

## **Abstract**

**Objectives:** Nonattachment has been shown to be a mental quality which can enhance mental well-being and mitigate psychological distress through the letting go of mental fixations. The study investigated the effect of nonattachment on the mental well-being of public employees by examining the relationships among nonattachment, public service motivation, the experience of meaning and mattering at work, perceived organizational prestige, flourishing at work and psychological distress.

**Methods:** This is a cross-sectional study using survey data provided by 54 civil servants in the Hong Kong Government. Sequential mediation analyses were conducted to test how nonattachment may be related to mental well-being of public employees, with the relationship hypothesized to be mediated sequentially by public service motivation and the experience of meaning and mattering at work. Moderation analysis was also performed to test the potential moderating effect of nonattachment on the relationship between perceived organizational prestige and mental well-being of public employees.

**Results:** Results indicated nonattachment was positively associated with flourishing at work and negatively associated with psychological distress for civil servants. Public service motivation and the experience of meaning and mattering at work fully and sequentially mediated the effect of nonattachment on both flourishing at work and psychological distress. Nonattachment did not have a significant moderating effect on the association between perceived organizational prestige and well-being.

**Conclusions:** This study provided suggestive evidence that being nonattached fosters prosocial orientation of serving the society, which enables public employees to experience meaning and mattering at work, in turn contributing to enhanced mental well-being. The findings advanced theoretical understanding of nonattachment and public service motivation, and provided practical recommendations for public organizations to foster employees' mental well-being.