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journals.sagepub.com/home/tpa **Nicole M Elias**

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Abstract

Sex and gender are evolving identity categories with emergent public policy and administration needs. To respond to the diverse landscape of sex and gender issues in the public sector, greater competency is needed. This research will contribute to the body of work on sex and gender in public administration by asking the following questions: (a) what do graduate students in Master of Public Administration (MPA) programs know about gender competency, (b) have graduate students learned gender competency in their MPA coursework, and (c) how can gender competency in MPA education be further developed and promoted? This study provides a critical analysis of one MPA program, at John Jay College, City University of New York, to begin this line of research. Our e-survey results of a non-random sample of John Jay MPA students demonstrate that many students do not learn about gender competency through their MPA education and that gender competency skills otherwise obtained are limited. To address this, we emphasize the need for incorporating gender competency into MPA education as the first step in equipping future practitioners with skills to promote gender competency in public policy, administrative decision making, and workplace culture. We provide practical means of achieving greater gender competency in MPA curricula and programming and articulate the importance of expanding this research to other MPA programs, MPA faculty and directors, and geographic regions.

Keywords

Gender competency, cultural competency, diversity, public sector, MPA education

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Introduction

Master of Public Administration (MPA) programs prepare students for leadership roles in the public sector and ensure that students are capable “of responding to the needs of a diverse citizenry through education, engagement, and participation” (Blessett and Lopez-Littleton, 2015: 559). Historically, and even today, a focus on competencies targeting sex and gender identities has been missing (Schachter, 2017). In the history of the field, only two symposia have focused on women in the public sector. In 1976, Nesta Gallas edited “A symposium: Women in public administration” appearing in *Public Administration Review* (Gallas, 1976). In 2017, Maria D’Agostino and Nicole Elias edited “The future of women in public administration” in *Administration & Society*. The 1976 and 2017 symposia provided a starting point for bringing sex and gender into the mainstream public administration literature. To respond to the evolving needs of sex and gender populations within public organizations and among citizens, a greater focus on building gender competency in MPA curricula should be undertaken. This research is a promising next step for increasing awareness of tools and gender competency in MPA education.

We define gender competency as the knowledge, skills, and abilities utilized in public organizations for the purpose of promoting representation and equity of sex and gender identities. Below are the Universal Competencies put forth in Standard 5.1 of the Networks of Public Policy, Affairs, and Administration (NASPAA):

- to lead and manage in public governance;
- to participate in and contribute to the policy process;
- to analyze, synthesize, think critically, solve problems and make decisions;
- to articulate and apply a public service perspective; and
- to communicate and interact productively with a diverse and changing workforce and citizenry (NASPAA Standards, 2009: 7).

From these Universal Competencies, we developed more nuanced gender competencies based on key gendered aspects of public service described in the academic literature. For ease of understanding and organization, the gender competencies are grouped into three categories: “Public Governance and Administrative Behavior,” “Policy Process and Implementation,” and “Public Service Perspectives in Human Resource Management Functions.” We recognize that there is overlap in these competencies, and that many of the knowledge, skills, and abilities could be placed within other categories. For example, a gendered approach “to lead and manage in public governance” would require one to be able to “Recognize gender equity, Promote equitable gender roles, Promote equitable gender leadership, Eliminate gender bias, Combat the gender wage gap, Apply gender in decision making, and Ensure gender equity in decision making” (see Table 1).

Considering topics of equity, representation, policy, and administrative decision making, a critical teaching challenge is that of determining how to equip MPA students as future practitioners with the competencies they need to address pressing sex and gender issues in the public sector. This project addresses the following research questions: (a) what do graduate students in MPA programs know about gender competency,

Table 1. Competencies.

Public Governance and Administrative Behavior
Recognize gender inequity
Promote equitable gender roles
Promote equitable gender leadership
Eliminate gender bias
Combat the gender wage gap
Apply gender in decision making
Ensure gender equity in decision making
Policy Process and Implementation
Ensure gender equity in policy making
Ensure gender equity in policy implementation
Ensure equity in citizen engagement
Ensure gender equity in citizen representation
Public Service Perspectives in Human Resources Management Functions
Ensure a fair hiring process
Ensure gender is not a factor in promotion
Ensure gender is not a factor in turnover
Ensure pay equity
Promote fairness in sex assigned job roles
Prevent sexual harassment and discrimination

(b) have graduate students learned gender competency in their MPA coursework, and (c) how can gender competency in MPA education be further developed and promoted? To answer these questions, we first review scholarship on cultural competency and gender competency in public administration. Then, we detail the design of our gender competency survey of MPA students at John Jay College, City University of New York (CUNY). Next, we present our analysis and findings of John Jay College, CUNY MPA educational experiences with gender competency. Finally, although not generalizable, we provide recommendations to build gender competency into MPA education and programming and pose new research directions to expand scholarship on gender competency.

Literature review

The concern for culturally and gender competent public servants increases along with the increasing diversity in public agencies and among the US citizenry. NASPAA’s 2013 diversity report revealed that the number of female faculty members had almost tripled from 12% to 34% between 2000 and 2013 (Primo, 2013). Yet, women still remain in the minority in faculty positions. For example, women have been and continue to be underrepresented in higher education (Gómez Cama et al., 2016). The role of public administration programs is to prepare students for leadership roles in the public sector through education and engagement that foster cultural and gender equity (Blessett and Lopez-Littleton, 2015). To do this, a greater focus on building gender competency in

MPA education should be undertaken. Few scholars have focused specifically on gender competency. Instead, most attention has been devoted to the more general approach, cultural competency (Blessett and Lopez-Littleton, 2015; Gooden and Norman-Major, 2012; Carrizales, 2010). Our review of the literature begins by covering cultural competency in MPA curricula and then focuses more specifically on gender competency in MPA curricula.

Cultural competency in MPA curricula

Cultural competence entails developing positive attitudes towards cultural differences and gaining knowledge of different cultural practice. In the context of public administration, cultural competency refers to the “ability of organizations and individuals to work effectively in cross-cultural or multicultural interactions” (Fernandopulle, 2007: 16). Carrizales (2010) addresses two specific questions related to cultural competency in academia: first, what role do academic programs have in promoting and fostering a cultural competency dialogue and, second, where can opportunities for cultural competency initiatives be placed within the public affairs curriculum? With increasingly changing demographics in the US, public administration research has emphasized the need to explore cultural competency initiatives (Carrizales, 2010). Carrizales’s research suggests that incorporating cultural competency in the curricula of higher education has been explored and practiced for decades, specifically within higher education for health professions. Cultural competency has become a key component of successful service delivery as well as organizational change (Carrizales, 2010). Scholars have developed a framework for cultural competency in medical disciplines, specifically nursing, which includes several different approaches to incorporating cultural competency through curricula. In this context, it is important to define culture and organizational concepts to build cultural competency skills and incorporate them into the organizational community.

Cultural competency is an essential component of all public service functions that benefits both public sector employees and citizens served. Given the increasing cultural difference in communities, several local governments have adopted measures to increase cultural competency (Benavides and Hernandez, 2007). Changing demographics in a citizen population often require public sector organizations to create work cultures that are inclusive and in which public sector employees will have a better understanding of the ways in which individuals differ from one another (White and Rice, 2005). Public agencies that have managed diversity well have improved the quality of services provided to citizens (Matthews and Mitchell, 2012). Cultural competency initiatives in the public sector allow for increased effectiveness and future systems that serve culturally diverse populations (Ronnau, 1994; also see Carrizales, 2010). Ronneau (1994) asserts the value of a “culturally competent professional,” should be instilled throughout educational experiences so that students understand and are comfortable with cultural difference. Moreover, Johnson and Rivera (2007: 15) point out that “graduate public affairs students need greater exposure to diversity themes and issues.” Graduate programs that fail to incorporate cultural competency in their curricula limit the ability of their students to “deliver responsive public service” (Hewins-Maroney and Williams, 2007: 36).

The values and rationale that underlie cultural competency should likewise be embedded in MPA education. Each year, over 6,000 students complete an MPA degree (Primo, 2013). With this in mind, the National Academy of Public Administration (NAPA) has recently adopted social equity as the fourth pillar of public administration, along with economy, efficiency, and effectiveness. NASPAA requires MPA programs to incorporate diversity into the curriculum and programs (Matthews and Mitchell, 2012). The intention is to foster public administrators who can serve diverse populations (Matthews and Mitchell, 2012). Developing culturally competent MPA students plays an important role in the transitioning of graduates into the public sector workforce.

Not all MPA programs incorporate cultural competency into their curricula, despite the value of instilling cultural competence in students. A survey study of MPA program directors conducted by Antwi-Boasiako and Wyatt-Nichol (2008) maintains that it is important for graduate programs to promote awareness of cultural diversity. The online survey revealed that, although every MPA program director who participated in the survey felt that cultural diversity in graduate programs was important, course offerings on diversity were limited. Several participants expressed concerns about the lack of clarity in what was expected from institutions with respect to incorporating diversity in the curriculum (Antwi-Boasiako and Wyatt-Nichol, 2008). As the need to incorporate cultural competence in the MPA curriculum strengthens, continuous reflection and examination are one way for public policy and administration faculty to respond (Antwi-Boasiako and Wyatt-Nichol 2008). In the field, for example, valid performance measures should evaluate services in relation to actual citizen needs. This requires consideration of gender, age, race, ethnicity, and religion to the extent that such characteristics affect the purposes (Schachter, 2010). To achieve cultural competency, curricula must incorporate all aspects of diversity, including gender competency.

Gender competency in MPA curricula

For public servants, understanding and meeting the needs of diverse citizen groups requires gender competency. Gender is a socially constructed concept, typically rooted in the heteronormative understandings of “man” and “woman” and defines masculine and feminine behavior. The meaning of “femininity” and “masculinity” varies in different contexts. Today, gender and gender identity are seen as far more varied and fluid than the traditional binary, heteronormative model, prompting even more of a need for diversity and gender competency. Diversity manifests itself in many ways in an organization or a program; factors that influence policies and practices are interrelated elements of cultural knowledge, cultural sensitivity, cultural competency, and cultural proficiency (Rubai, 2014). Diversification in the MPA curriculum creates civically engaged service providers who can lead, manage, and support a globally diverse workforce and clientele. It is important to create a multifaceted MPA curriculum that creates a gender competent environment with an emphasis on social equity. When implemented in a systematic manner, gender training can institute positive change in the attitudes of policy makers (European Institute for Gender Equality, 2016).

Creating gender competent public administrators requires MPA programs and faculty to provide an environment in which students can learn about and simulate gender competency in class material, class exercises, and events outside the classroom. Fostering culturally and gender competent MPA students can influence the number of women in public administration leadership roles. Scholars in this area have questioned why there are so few women in managerial or leadership roles in government service (Beaty and Davis, 2012). This is due to a number of factors, including gender stereotypes, organizational structure, and lack of professional training (Beaty and Davis, 2012). Yet, when examining the data on ratios of female–male students to female–male practitioners in leadership roles, striking disparities are evident.

The number of students attaining Masters of Public Administration and Public Policy has increased over the years, particularly for women. During the 1980s, men outnumbered women in educational attainment in Masters of Public Administration, earning 59.2% of MPA degrees. However, starting in the mid-1990s, the numbers of men and women attaining Masters of Public Administration began to equalize and women soon began to surpass men in educational attainment (Beaty and Davis, 2012). In 2006, a little over 60% of women had an MPA degree, yet disparity persists in senior management positions in local government where, in a male dominated workforce, women represent only 12% of those positions (Beaty and Davis, 2012). An increasing number of women obtaining MPA degrees suggests that there should be an increase of women in city management positions, but the number of men in senior management positions in local government continues to outnumber women (Beaty and Davis, 2012). Greater representation of female students and faculty will likely lead to greater gender competency in MPA programs and, in turn, public sector organizations and gender competent public administration leaders.

Looking more closely at female representation in academia, similar disparities between female–male faculty emerge. The NASPAA diversity report found the percentage of female faculty almost tripled, from 12% to 34% between 2000 to 2013 (Primo, 2013). Despite this, women have continued to be underrepresented in higher education (Beaty and Davis, 2012), where men outnumber women at every rank, resulting in a continuation of the gender disparity (Beaty and Davis, 2012). Research conducted by NASPAA shows that women often opt to work in traditionally female dominated industries, such as non-profit management (Beaty and Davis, 2012). Thus, recent efforts by NASPAA seek to increase diversity initiatives in hiring faculty, the recruitment of students, and the development of coursework within public policy and public administration programs.

In addition to the composition of female–male MPA faculty, the subject matter and delivery for promoting gender competency are critical. The role of public administration programs is to prepare students for leadership roles in public service to service, support, and engage people of diverse citizenry (Blessett and Lopez-Littleton, 2015); however, there is an inconsistency in the practical utility of cultural competency in the classroom (Blessett and Lopez-Littleton, 2015). To address cultural competency, NASPAA has focused on recruiting and retaining diverse faculty to promote a climate of inclusiveness through diverse recruitment. Specifically, with regard to gender competency, various

strategies have been explored to identify how gender is taught within the MPA curriculum. A research survey, conducted by Mills and Newman (2002), of NASPAA accredited learning institutions revealed that approximately 30% of the MPA programs examined taught courses on gender in public administration (Schachter, 2017).

The integration of more gender competency throughout the MPA curriculum will lead to more gender competent public service leaders (Burnier, 2005). Some scholars have provided suggestions for incorporating more gender learning in MPA education. For example, according to Beaty and Davis (2012), MPA programs should offer stand-alone courses focused on gender competency in public administration. Offering these types of courses as electives will create a platform for students to discuss the importance of gender and cultural competence in public service. An effective course should include (a) a discussion on the similarities and differences of male and female leaders, (b) an examination of contemporary definitions of leadership styles, and (c) leadership strategies in light of public sector management trends. Also, offering stand-alone courses will assist faculty in integrating diversity within existing courses, and students can learn to develop a deeper understanding and appreciation of diverse work styles and their own leadership styles (Beaty and Davis, 2012). Traditional teaching about gender competence has focused on ensuring knowledge about nondiscrimination laws and policies. However, a realistic application of the range of issues and decisions that future practitioners will face in the workplace is best served by exposing students to complex and varied gender issues throughout their MPA education. Designing courses and exercises with these goals in mind first requires understanding what current gender competence pedagogy looks like. The next section describes how we surveyed students on their gender competency perceptions, knowledge, training, and preparedness.

Research design and data

This study uses e-surveys to gain an understanding of the level of gender competency MPA students attained throughout their education in the MPA program at John Jay College of Criminal Justice, CUNY. The purpose of the survey was to answer the following research questions:

1. What do graduate students in the Masters of Public Administration (MPA) program know about gender competency?
2. Have these graduate students learned gender competency in their MPA coursework?
3. How can gender competency in MPA education be further developed and promoted?

The survey questions were grounded in the literature on gender in public administration and policy and the Gender Competencies (derived from NASPAA Standard 5.1) detailed in Appendix 1. As a qualitative study, this research on gender competency evaluates a single MPA program. The intent is not to generalize to all NASPAA accredited MPA programs, but rather to provide a basis for a new line of inquiry in this area of research.

Our data collection began with an official list of registered MPA students provided by the College. Using non-random sampling, emails were sent to each of the 1200 John Jay College MPA students in November 2017; 511 emails that were either duplicated or returned as “undeliverable” decreased our sample frame to 689 students. Given that web-based surveys have a lower response rate than mail surveys (Couper et al., 1999; Solomon, 2001), especially with a student population (Van Mol, 2017), we implemented several recommended strategies to increase response rates, including: sending follow-up reminders and pre-notification; providing the URL directly in an email; and sending frequent reminders and involving academics (Nulty, 2008; Solomon, 2001; Van Mol, 2017). The initial survey email was sent in November 2017 to individual students and requested participation in the study by providing an embedded link to the online questionnaire. We requested MPA faculty to notify students of the survey and to encourage completion.

The initial survey response yielded a response rate of 4% (44 students). We increased our response rate to 7% (50 students) in December after sending a follow-up email to the students. Then, in February, keeping in mind “survey fatigue” (Van Mol, 2017), we requested the MPA faculty to provide time in class for students to complete the survey via their ipads or phones. The final response rate was 17%, with a total of 120 responses. The low response rate can be attributed to several factors, including survey fatigue, students not checking their official college email address, students no longer being enrolled in the program, technical issues, or the survey invitation going into spam (Van Mol, 2017). In addition, a response rate of 10% is not uncommon for web-based surveys and can be considered “trustworthy” (Chenicheri et al., 2008). The e-survey questionnaire consisted of 13 questions, including two open-ended questions to provide additional contextual information about gender competency in and outside the classroom. Respondents were asked whether the topic of gender competency was addressed in the curriculum and whether more gender competency should be incorporated in MPA education. For example, the survey asked students to identify gender competency skills they believed they had acquired and the source of their gender competency knowledge (‘Did you gain your knowledge of gender competency in MPA courses or outside of the classroom?’ ‘What gender competency skills did you learn?’). The major findings of our survey are presented below, with a focus on the key themes of attainment of gender competency, sources of gender competency knowledge, and means to further develop gender competency in MPA education.

Findings

Although significantly more than half of the respondents acknowledged having public service experience, our findings suggest that John Jay College MPA students¹ have limited knowledge of gender competency (Table 2).

MPA education should prepare students for public service by teaching gender competency. However, more than half of the respondents, 60.24%, stated that their MPA education did not teach them about gender competency; 59% of these expressed interest in taking a course on gender competency, and 78% indicated that their MPA program did

Table 2. Background information.

56.00%	Students between the ages of 25 and 34
80.00%	Identified as women
87.00%	Identified as part-time students
87.00%	Had public service experience

Table 3. Gender competency in MPA education.^a

20.48%	Had learned about gender competency through their MPA education
19.28%	Were not sure if they had learned about gender competency in their MPA education
60.24%	Had not learned about gender competency through their MPA education
68.75%	Would like to see more gender competency in MPA education
11.25%	Would not like to see more gender competency in MPA education
20.00%	Were not sure if they would like to see more gender competency in MPA education
59.00%	Expressed interest in taking a course on gender competency
78.00%	Indicated that their MPA program did not offer a course devoted to gender competency

Note: ^aParticipants were asked “Did your MPA education teach you about gender competency?” They could choose one of three answers: Yes; No; Not sure. Participants were then asked, “Would you like to see more gender competency in MPA education?” They could choose one of three answers: Yes; No; Not sure.

not offer a course devoted to gender competency (Table 3). Accordingly, it was important to know where respondents had gained their knowledge of gender competency.

Most respondents’ gender competency knowledge came from outside the classroom. When asked where they had gained knowledge of gender competency, only 45% said in the classroom; specifically, human resource courses, 76%; introduction courses, 24%; and policy courses, 24%. (See Table 4.) When asked to identify the best means of gaining gender competency, 70% considered case studies as the most effective mode of learning about gender competency, whereas 81% reported learning about gender competency outside of the classroom. The majority of students reported learning about gender competency through the workplace (88%); organizations outside the college (44%); classmates and individual faculty members (32%); and organizations within the college, such as Women in the Public Sector² (16%).

Given that more than 68% of the respondents would like to see more gender competency in MPA education (Table 3), it is essential to determine the respondents’ understanding of gender competency skills. When asked what specific gender competency skills they had acquired, 75% believed they had learned how to recognize gender inequity; 79% how to prevent sexual harassment and discrimination; but only 23% had learned how to ensure pay equity and only 29.17% had learned how to combat the gender wage gap (Table 5). Furthermore, despite 50% of respondents stating that they had learned how to eliminate gender bias, only 29.17% had learned to ensure gender equity in policy making and decision making, and only 16.67% reported that they understood how to ensure gender equity in citizen representation (Table 5).

Table 4. Source of knowledge of gender competency.

%	In classroom
45.45	MPA courses
76.00	Human Resources courses
24.00	Policy courses
8.00	Organization courses
3.00	Diversity courses
24.00	Introductory courses
24.00	Ethics courses
%	Outside classroom
32.00	Individual faculty member(s)
32.00	Classmates
16.00	Women in the Public Sector at John Jay College
12.00	Student Organization at John Jay College
4.00	Women's Center for Gender Justice at John Jay College
44.00	Organizations outside the college
88.00	Workplace

Table 5. What gender competency skills did you learn?^a

%	Answer choices
20.83	How to ensure pay equity
75.00	How to recognize gender inequity
79.17	How to prevent sexual harassment and discrimination
29.17	How to apply gender in decision making
54.17	How to ensure a fair hiring process.
50.00	How to ensure gender is not a factor in promotion
25.00	How to ensure gender is not a factor in turnover
29.17	How to promote equitable gender leadership
33.33	How to promote fairness in sex assigned job roles
29.17	How to combat the gender wage gap
29.17	How to ensure gender equity in policy making
29.17	How to ensure gender equity in decision making
20.83	How to ensure gender equity in policy implementation
25.00	How to promote equitable gender roles
50.00	How to eliminate gender bias
29.17	How to ensure equity in citizen engagement
16.67	How to ensure gender equity in citizen representation
4.17	I'm not sure
0.00	None
0.00	Other (please specify)

Note: ^aParticipants were asked "What gender competency skills did you learn?" They were able to select all options that applied.

Table 6. How can administrators promote gender competency in public agencies?^a

"It is hard, there are some jobs that are just known that it will be a woman or a man. A way to establish gender competency is by not having different wages for the same job position."
"Gender equality should be in the agencies' mission statement so that all employees are aware. Training should also be implemented."
"Eliminate gender bias by engaging all genders in workplace projects."
"Promote accountability for racism, bias and discrimination."
"Use merit-based hiring practices."

Note: ^aParticipants were asked the open-ended question, "How can administrators promote gender competency in public administration?" They were able to provide a written response.

When asked an open-ended question about what administrators could do to promote gender competence in practice, respondents revealed a sense of uncertainty; 49% of them indicated that they were only somewhat ready to apply gender competency in the workplace. Respondents recommended that public agencies (a) include gender equality in their mission statements; (b) implement gender competency training; (c) provide refresher courses that define discrimination and reiterate the agency's intolerance for workplace discrimination; (d) eliminate gender bias by engaging all genders in essential workplace functions; (e) promote accountability for racism, bias, and discrimination in the workplace; and (f) ensure merit-based hiring practices (Table 6). These findings suggest that there is room for growth in gender competency in MPA education. In the next section we identify the limitations of this study, offer initial conclusions, provide practical recommendations for developing and promoting gender competency, and pose future research questions.

Conclusions and future research

The results from this study reveal that, although participants are gaining some exposure to gender competency, they are not obtaining gender competency skills in the classroom and there is not a clear understanding of what gender competency is or how to apply it in the workplace. Given that gender competency is integral to public service, this knowledge and skill set should be taught in MPA curricula and promoted outside the classroom too. As a first step, MPA programs should assess their curricula to ensure that gender competency is not relegated to a single course or special topic within a course but, rather, is incorporated in all courses, especially required and foundational classes. This would not only increase gender competency training in the classroom, but would also ensure that all MPA students were exposed to gender competency at multiple points in their educational experience. To gain a fuller picture of what is being taught in the classroom, as well as how and why gender competency is included, future studies should explore guiding program documents and syllabi. This research is limited in that it did not employ multi-methods, such as a content analysis of course syllabi to determine the breadth and scope of what elements of gender competency are taught in the MPA programs. Nor did it undertake interviews of faculty and MPA directors with discretion on gender competency curricula and programming decisions.

From these survey findings and the literature on this topic, incorporating gender competency into MPA education is critical for creating a workplace culture that promotes inclusion and diversity of sex and gender in policy, practice, and decision making (Gooden and Norman-Major, 2012). We recommend the inclusion of fundamental sex and gender definitions, concepts, theories, and models into coursework. In addition, professors should engage their students in empathy-based exercises which include cases, role-playing, and policy/administration simulations to allow students to explore gender issues and uncover their own gender perceptions and approaches. These exercises would encourage both students and faculty to (a) re-evaluate their personal understanding of gender competency; (b) identify what gender competency skills they have; (c) recognize which gender competency skills they need; and (d) build greater gender competency skills for solving and analyzing future workplace gender issues. The case study approach accomplishes these goals and serves as an effective way to teach and learn gender competency which draws on the work of the discipline, including practitioner experience. By inviting students to explore or apply gender competency to management and policy problems, a case study is a valuable means of building empathy, problem-solving, and simulating a practitioner environment (Keeney, 2014). In addition to these initial suggestions, other creative pedagogical tools can be developed to address gender competency needs for MPA students and future practitioners.

This study offers a cursory glimpse into gender competency in MPA education. Our research was limited to one MPA program at John Jay College in New York City and did not triangulate. Future research surrounding gender competency should include new populations and mixed-methods research designs. Expanding the study to other MPA programs and geographic regions and including faculty and MPA directors in survey populations will provide a better understanding of how gender competency is taught in MPA programs across the US and internationally. Surveys developed to gain an understanding of participants' knowledge of gender competency should continue to be used in gathering data, but research methods and design should incorporate qualitative approaches, such as focus groups and in-depth interviews not only of students, but also of faculty, alumni, and practitioners, to obtain a deeper understanding of how to design gender competency learning and practitioner preparedness.

Faculty play a key role in the promotion of gender competency in selecting material taught in the classroom and the way this material is taught, both of which have a significant impact on their students (Hatch, 2018). This study was limited to MPA students, and faculty or MPA directors were not included. Future research targeting faculty should ask (a) whether courses address gender competency; (b) how respondents incorporate gender-related issues in the classroom; (c) whether the MPA program provides resources to aid in teaching gender competency; and (d) what suggestions faculty have for including gender competency in MPA education. Similarly, MPA program directors can influence course and resource availability for organized efforts to promote gender competency. Organizations within the college or university can enhance MPA education with knowledge and resources to address gender issues in public administration. Programs like Women in the Public Sector at John Jay College can be replicated to provide gender competency skill-building events outside the classroom. MPA program directors

should be included in future research to (a) identify and assess gender competency training provided to faculty; (b) highlight courses that include gender competency; and (c) identify tools program directors should use to incorporate gender competency in programming outside the classroom. These future research directions will explore aspects of MPA education that have received little scholarly attention in the past. Additional gender competency research is needed to prepare future practitioners and to ensure more equitable public policy, administrative decision making, and workplace culture.

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Notes

1. As noted in the 'Research design and data' section, the survey population refers only to a sample of MPA students enrolled in the MPA programs at John Jay College, CUNY.
2. Women in the Public Sector (WPS) at John Jay College, CUNY is an organization whose mission it is to promote gender equality and provide opportunities to address gender issues in public service. WPS enacts this mission by educating, engaging, and fostering a consortium of students, faculty, public service practitioners, and community members interested in women in public service.

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Appendix I. Gender competency survey questions

1. Age (choose one): Under 18; 35–44 years old; 18–24 years old; 45–54 years old; 25–34 years old.
2. Gender identity (indicate where on the spectrum you identify).
3. Sex (choose one): Female; Male; Transgender; Other (please specify).
4. Which program are you enrolled in? MPA: Inspection and Oversight; MPA: Public Policy and Administration; MPA/JD Law and Public Accountability.
5. MPA program credits completed: _____
6. Expected graduation date: _____
7. Do you have public service experience? Yes; No.
8. How many years of public service experience do you have?
9. What type of public service experience do you have? (Select all that apply) Internship; Private sector; Non-profit; Government/state level; Other (please specify).
10. Are you a full-time or part-time student? Full-time: On-campus full-time: Online only part-time; On-campus part-time; Online only; Other (please specify).
11. How do you define gender?
12. How do you define sex?
13. Have you heard of the term 'non-binary' gender? Yes; I'm not sure; No.
14. Define 'non-binary' gender.
15. What does gender equity mean to you?
16. How does sex/gender influence public sector practices?
17. What public sector practices are influenced by sex/gender? (Select all that apply) Hiring; Promotion; Turnover; Leadership; Sex assigned job roles; Wage gap; Policy making; Decision making; Policy implementation; Gender roles; Gender bias; Citizen engagement; Citizen representation; I'm not sure; It doesn't; Other (please specify).
18. How can administrators promote gender competency in public agencies? (Be as detailed as possible.)
19. How can public sector organizations promote gender equity? (Select all that apply) Hiring; Promotion; Turnover; Leadership; Sex assigned job roles; Wage gap; Policy

- making; Decision making; Policy implementation; Gender roles; Gender bias; Citizen engagement; Citizen representation; I'm not sure; It doesn't; Other (please specify).
20. Did your MPA education teach you about gender competency? Yes; I'm not sure; No.
21. Did you gain your knowledge of gender competency in MPA courses? Yes; No.
22. In which course(s) did you gain your knowledge of gender competency? (Select all that apply) Introductory courses; Human Resources courses; Policy courses; Organization courses; Ethics courses; Diversity courses; Special topics; Independent studies; Other (please specify).
23. What ways of learning about gender competency were most effective? (Select all that apply) Textbooks; Case studies; Simulations; Research projects; News media; Outside of classroom; Individual faculty members; Organizations; Other (please specify).
24. Did you gain knowledge of gender competency outside the classroom? Yes; No.
25. Where did you gain your knowledge of gender competency outside the classroom? (Select all that apply) Individual faculty member(s); Classmates; Women in the Public Sector at John Jay College; Student organizations at John Jay College; Women's Center for Gender Justice at John Jay College; Organizations outside the college; Workplace; Other (please specify).
26. What gender competency skills did you learn? (Select all that apply) How to ensure pay equity; How to recognize gender inequity; How to prevent sexual harassment and discrimination; How to apply gender in decision making; How to ensure a fair hiring process; How to ensure gender is not a factor in promotion; How to ensure gender is not a factor in turnover; How to promote equitable gender leadership; How to promote fairness in sex assigned job roles; How to combat the gender wage gap; How to ensure gender equity in policy making; How to ensure gender equity in decision making; How to ensure gender equity in policy implementation; How to promote equitable gender roles; How to eliminate gender bias; How to ensure gender equity in citizen engagement; How to ensure gender equity in citizen representation; I'm not sure; None; Other (please specify).
27. Are you aware of any courses that your program offers specifically devoted to gender competency? Yes; I'm not sure; No.
28. What is the title of the course?
29. Have you taken this course? Yes; No.
30. Would you like to take a course on gender competency? Yes; No; I'm not sure.
31. How prepared are you to apply gender competency in the workplace? Very much; Somewhat; Very little; Not at all.
32. Would you like to see more gender competency in MPA education? Yes; I'm not sure; No.