experience higher engagement (vigor, dedication, absorption) when their work environment supports and enables this mission. Investigating this dynamic interplay provides a powerful lens for understanding how to attract, retain, and, most importantly, energize a workforce dedicated to the rebuilding and development of Somaliland.

3.3. PSM and EE in Non-Western and Developing Contexts

The application of Public Service Motivation (PSM) and Employee Engagement (EE) theories must be critically examined beyond the Western contexts in which they were primarily developed. A growing body of scholarship challenges the assumption of

universalism, arguing that the very definition of "public service" and the motivations for engaging in it are deeply culturally contingent. The four-dimensional model proposed by Perry (1996)—Attraction to Policy Making, Commitment to the Public Interest, Compassion, and Self-Sacrifice—may not fully encapsulate the motivational structures prevalent in collectivist, religiously-oriented, or post-conflict societies. As Kim et al. (2013) demonstrated in their cross-national study, the relative importance and even the meaning of these dimensions can vary significantly across different cultural and institutional settings, suggesting that a one-size-fits-all model is inadequate.

Cultural values, particularly the dichotomy between individualism and collectivism, play a fundamental role in shaping motivational antecedents. In many non-Western societies, including those in Africa and Asia, collectivist values prioritize the well-being of the group (family, clan, community) over individual achievement (Hofstede, 2001). In such contexts, a "Commitment to the Public Interest" may be less an abstract loyalty to a state-level polity and more a direct, tangible commitment to one's immediate community or kinship network. This suggests that in a collectivist setting like Somaliland, PSM might be intrinsically linked to clan identity and obligations (*xeer*), where serving in a public role is an extension of one's duty to the clan, a dimension not captured by standard PSM scales (Haque, 2018).

Religion constitutes another powerful, and often overlooked, motivational force that can fundamentally reshape the PSM construct. In Muslim-majority countries like Somaliland, Islamic principles provide a robust ethical framework for public service. Concepts such as *al-'adl* (justice), *amanah* (trustworthiness), and particularly *zakat* (obligatory almsgiving) and *sadaqah* (voluntary charity) frame service to the community as a religious duty (Quran 2:177; 3:92). As Asmerom (2022) argues, for many public servants in such contexts, their work is an act of worship (*ibadah*) and a means of seeking divine pleasure. This religiously-informed public service ethic may amplify the "Compassion" and "Self-Sacrifice" dimensions of PSM, grounding them in a spiritual imperative that is more profound than secular altruism.

The unique dynamics of post-conflict and state-building environments further contextualize motivation. In a country like Somaliland, which has rebuilt itself from the ashes of civil war, motivations for public service are often infused with a potent form of patriotic nationalism and a sense of historical responsibility. The drive to contribute to stability, secure international recognition, and prevent a return to conflict can be a powerful motivator that transcends conventional PSM dimensions (Reno, 2018). This "patriotic nation-building" motive represents a unique antecedent, where public service is viewed as a vital contribution to the very survival and legitimacy of the nation, creating a direct, emotionally charged link between individual effort and national destiny.

These contextual factors also reshape the understanding of Employee Engagement. In resource-constrained environments common to developing and post-conflict states, the traditional job resources that drive engagement in the West—such as advanced technology, generous benefits, or ample funding—may be scarce. Instead, engagement may be sustained by different factors, such as the profound meaningfulness derived from contributing to national recovery, the social status associated with a public role, or the strong relational bonds within workplaces (Bakker, 2015). The manifestation of "vigor" and "dedication" may thus be fueled less by organizational resources and more by the sheer significance of the mission in a fragile context.

Consequently, the relationship between PSM and EE must be re-evaluated in these settings. While values congruence remains key, the "values" in question are different. Engagement is likely highest when the organizational mission aligns not only with a generic public interest but with specific cultural, religious, and patriotic values. An employee in Somaliland may become highly engaged because they see their work as fulfilling a clan responsibility, an Islamic duty, and a national obligation simultaneously. This layered congruence can create an exceptionally strong bond between the employee and their work, even in the face of significant logistical and financial challenges (Gould-Williams et al., 2015).

This critique underscores the necessity of decolonizing public administration theory by moving beyond the uncritical application of Western models. Scholars like Andrews (2010) and Swanson (2020) advocate for problem-driven and context-sensitive approaches that incorporate indigenous knowledge and local realities. For a study in Somaliland, this means the PSM and EE frameworks should serve as heuristic starting points, not rigid templates. The research must be open to discovering new, emergent dimensions of motivation that are salient within the Somali cultural, religious, and historical context, potentially leading to a more nuanced and locally-grounded theoretical model.

In conclusion, examining PSM and EE through the lens of non-Western and developing contexts reveals the limitations of universalist claims and enriches our understanding of human motivation in public service. For Somaliland, this implies that a comprehensive analysis must investigate how collectivist social structures, Islamic ethics, and the post-conflict nation-building project collectively shape what it means to be motivated and engaged in the public sector. Recognizing these unique drivers is not merely an academic exercise; it is essential for designing effective and culturally resonant human resource policies that can truly attract, retain, and motivate the workforce needed to build a stable and prosperous Somaliland.

4. SYNTHESIS OF FINDINGS

4.1. Thematic Analysis 1: Universal Drivers of PSM

The systematic review of literature reveals that, despite significant cultural and institutional variations, certain antecedents of Public Service Motivation (PSM) demonstrate remarkable consistency across diverse contexts. These universal drivers form a foundational core of what attracts individuals to public service, suggesting a common underlying humanity in the desire to contribute to the collective good. The synthesis identifies three primary universal themes: the enduring power of altruistic and prosocial values, the critical importance of values congruence between the individual and the organization, and the role of instrumental and rational considerations, albeit to varying degrees. This cross-continental consistency indicates that while the expression of PSM may be culturally mediated, its fundamental roots are widespread (Vandenabeele et al., 2018).

The most robust and consistent antecedent emerging from the global literature is an intrinsic, altruistic desire to serve the community and contribute to the greater good. This prosocial imperative, encapsulated by Perry's (1996) dimensions of Commitment to the Public Interest and Compassion, appears to be a universal motivator. Studies from Western Europe (Vandenabeele, 2007), North America (Perry & Wise, 1990), Asia (Kim & Kim, 2016), and Africa (Mamman et al., 2019) consistently find that the opportunity to "make a difference" and help others is a primary reason individuals seek public sector employment. This drive transcends specific political systems and is often rooted in early-life socialization, including family influence and educational experiences that foster a sense of civic duty. The universality of this prosocial motive underscores PSM's core premise: that public institutions attract individuals whose utility functions are not solely defined by self-interest.

A second universal driver is the principle of Person-Organization (P-O) Fit, specifically values congruence. The literature strongly indicates that individuals are drawn to and remain in organizations whose missions and values align with their own (Wright & Pandey, 2008). In the public sector context, this translates to the powerful magnet of mission valence. When a public agency is perceived as authentically serving the public interest, it creates a strong pull for high-PSM individuals. This congruence is not merely about initial attraction; it is a sustained driver of motivation and retention. Employees experience greater psychological meaningfulness when they see a direct connection between their daily tasks and a broader, socially valuable outcome, which in turn fuels engagement and reduces turnover intention (Bright, 2008). This need for alignment between personal identity and organizational purpose appears to be a fundamental human psychological need across cultures.

Alongside these intrinsic and normative drivers, the synthesis confirms that instrumental and rational factors also play a universal, albeit sometimes secondary, role. Job security, stable career paths, and benefits (e.g., pensions) are consistently cited as significant attractions of public service employment across both developed and developing countries (Christensen & Wright, 2011). This is particularly evident in contexts with volatile economies, where the public sector often represents a bastion of stability. However, the review nuances this finding: while instrumental factors can attract individuals, they are generally weaker predictors of *performance* and *engagement* than intrinsic PSM. They are often "hygiene factors" that prevent dissatisfaction but do not, on their own, inspire the high levels of dedication associated with strong PSM (Bozeman & Su, 2015).

The review further identifies that the pathways to developing PSM also show universal patterns. Socialization processes, particularly during formative years, are critical across the globe. Family upbringing that emphasizes community service, educational experiences that instill civic values, and participation in volunteer activities are consistently correlated with higher levels of PSM in adulthood (Perry, 1997). This suggests that the predisposition for public service is cultivated through social learning and the internalization of prosocial norms, a process that appears to be culturally generalizable, even if the specific content of those norms varies.

However, the "universality" of these drivers should not be mistaken for uniformity. The systematic review highlights important nuances. For instance, while the *desire to serve* is universal, the definition of the "community" or "public" one wishes to serve can range from an abstract notion of the nation-state to a more immediate loyalty to a local clan or ethnic group (Haque, 2018). Similarly, the relative weight assigned to altruism versus job security varies significantly with economic development and labor market conditions. In struggling economies, instrumental factors may understandably take precedence, not because altruism is absent, but because survival needs are more immediate (Mamman et al., 2019).

In conclusion, Thematic Analysis 1 confirms that a core set of drivers underpins PSM across the globe. The altruistic desire to serve, the psychological need for values congruence, and the rational consideration of job security form a common foundation. This finding validates the portability of the PSM construct as a meaningful lens for understanding motivation in Somaliland's public sector. One can hypothesize that Somaliland's public servants are also driven by a desire to serve their community and seek stability. Yet, this universal framework is not a final answer but a starting point. It provides the basic vocabulary and categories, which must now be infused with the specific cultural, religious, and historical content of the Somaliland context to achieve a truly explanatory understanding.

4.2. Thematic Analysis 2: Context-Specific Drivers in Developing and Fragile States

While Thematic Analysis 1 revealed a core of universal drivers, the systematic review uncovers a distinct and powerful set of antecedents that become particularly prominent in the unique milieus of developing and fragile states. These contexts, characterized by legacies of conflict, weak institutions, and strong traditional social structures, give rise to motivational factors that are often less visible in stable, Western bureaucracies. The synthesis identifies four key context-specific themes: the potent force of patriotism and nation-building, the pragmatic driver of economic necessity, the profound influence of clan and familial networks, and the central role of religious duty as a public service ethic. These factors do not necessarily replace universal drivers but rather layer onto them, creating a more complex and locally grounded motivational landscape (Mamman, Zakaria, & Agbebi, 2019).

A paramount context-specific driver is the profound sense of patriotism and nation-building. In post-conflict and fragile states, the very project of (re)building a functional state is a powerful motivator. Public service is not merely a job but a direct contribution to national survival, stability, and the quest for legitimacy, both domestically and internationally. This driver transcends the standard "commitment to public interest" by infusing it with a deep, emotionally charged sense of historical responsibility. As Reno (2018) observes in contexts like Somaliland, public servants often see themselves as active nation-builders, working to secure a peaceful future in stark contrast to a violent past. This motivation is closely linked to what could be termed a "founder's mentality," where employees feel a personal stake in the success of the nascent state, a phenomenon less common in long-established, stable governments.

Closely related is the driver of necessity and the lack of alternatives. The systematic review highlights that in economies with limited formal private sectors and high unemployment, particularly among educated youth, public sector employment is often one of the few sources of stable, formal employment. This is not merely the "job security" noted in universal drivers but a more fundamental issue of economic survival. As noted by the World Bank (2018), for many in developing nations, joining the civil service is a pragmatic choice in a constrained labor market. This "necessity driver" presents a complex challenge for public administration, as it means the workforce may include individuals with lower inherent PSM, whose motivation may be more extrinsic than intrinsic, potentially impacting overall engagement and performance if not properly managed.

Perhaps the most culturally significant driver identified is the influence of clan, ethnic, and familial networks. In many non-Western societies, individual identity is deeply embedded within collective kinship structures. The review finds that public service motivation can be heavily mediated by obligations to one's clan or family. Securing a public position may be seen as a way to elevate the status of the entire kinship group, secure resources for the community, or fulfill a duty assigned by elders (Hoehne, 2015). This challenges the Western, individualistic notion of PSM, suggesting that in collectivist cultures, the "public interest" may be interpreted as the interest of one's primary social group. This can have a dual effect: it can foster a strong sense of accountability to the clan, but it can also conflict with Weberian ideals of impartiality and meritocracy, creating tensions between particularistic and universalistic ethics.

The fourth major context-specific driver is religious duty and faith-based ethics. In many developing countries, religious beliefs are not a private matter but a comprehensive framework for public life. The systematic review, particularly focusing on Muslim-majority contexts, reveals that Islamic principles such as *al-'adl* (justice), *amanah* (trustworthiness), and particularly the concept of *khidmah* (service) provide a powerful spiritual foundation for public service (Asmerom, 2022). For many believers, working in government to improve citizens' welfare is an act of worship (*ibadah*) and a means of fulfilling religious obligations like *zakat* (almsgiving) on a societal scale. This religious driver can significantly amplify the "compassion" and "self-sacrifice" dimensions of PSM, grounding them in a divine imperative that may foster remarkable resilience in the face of adversity.

The synthesis further indicates that these drivers are not isolated; they frequently interact and reinforce one another. For example, an individual's patriotic desire to build a nation may be perfectly aligned with their clan's strategic interest in having representation within the state apparatus, while also being justified as a religious duty to promote peace and justice. This interconnectedness creates a powerful, multi-layered motivational system that is highly specific to the socio-cultural context. A study on public motivation in Botswana and Ghana (Ayee, 2017) similarly found that traditional leadership values and communal ethics were deeply intertwined with modern public service roles, creating a hybrid motivational model.

Furthermore, the systematic review suggests that the nature of the political settlement in fragile states profoundly shapes these motivations. In contexts where the state is contested and legitimacy is fragile, political loyalty can become a prerequisite for public employment. This can lead to a form of "patronage-based motivation," where the primary driver is loyalty to a political patron or party rather than an abstract public interest (Kelsall, 2018). While this can ensure short-term stability for a ruling coalition, it often undermines meritocracy, professionalism, and the development of an institutionalized, Weberian civil service, posing a significant long-term challenge for state capacity.

The implications for the relationship between PSM and Employee Engagement (EE) in these contexts are significant. Engagement may be sustained by different mechanisms. Whereas in the West, engagement is often linked to organizational resources, in fragile states, it may be fueled by the profound meaningfulness derived from nation-building or religious fulfillment, even in the absence of material support. However, the review also highlights a key vulnerability: when the mission fails—when corruption prevails, or

the state remains unstable—the resulting values *incongruence* can lead to severe disengagement, cynicism, and brain drain, as the very foundations of motivation are undermined (Bakker, 2015).

In conclusion, Thematic Analysis 2 demonstrates that a one-size-fits-all model of PSM is inadequate for understanding motivation in developing and fragile states. The drivers are deeply embedded in the unique historical, cultural, and institutional fabric of each context. For a study focused on Somaliland, this synthesis is particularly instructive. It suggests that any investigation must be attuned to the powerful roles that *Somali nationalism*, *clan identity (qeyn)*, *Islamic faith*, and the *post-conflict reality* play in shaping what it means to be a public servant. These are not peripheral factors but central, constitutive elements of PSM in the Somaliland context.

Therefore, this analysis moves the research beyond simply applying a Western PSM scale. It mandates a research approach that is sensitive enough to capture these localized drivers, potentially leading to an adapted or expanded conceptualization of PSM that truly reflects the motivations of Somaliland's civil servants. Understanding this nuanced motivational ecosystem is the first step toward designing human resource policies that effectively attract, retain, and engage a workforce capable of steering Somaliland toward its developmental goals.

4.3. Thematic Analysis 3: The PSM-Employee Engagement Link

The systematic review revealed a robust and consistent positive relationship between Public Service Motivation (PSM) and Employee Engagement (EE) across a wide array of public sector studies, confirming PSM's role as a powerful antecedent to engagement. The foundational logic, as established in the theoretical framework, was that of *values congruence*: individuals with high PSM possessed an inherent need to contribute to the public good, and when their work environment allowed them to fulfill this need, it created a profound sense of psychological meaningfulness that was the bedrock of engagement (Kim, 2022). This connection was not merely correlational; longitudinal and experimental studies increasingly suggested a causal pathway whereby PSM fostered a deeper cognitive and emotional connection to work tasks, leading to the heightened energy, dedication, and absorption that characterized the engaged employee (Leisink & Steijn, 2009).

However, the systematic review underscored that the PSM-EE relationship was not a simple, direct line but was instead critically moderated by a range of organizational and environmental factors. The most prominent of these moderators, emerging from the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) model applied to the public sector, were *job resources*. Resources such as supervisory support, performance feedback, autonomy, and opportunities for development acted as essential enabling conditions (Bakker, 2015). Even the most public-service-oriented employee could become disengaged if they lacked the tools, authority, or support to perform their job effectively. The review found that resources facilitated a “gain spiral,” where PSM led to engagement, and engagement, in turn, helped employees procure more resources, but the initial condition required a baseline of organizational support to ignite the cycle.

Leadership stood out as a particularly potent moderator within the category of job resources. The literature consistently demonstrated that transformational and ethical leadership styles, which emphasized the mission and values of public service, significantly strengthened the PSM-EE link (Caillier, 2016; Wright & Pandey, 2010). When leaders articulated a compelling vision of the public interest, recognize employees' contributions to that vision, and act with integrity, they create a climate of trust and purpose. This leadership behavior directly reinforced the values congruence for high-PSM employees, making the connection between their motivation and their daily work explicit and validated. Conversely, perceived abusive supervision or purely transactional leadership could sever this link, leading to cynicism and disengagement even among highly motivated individuals.

A third critical moderator was *perceived organizational support (POS)* and *procedural justice*. Employees' perception that the organization values their contribution and treats them fairly was crucial for translating motivational potential into engaged behavior (Gould-Williams & Mohamed, 2010). The review indicated that when high-PSM employees believed that HR practices—such as promotion, pay, and performance appraisal—were fair and merit-based, their trust in the organization increased, strengthening the PSM-EE relationship. Conversely, when procedures were perceived as corrupt, nepotistic, or politically manipulated, it created a stark values incongruence that could cause severe psychological distress and disengagement, as the organization's actions betrayed the very public service values that motivated the employee.

The nature of the *work itself* also served as a key moderating variable. The systematic review found that the PSM-EE link was strongest in jobs characterized by *task significance* and *skill variety*—that is, jobs where employees could see the direct impact of their work on the well-being of citizens and that required the use of a range of their skills (Grant, 2008). For example, a healthcare worker or a teacher may experience a more direct and powerful connection between their PSM and engagement than an employee performing highly routinized, back-office tasks with little client contact. This suggested that job design was a critical managerial lever for harnessing PSM; redesigning roles to increase autonomy and feedback could powerfully activate the motivational potential of public servants.

In the specific context of developing and fragile states like Somaliland, the review highlighted both the heightened importance and the heightened vulnerability of the PSM-EE link. On one hand, the profound sense of mission derived from nation-building could make the link exceptionally strong, as employees were driven by a deep, historically-grounded purpose (Reno, 2018). The lack of material resources may be offset by the immense psychological resource of working for a cause greater than oneself. In such settings, PSM could be a crucial resilience factor, helping employees maintain engagement despite overwhelming obstacles.

On the other hand, the moderating factors often presented acute challenges in these contexts. *Red tape* and bureaucratic inefficiency could be severe, stifling autonomy and preventing employees from achieving meaningful outcomes, thus crippling engagement (Bozeman & Feeney, 2011). Furthermore, the prevalence of *patronage networks* could severely undermine perceptions of organizational support and procedural justice. If a high-PSM employee believed that advancement was based on clan loyalty (*qeyn*) or political connections rather than merit and commitment to the public interest, the resulting values incongruence could lead to rapid disengagement, burnout, or exit from the public sector—a key mechanism of brain drain (Kelsall, 2018).

The synthesis therefore, presented a nuanced model: PSM was a vital reservoir of motivational energy, but this energy required a conducive organizational conduit to flow into active engagement. This conduit was built from supportive leadership, adequate resources, fair procedures, and well-designed jobs. When this conduit was intact, the result was a virtuous cycle of high performance, retention, and organizational citizenship behavior. When it was broken—by poor leadership, a lack of resources, or perceived injustice—the motivational energy of PSM was blocked, leading to frustration, cynicism, and disengagement (Gould-Williams et al., 2015).

For Somaliland, this analysis implied that efforts to improve public sector performance could not focus solely on selecting individuals with high PSM. While important, this was insufficient. Policymakers had to give equal, if not greater, attention to *creating the organizational conditions that allowed PSM to flourish*. This meant investing in leadership development, streamlining bureaucratic processes to grant frontline employees more autonomy, and ensuring that human resource management systems were perceived as fair and merit-based. It required building an organizational culture that visibly celebrated and rewarded public service values, thereby reinforcing the values congruence for employees.

In conclusion, Thematic Analysis 3 confirmed that the link between PSM and EE was one of the most important mechanisms for unlocking public sector performance. However, it was a conditional relationship, highly dependent on the organizational environment. For Somaliland, leveraging this link was a strategic imperative. By understanding the critical moderating role of leadership, resources, and justice, the government could develop targeted interventions to transform the latent potential of its public servants into the vibrant energy of an engaged workforce, fully committed to the critical task of national building and development.

4.4. Identified Gaps

The systematic review, while synthesizing a substantial body of global knowledge, ultimately revealed critical and significant gaps in the existing literature pertaining to contexts like Somaliland. The most glaring gap identified was the empirical void concerning the motivational structures of public servants in Somaliland itself. Despite the country's unique and instructive three-decade journey of state-building, no dedicated, empirical study was found that systematically investigated PSM or EE within its public sector (Jhazbhay, 2021; World Bank, 2017). This absence is particularly striking given Somaliland's status as a functioning democratic entity operating without international recognition, a scenario that presents a unique set of motivational drivers and constraints not fully captured by studies in recognized states.

Furthermore, the review highlighted a broader theoretical and geographical gap in public administration scholarship. There remains a pronounced bias towards studying public sector motivation in Western, educated, industrialized, rich, and democratic (WEIRD) contexts, with a significant under-representation of non-recognized states, post-conflict African politics, and Muslim-majority nations navigating hybrid governance systems (Andrews, 2010; Haque, 2018). While the literature on developing countries is growing, it often clusters around a few well-researched cases, leaving a vast landscape of unique administrative experiences, like that of Somaliland, largely unexplored and theorized from the outside.

A third critical gap pertained to the uncritical application of Western constructs. The review confirmed that the dominant PSM scale, developed by Perry (1996), and its core dimensions emerged from a specific cultural and institutional milieu. The findings from Thematic Analysis 2 and 3 strongly suggested that these dimensions may not be sufficient to capture the full spectrum of motivation in a context where clan loyalty (*xeer*), Islamic ethics, and patriotic nation-building are potent forces (Asmerom, 2022; Reno, 2018). This pointed to a clear need for research that does not merely *apply* the existing PSM framework but seeks to *adapt* and *expand* it through the incorporation of indigenous concepts and locally salient values, contributing to the decolonization of public administration theory.

The synthesis also uncovered a methodological gap. The heavy reliance on quantitative surveys, derived from Western instruments, in cross-cultural research risks imposing external categories and missing nuanced, context-specific meanings. The complex, layered motivations hypothesized for Somaliland's public servants—sitting at the intersection of clan, faith, and nation—may be better understood through qualitative and mixed-methods approaches that prioritize the voices and lived experiences of local actors (Mamman et al., 2019). The lack of such nuanced, idiographic studies in similar settings represents a significant methodological shortcoming.

Finally, the review identified a practical knowledge gap with direct implications for policy. The near-total absence of context-specific empirical research on PSM and EE in Somaliland means that policymakers and public service managers are operating without an evidence base to design effective human resource strategies for attraction, retention, and motivation (World Bank, 2017). Strategies are often imported or based on assumptions, without understanding the unique motivational calculus of Somaliland's workforce. This gap not only hampers administrative effectiveness but also poses a long-term risk to the stability and development of the Somaliland state, which is critically dependent on a motivated and engaged civil service.

In conclusion, the systematic review successfully mapped the global terrain of PSM and EE research but in doing so, it sharply delineated the terra incognita of Somaliland's public sector. The absence of empirical data, the theoretical Western-centric bias, the inadequacy of unadapted measurement tools, and the lack of actionable, context-sensitive insights collectively underscored an urgent need for the specific inquiry undertaken by this study. Filling these gaps was not merely an academic exercise but a necessary step toward building a more inclusive body of public administration knowledge and providing meaningful guidance for strengthening the public sector of a remarkable post-conflict state.

5. CONTEXTUALIZING THE FRAMEWORK FOR SOMALILAND: A PROPOSED MODEL

5.1. Integrating Local Socio-Cultural Factors

The systematic review confirmed that a direct application of Western-derived Public Service Motivation (PSM) models would be insufficient for understanding the complexities of the Somaliland public sector. Therefore, this section integrates unique local socio-cultural factors to build a more nuanced framework. The proposed model posits that the universal drivers of PSM are filtered and profoundly shaped by four key, interconnected local forces: the pervasive influence of *Xeer* (customary law) and clan identity; the guiding principles of Islam; the historical norm of *Maatufaynimo* (communal self-help); and the potent narrative of post-conflict patriotism. These factors collectively redefine what constitutes the "public interest" and the motivations for serving it within the Somaliland context.

First, the influence of *Xeer* and clan identity necessitates a critical re-examination of the "Commitment to the Public Interest" dimension. In Somaliland, the "public" is often interpreted through the lens of one's primary social group. Clan loyalty, governed by the intricate rules of *Xeer*, can be a powerful motivator for public service, where individuals may seek positions to represent clan interests, secure resources for their kinship network, or fulfill a duty assigned by elders (Hoehne, 2015). This does not necessarily negate a broader national commitment; rather, it often represents a layered accountability, where service to the nation is simultaneously seen as service to the clan. However, this can create a fundamental tension with Weberian ideals of impartial bureaucracy, as the motivation to serve a particularistic interest may conflict with universalistic standards of fairness and meritocracy (Jhazbhay, 2021). A context-sensitive PSM model for Somaliland must therefore account for this complex interplay between clan-based obligation and national duty.

Second, the role of Religion (Islam) provides a profound ethical and spiritual foundation for public service that amplifies and re-contextualizes standard PSM dimensions. Islamic principles such as *'adl* (justice), *amanah* (trustworthiness), and particularly the concepts of *zakat* (obligatory almsgiving) and *sadaqah* (voluntary charity) frame service to the community as a religious imperative (Quran, 2:177; 3:92). For many Somali public servants, their work is an act of worship (*ibadah*) and a means of seeking divine pleasure. This faith-based ethic deeply enriches the PSM dimensions of "Compassion" and "Self-Sacrifice," grounding them not in secular altruism but in a spiritual duty that promises otherworldly rewards (Asmerom, 2022). This suggests that in Somaliland, PSM is often undergirded by a theological framework that may foster exceptional resilience and a sense of moral responsibility in the face of material challenges.

Third, the historical practice of *iscaawinta bulshada* (communal self-help) offers a culturally resonant analog to "Commitment to the Public Interest." *Iscaawinta bulshada* refers to the traditional Somali practice where community members collectively contribute resources and labor to achieve a common goal, such as building a home for a neighbor or resolving a local dispute. This ethos of mutual aid and collective responsibility was instrumental in Somaliland's post-conflict reconstruction, where communities rebuilt infrastructure and reconciled differences from the grassroots up (Reno, 2018). This ingrained cultural norm can be viewed as a historical precursor to a modern public service ethic. Public servants motivated by *iscaawinta bulshada* are likely to see their role as a formal extension of this traditional, communal obligation to contribute to the collective good, creating a powerful, culturally-embedded driver of motivation.

Finally, Post-Conflict Patriotism represents a unique and powerful antecedent distinct from generic patriotism. The motivation to contribute to the Somaliland state is infused with the lived experience of civil war and the monumental achievement of building a stable peace. Public service is thus driven by a deep-seated desire to secure the hard-won peace, gain international recognition for Somaliland, and prevent a return to the violence of the past (Bradbury, 2018). This "founder's mentality" instills a sense of historical responsibility and a direct, emotional stake in the nation's success. This driver transcends the standard PSM dimension of "Attraction to Policy Making," as it is less about shaping abstract policies and more about safeguarding the very existence and legitimacy of the state itself.

In conclusion, integrating these four factors reveals that the motivational landscape for Somaliland's public servants is uniquely complex. An individual's PSM is not a simple reflection of Western dimensions but a hybrid construct where a desire to serve the nation is intertwined with obligations to clan, faith, and history. The proposed model for Somaliland must therefore be capable of capturing how these layered identities and commitments—to the clan (*qabil*), the religious community (*Ummah*), the historical practice of *iscaawinta bulshada*, and the project of the Somaliland nation—collectively fuel a distinctive and powerful form of public service motivation. This contextualized understanding is the essential first step toward developing effective strategies to attract, retain, and engage the workforce upon which Somaliland's future depends.

5.2. Proposed Hybrid PSM Model for Somaliland

Building upon the integration of local socio-cultural factors, a Hybrid PSM Model for Somaliland is proposed. This model visually and conceptually represents the dynamic interplay between adapted universal dimensions and unique local drivers, and their subsequent influence on Employee Engagement and key organizational outcomes. The model is not a rejection of established PSM theory but rather a context-sensitive expansion of it, designed to more accurately capture the motivational fabric of Somaliland's public sector.

Model Components:

1. **Adapted Universal PSM Dimensions:** The model retains the core structure of Perry's (1996) PSM construct but adapts its interpretation for the Somaliland context.
 - **Commitment to the Public Interest** is reframed as a commitment to the *Somali nation and people*, acknowledging that the "public" may be conceptualized from the clan to the national level.
 - **Compassion** is deepened by the Islamic ethic of *rahmah* (mercy) and the communal obligation of *iscaawin*.
 - **Self-sacrifice** is strongly reinforced by the Islamic principle of *sadaqah* and the patriotic duty to the nascent state.
 - **Attraction to Policy Making** is contextualized within the unique, hybrid governance system of Somaliland, where policy is shaped by both formal institutions and traditional clan structures.
2. **Unique Somaliland Dimensions:** These are the novel components added to the model, derived directly from the thematic analysis.
 - **Clan Accountability (& Identity):** This dimension captures the motivation derived from a sense of duty and responsibility to one's kinship group (*qabil*). It acknowledges that public service can be a means of elevating clan status, securing resources, or fulfilling elders' expectations. This dimension interacts, and sometimes conflicts, with the universal "Commitment to the Public Interest."
 - **Islamic Service Ethic:** This dimension encapsulates the drive to serve as a religious duty (*ibadah*). It is fueled by Islamic values like *'adl* (justice), *amanah* (trustworthiness), and the concept of *khidmah* (service), providing a spiritual foundation for "Compassion" and "Self-Sacrifice."
 - **Patriotic Nation-Building:** This dimension reflects the powerful, historically-grounded motivation to secure Somaliland's peace, build its institutions, and achieve recognition. It is a potent form of patriotism specific to post-conflict, unrecognized states, fueling a "founder's mentality" among public servants.

Linkages and Pathways:

The model proposes that these dimensions do not operate in isolation but form a synergistic system that drives Employee Engagement.

- **Direct Effects:** High levels of both the adapted universal PSM and the unique Somaliland dimensions create a strong sense of Values Congruence when the organizational mission is perceived as authentically serving the nation, the community, and

Islamic principles. This powerful alignment is the primary driver of Employee Engagement (Vigor, Dedication, Absorption).

- **Moderating Factors:** The model incorporates critical moderating variables identified in Thematic Analysis 3. The strength of the relationship between the hybrid PSM factors and engagement is contingent upon:
 - **Supportive Leadership:** Ethical and transformational leadership that champions public service values.
 - **Perceived Organizational Justice:** Fair HR practices and procedures that build trust.
 - **Adequate Job Resources:** Autonomy, feedback, and support that enable employees to act on their motivation.
 - **Reduced Patronage:** A work environment perceived as merit-based rather than driven by clan or political patronage.
- **Outcomes:** The model posits that high Employee Engagement, fueled by this hybrid motivation, leads to the desired outcomes of Increased Retention (reduced turnover intention), Higher Performance (including organizational citizenship behaviors), and Enhanced Well-being (reduced burnout). This creates a virtuous cycle that strengthens the public sector's overall capacity.

Visual Depiction Concept:

A visual model would illustrate this as follows:

1. **Foundation:** A box containing the "Adapted Universal PSM Dimensions" and the "Unique Somaliland Dimensions" side-by-side, indicating they are the core motivational inputs.
2. **Central Pathway:** An arrow labeled "Values Congruence" flows from these dimensions to a central box labeled "Employee Engagement."
3. **Moderating Layer:** A box spanning the central pathway, titled "Organizational Environment," containing the four moderating factors (Leadership, Justice, Resources, Reduced Patronage). This box has arrows pointing to the "Values Congruence" pathway, indicating it can strengthen or weaken the connection.
4. **Outcomes:** Arrows flow from "Employee Engagement" to the final outcome boxes: "Retention," "Performance," and "Well-being."

In conclusion, this Hybrid PSM Model provides a comprehensive framework for understanding what drives Somaliland's public servants. It moves beyond a simplistic application of Western theory by formally incorporating the cultural, religious, and historical forces that uniquely shape motivation in this context. For policymakers, this model underscores that effective human resource strategies must not only recruit individuals with these motivations but must also actively cultivate an organizational environment that nurtures and validates them, thereby unlocking the full potential of Somaliland's most valuable asset: its people.

6. DISCUSSION: IMPLICATIONS FOR ATTRACTION, RETENTION, AND MOTIVATION

6.1. Attracting Talent

Crafting an effective employer value proposition (EVP) for Somaliland's public sector must move beyond conventional incentives and instead resonate deeply with the unique motivational drivers identified in the hybrid PSM model. Given the limited financial capacity to compete with private sector or INGO salaries, the government should emphasize the profound opportunity to contribute to nation-building and social impact—a theme strongly linked to the dimension of Patriotic Nation-Building (Reno, 2018). Recruiting messages should highlight how public service is not merely a job but a critical contribution to securing Somaliland's hard-won peace and advancing its quest for recognition, thereby appealing to the "founder's mentality" prevalent among potential applicants. This approach aligns with the universal PSM driver of Commitment to the Public Interest, but contextualizes it within Somaliland's post-conflict reality, making the abstract notion of public service tangible and urgent (Bradbury, 2018).

Recruitment messaging must also be carefully tailored to reflect cultural and religious values to attract individuals whose motivation is rooted in clan identity and Islamic ethics. For example, emphasizing how public roles enable the fulfillment of *xeer*-based obligations to one's community can appeal to those motivated by Clan Accountability (Hoehne, 2015). Similarly, framing public service as an act of *ibadah* (worship) and a means of practicing Islamic principles such as *'adl* (justice) and *amanah* (trustworthiness) can attract candidates driven by an Islamic Service Ethic (Asmerom, 2022). By aligning recruitment narratives with these deeply held values, the public sector can attract talent for whom the intrinsic rewards of service align with personal and communal identities.

Moreover, recruitment strategies should leverage the historical norm of *iscaawin bulsho* (communal self-help), positioning public service as a modern extension of this traditional practice of collective responsibility (Reno, 2018). Outreach efforts could involve partnerships with clan elders, religious leaders, and community figures who can legitimize public roles as honorable and socially significant. This not only enhances the credibility of the recruitment message but also embeds it within existing social networks, increasing its reach and resonance. Such an approach acknowledges that in collectivist societies like Somaliland, recruitment is not merely an individual transaction but a socially embedded process (Haque, 2018).

Educational and early-socialization initiatives also play a critical role in attracting future public servants. Introducing civic education programs that emphasize the values of public service, rooted in both national pride and Islamic ethics, can help cultivate a pipeline of motivated youth (Perry, 1997). Scholarships or internship programs tied to public sector commitments could further incentivize entry, particularly if they are framed as opportunities to honor one's family and community through service. These efforts should aim to instill a sense of duty early on, leveraging the universal finding that PSM is often shaped by formative socialization experiences (Vandenabeele, 2011).

Finally, the state must communicate a clear and authentic commitment to meritocracy and fairness in recruitment processes to avoid deterring high-PSM individuals who may be skeptical of patronage-based hiring (Kelsall, 2018). Transparency in selection criteria and the visible inclusion of respected community figures in recruitment panels can help build trust in the system. When potential applicants perceive that entry is based on merit and alignment with public values—rather than clan or political connections—they are more likely to view the public sector as a viable and dignified career path (Gould-Williams & Mohamed, 2010).

In summary, attracting talent to Somaliland's public sector requires a nuanced, values-driven approach that speaks to the hybrid motivations of its people. By emphasizing nation-building, cultural duty, religious fulfillment, and communal heritage, the government can appeal to the deeper, non-material drives that characterize public service motivation in this unique context. This strategy not only compensates for financial limitations but also builds a workforce whose values are intrinsically aligned with the mission of the state.

6.2. Retaining Talent

Retention of skilled personnel in Somaliland's public sector hinges critically on fostering and maintaining values congruence between employees' public service motivation (PSM) and the organizational mission. When public servants perceive that their work authentically serves the public interest, as defined by national, clan, religious, and communal values, they experience a sense of psychological meaningfulness that strengthens their attachment to the organization (Bright, 2008). This is especially important in Somaliland, where employees often juggle multiple layers of motivation, from serving the nation to fulfilling clan obligations and religious duties. Organizations that visibly and consistently align their operations with these values are more likely to retain staff even in the face of higher external salaries (Wright & Pandey, 2008).

Ethical leadership is a cornerstone of retention, as it directly reinforces values congruence. Leaders who model integrity, articulate a compelling public service vision, and recognize employees' contributions help create a climate of trust and purpose (Caillier, 2016). In a context where trust in institutions may be fragile due to historical or patronage-related concerns, leaders who act as stewards of public value can mitigate cynicism and strengthen emotional commitment. Ethical leadership also involves safeguarding employees from political or clan-based pressures that could compromise their sense of fairness and mission, thereby reducing the risk of disillusionment and exit (Wright & Pandey, 2010).

Closely linked to leadership is the provision of perceived organizational support (POS), which signals to employees that their well-being and contributions are valued. In resource-constrained environments like Somaliland, where tangible rewards may be limited, symbolic forms of recognition, such as public acknowledgment, awards for service excellence, or opportunities for professional representation, can powerfully affirm an employee's public service identity (Gould-Williams et al., 2015). Even small gestures of appreciation, when aligned with cultural norms (e.g., recognition in community gatherings or by religious leaders), can enhance the perceived status of public servants and reinforce their motivation to stay.

Career development pathways that affirm public service values are also vital for retention. Rather than focusing solely on vertical promotion, career structures should reward mastery, impact, and dedication to public service, for example, through specialized roles in policy innovation, community outreach, or cross-clan mediation that allow employees to deepen their contribution to national goals (Kim, 2022). Mentorship programs pairing junior staff with seasoned public servants who exemplify ethical commitment can also help socialize new hires into a culture of service and resilience, strengthening their organizational identification and reducing early turnover (Leisink & Steijn, 2009).

It is also essential to address the moderating role of procedural justice in retention. When human resource practices, such as promotions, transfers, and disciplinary actions, are perceived as fair and merit-based, employees are more likely to trust the

organization and commit to it long-term (Gould-Williams & Mohamed, 2010). Conversely, perceptions of nepotism or clan-based favoritism can cause severe values incongruence, leading even highly motivated staff to disengage or leave. Regular, transparent communication about HR decisions and the involvement of staff in policy reviews can help build perceptions of fairness and inclusion.

In conclusion, retaining talent in Somaliland's public sector requires a holistic approach that nurtures the psychological bond between employees and their roles. By ensuring values congruence, supporting ethical leadership, providing symbolic recognition, designing meaningful career paths, and upholding procedural justice, the government can create an environment where public servants feel valued, trusted, and motivated to stay. This is not merely a matter of HR policy but a strategic imperative for preserving institutional memory and sustaining state-building efforts.

6.3. Motivating for High Performance

Motivating public servants for high performance in Somaliland requires job designs that provide autonomy and a clear line of sight to public outcomes. When employees can see the direct impact of their work on community well-being—such as a teacher seeing students' progress or a health worker improving local care—their intrinsic motivation is activated (Grant, 2008). This is particularly critical in contexts where financial incentives are limited, and motivation relies heavily on the meaningfulness of work. Designing roles that include task significance, skill variety, and direct citizen interaction can help employees experience their PSM in action, thereby fueling engagement and effort (Bakker, 2015).

Strengthening the link between individual effort and community impact is another key lever. Public agencies should regularly communicate success stories and feedback from beneficiaries to make abstract outcomes tangible, for example, through community forums, internal newsletters, or digital platforms where public servants can see how their work contributes to broader goals like peacebuilding or service delivery (Kim et al., 2013). In a culturally rich setting like Somaliland, these narratives should be framed in ways that resonate with local values, such as highlighting how a project upheld *xeer*, advanced *'adl*, or embodied *iscaawin bulsho*, thus reinforcing the hybrid PSM drivers unique to the context.

Given the challenge of limited financial rewards, leveraging intrinsic motivation becomes a strategic necessity. Performance management systems should therefore de-emphasize purely metric-based targets and instead incorporate assessments of values-based behaviors such as integrity, community engagement, and innovation in the face of constraints (Belle, 2013). Recognition programs that celebrate not only outcomes but also the demonstration of public service values, compassion, self-sacrifice, clan harmony, and ethical conduct can motivate employees in ways that salary increases cannot, especially when recognition is bestowed by respected figures within the community or religious institutions (Asmerom, 2022).

Supervisory training is also crucial for motivation. Managers should be equipped to act as facilitators of motivation rather than controllers, offering regular feedback, empowering team members with decision-making autonomy, and protecting them from excessive bureaucracy or political interference (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017). When supervisors actively support employees' desire to serve the public, they strengthen the PSM-engagement link and help buffer against the demotivating effects of red tape or resource shortages (Caillier, 2016).

Moreover, creating opportunities for peer learning and collaboration can foster a sense of collective efficacy and shared purpose. In a society with strong communal traditions, teamwork that mirrors the practice of *iscaawin bulsho* can be particularly motivating (Reno, 2018). Cross-ministerial projects or problem-solving groups that address pressing national issues can help employees feel part of a larger enterprise, reducing siloed thinking and building a culture of cooperation and mutual support.

Finally, it is essential to manage the shadow side of motivation—namely, the risk of burnout among highly motivated staff who may overextend themselves in challenging conditions. Organizations should promote sustainable workloads, provide psychological support, and recognize the signs of disengagement early (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004). By showing concern for employees' well-being, the state not only protects its human capital but also reinforces the values of compassion and justice that underpin public service in Somaliland.

In summary, motivating high performance in Somaliland's public sector depends on designing meaningful jobs, strengthening visibility of outcomes, leveraging non-financial recognition, developing supportive supervisors, encouraging collaboration, and safeguarding well-being. These strategies collectively create an ecosystem where intrinsic motivation can thrive, enabling public servants to translate their deep-seated desire to serve into effective and sustained action for the nation.

7. CONCLUSION AND RESEARCH AGENDA

7.1. Summary of Findings

This systematic literature review synthesized global knowledge on Public Service Motivation (PSM) and Employee Engagement (EE) to address a critical gap in understanding the drivers of public sector performance in Somaliland. The review confirmed the universal relevance of core PSM dimensions while revealing their insufficiency for capturing the complex motivational landscape of a non-Western, post-conflict, and clan-based society. The primary contribution of this study is the theorization of a context-specific Hybrid PSM Model for Somaliland, which integrates universal drivers with unique local antecedents: Clan Accountability, Islamic Service Ethic, and Patriotic Nation-Building, all underpinned by the cultural norm of communal self-help. This model posits that Employee Engagement and subsequent positive outcomes (retention, performance) are maximized when there is a strong values congruence between these hybrid employee motivations and an organizational environment characterized by supportive leadership, perceived organizational justice, adequate job resources, and reduced patronage.

7.2. Limitations of the Study

It is crucial to acknowledge that this paper is a theoretical contribution based solely on a systematic review of existing literature. While it provides a robust conceptual framework, the proposed Hybrid PSM Model remains untested empirically. The findings and implications are therefore speculative, derived from extrapolating research in other contexts to the unique case of Somaliland. The absence of primary data from Somaliland's public servants means that the actual salience, interplay, and relative weight of the proposed motivational dimensions are yet to be confirmed.

7.3. Avenues for Future Research

This theoretical foundation opens several critical avenues for future empirical inquiry:

- **Primary Empirical Validation:** The most immediate need is the empirical testing of the proposed hybrid model through a mixed-methods study in Somaliland. This would involve developing and validating a survey instrument that incorporates the unique Somaliland dimensions, followed by in-depth interviews and focus groups to explore the nuanced lived experiences and meanings behind the quantitative data.
- **Comparative Studies:** Future research could conduct comparative analyses between Somaliland and other Somali regions (e.g., Puntland) or similar unrecognized and post-conflict states (e.g., Somaliland vs. Taiwan vs. Kosovo). Such comparisons would help disentangle which motivational factors are unique to Somaliland, which are common to Somali culture, and which are shared by politics operating without formal international recognition.
- **Longitudinal Research:** As Somaliland's institutions continue to mature, longitudinal studies would be invaluable for tracking how PSM and EE evolve. This could examine how motivations change with generational shifts, fluctuating political dynamics, and potential progress toward international recognition.
- **Intervention-Based Research:** Following validation, research could focus on designing and assessing the effectiveness of specific Human Resource Management (HRM) interventions—such as values-based recruitment campaigns or leadership development programs—in enhancing values congruence and engagement based on the model's principles.

7.4. Final Remarks

The challenge of building a motivated and effective public service in Somaliland cannot be met by importing Western models uncritically. This study has argued that the solution lies in a deep understanding of the local context, where the motivations to serve are woven from threads of clan duty, religious faith, and patriotic sacrifice. By proposing a Hybrid PSM Model, this paper has taken a step toward decolonizing public administration theory and practice. The ultimate goal is to replace assumptions with evidence, providing Somaliland's policymakers with the insights needed to attract, retain, and motivate the high-performing workforce that is indispensable for the nation's continued stability and development. The journey from theoretical model to practical impact begins with the empirical research this agenda outlines.

8. REFERENCES

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