Do Trust and Culture Matter for Public Service Motivation Development? Evidence From Public Sector Employees in Korea

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Abstract
Ethical values and performance have gained importance in the Korean public sector because of the new public management wave and social issues such as corruption. This study examines how the effects of types of organizational culture, such as performance-driven culture and ethics-driven culture, serve as the antecedents of public service motivation (PSM) among central government agencies, public enterprises, and executive agencies in Korea. Furthermore, it investigates how trust in top management affects PSM and how organizational culture moderates this relationship. A survey of 1,216 Korean public employees and seven focus group interviews show that trust in management strongly predicts PSM. Performance-driven culture is positively and significantly associated with norm-based PSM and affective PSM, and ethics-driven culture predicts rational PSM. The moderating effects of organizational culture differ by PSM dimension.

Keywords
public service motivation, performance-driven culture, ethic-driven culture, trust in top management, Korean public sector

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Introduction

Accounting for various national crises and increasing public demands, public organizations must adapt their systems to accommodate such circumstances. The Korean government has also made extensive efforts to show its new government paradigm amid these changes. However, because of the recent problems in the Korean public sector, such efforts to reform public organizations have failed, as public employees continue to demonstrate a lack of responsibility and capability. Unless there is voluntary and active participation of public employees, innovation in such organizations can only be cursory. Therefore, for effective organizational innovation and development, it is crucial for existing members to break from a peace-at-any-price principle and foster high public service motivation (PSM), interest, and recommitment with respect to civil service values.

Although not all members of public organizations are intrinsically motivated, individuals who become members of public organizations and are motivated can make a more profound contribution to organizational performance than others (S. Kim, 2005; Pandey, Wright, & Moynihan, 2008). The pathway to the Korean public sector is more related to job safety considerations than to intrinsic PSM, leading to the possibility of decreasing levels of public responsibility and service. In this context, this study investigated factors that improve PSM among Korean public employees from the perspective of organizational management.

Considering that the strong effects of senior managers’ authority and leadership, public employees’ trust in top management within their organization could be an important factor in the Korean public sector. In the rapidly changing environment surrounding public service organizations, trust has been highlighted as a driving force for societal change and a source of new development (Fukuyama, 1995). Overall, trust has been reported to play a significant role in increasing the level of organizational adaptability toward uncertain changes (Reina & Reina, 2006). Therefore, promoting PSM through trust is clearly pivotal.

Examining the relationship between trust in top management and PSM, this study focuses on organizational culture as an essential intervening element. Based on empirical evidence suggesting that organizational culture strongly impacts a variety of organizational outcomes, we address the following key research question:

**Research Question:** How do the effects of trust in top management on PSM change depending on the two types of organizational culture (performance-driven and ethics-driven culture)?

This question is particularly pertinent considering the Korean government’s recent focus on enhancing the efficiency of organizational operations by reshuffling the system based on empirical results and on eradicating corruption by emphasizing public service ethics.

Our primary research purpose is thus to explore the relationship between trust, culture, and PSM (see Figure 1). The research contributes to the understanding of
PSM in the following ways: (a) we extend the research on PSM conducted from a global perspective by examining it in the context of the Korean public sector; (b) we expand on the interpersonal and organizational dispositions that result in PSM by studying trust and culture as its antecedents and moderators; and (c) we contribute to the available knowledge on the motivational basis and processes of public employees by performing content analysis, which can identify specific psychological factors and changes.

Besides performing empirical analyses to test our research hypotheses, we analyze related interview content to facilitate the interpretation of the quantitative results. To better interpret the results, we also perform a content analysis by extracting pertinent core themes. In considering the relationship between trust, organizational culture, and PSM, we seek to present a nuanced and refined perspective on the state of civil service in the Korean government, as well as on the organizational processes and innovation that can foster improvements in the Korean public service sector.

**An Overview of the Korean Public Sector**

Korean public sector organizations providing public services and delivering public goods exist in various forms. Generally, the Korean public sector comprises government agencies, executive agencies, and public agencies, including public enterprises. Government agencies include both central and local government agencies. Central government agencies such as the Ministry of Foreign Affairs are established by law at the national level and headed by the president who also appoints the ministers. In contrast, the top leaders of local governments are mayors, who are elected by the local voters. Executive agencies such as statistics bodies perform their own management and finance based on the Executive Agency Act, although they are a part of a government department; such agencies thus have flexibility and autonomy to manage the organization for their own purpose (Berman, 2010). The minister of the ministry to
which the executive agency belongs appoints the top leader of the executive agency after an open competition. Public enterprises are classified as market-based and quasi-market-based public corporations depending on their asset size and ratio of self-generated revenue (M. Y. Kim, Kim, Lee, & Park, 2016). The president, with the minister’s recommendation, appoints the CEO of a public enterprise after an open competition.

Korean bureaucracy is based on a “rank-in-person” system that emphasizes the development of incumbents over time within the organization (J. H. Park, 2015). The system comprises nine grades from Grade 9 to Grade 1, and the new entrance through open competition applies to only three grades—Grades 5, 7, and 9. Once appointed, public officers are given job security under the career civil service system (S. G. Kim, 2009). Conventional career civil service systems typically include generalist-driven, rank-in-person-based, closed, and seniority-based career systems, as well as the stable, hierarchical, and merit-based system that has been developed in Korea since 1960 (S. M. Park, Park, & Ryu, 2013). Although the Korean government has driven innovation against criticism for “its closeness, lack of flexibility and lack of competitiveness” (Kim, 2010, p. 383), a strong hierarchical culture rooted in Confucian values, which affects employees’ attitudes and public management practices, is highly prevalent in the “rank-in-person” system (Lee, Kim, & Park, 2017).

Various types of public organizations are included in this research. Although the functions and operations of these public organizations vary, a commonality is that all their employees have high job security and are expected to pursue the public interest. Furthermore, the method of selecting the top leader, such as appointment or election, is related to the political environment, as the president and ministers are supported by the ruling party. The term of the top leader of public organizations is normally 2 to 5 years, as it is affected by the political environment, whereas the employees have life-long job security. Thus, we can conclude that employees’ trust in top management, one of the main variables in this study, can be analyzed irrespective of the type of public organizations.

**Literature Review**

**PSM**

While the definition of PSM varies, Perry and Wise (1990) give a widely accepted conceptual description as “an individual’s predisposition to respond to motives grounded primarily or uniquely in public institutions and organizations” (p. 368). The positive effects generated by PSM in the public sector include prosocial behaviors (Brewer & Selden, 1998) and employees’ attitudes (Naff & Crum, 1999), job satisfaction, and intention to leave (Steijn, 2008). Similar PSM implications have been established in the Korean public sector, including increased organizational performance (S. Kim, 2005), organizational citizenship behavior (Kim, 2006), turnover intention (H. J. Kim, 2015), and internal and external accountability (J. H. Park, 2015).

Given the empirical evidence demonstrating how PSM positively impacts individual- and organization-level outcomes, it is crucial to examine factors that cultivate
PSM and the mechanisms by which such factors influence PSM outcomes (Jacobson, 2011). Concerning demographic factors, previous results seem to be divergent. In terms of gender, for example, males have been found to more likely have higher PSM (Perry, 1997); females have also been positively associated with higher PSM (Bright, 2005; Naff & Crum, 1999), or no relationship has been found between PSM and gender (Feeney, 2007). Regarding education level, most studies have found that a higher education level is more positively associated with PSM among public employees (Moynihan & Pandey, 2007; Perry, 1997). Job tenure has been found to be either unrelated (Feeney, 2007; Giauque, Anderfuhren-Biget & Varone, 2013) or negatively related to PSM (Moynihan & Pandey, 2007). Considering that demographic factors do not easily change once public employees enter the public sector, it is necessary that organizational factors such as organizational environment, structure, leadership, and culture should be more closely observed and examined. Surprisingly, only few empirical studies have explored the role of trust and organizational culture as pertinent factors.

Perry (1997) developed a four-dimensional model of PSM using the three categories of motives suggested by Knoke and Wright-Isak (1982): (a) rational, (b) norm-based, and (c) affective motives. As a rational motive, an “attraction to public policy-making” can make one feel like an integral and crucial component of the organization. Second, as a norm-based motive, “commitment to public interest and civic duty” is based on the values of patriotism, loyalty to the government, and responsibility. Finally, affective motives, one of the main motives that public employees endorse according to Frederickson and Hart (1985), capture the idea of “patriotism of benevolence.”

One research stream on PSM focuses on international comparisons of the PSM construct (Ritz, 2009). Kim (2009) noted the necessity to confirm the generalizability and applicability of the dimensions and scale of PSM in other countries, as PSM studies are largely rooted in Western countries. In his study, Kim (2009) explored whether these Western-rooted PSM dimensions can be generalized to the Korean context. The results suggested that rational motives might not be practically applicable to PSM in the Korean context, as the cultural and sociodemographic context is idiosyncratic and distinct from that of the United States. Hofstede (1991) showed that Korea is categorized as a collectivistic and feminine society, with a high level of power distance and uncertainty avoidance; thus, it substantially differs from the United States, which is characterized by individualism and masculinity. Furthermore, rational motives might be related to personal interests (Wise, 2000), as calculating costs and benefits and choosing to maximize the expected value for a particular group or special interest (Downs, 1966) are distinct from altruism, which is the core of PSM. A breadth of research, including Kim (2014), has demonstrated that rational PSM is empirically and ideologically different from other PSM types (see Brewer, Selden, & Facer, 2000). Approaching the PSM dimensions more logically, S. Kim and Vandenabeele (2010) asserted that rational motives are ambiguous with respect to their relation to PSM, as they can be understood as motives for realizing self-interests rather than public interests. Furthermore, “individuals could be attracted to public policymaking as a way of
maximizing their own needs of power and self-importance or to advocate a special interest that would provide personal benefits” (Wright, 2008, p. 81). Public officers with rational PSM feel satisfied that “they,” rather than “others,” can express opinions and participate in decision-making with societal implications. This is a pursuit of self-expression or personal challenge. Although the behavioral results are similar to those for other PSM dimensions in serving others, rational PSM is primarily grounded in self-satisfaction. According to Yung (2014), who examined the interconnection between PSM and the Confucian political philosophy, rational PSM is incongruent with Confucian philosophy, unlike the other three PSM dimensions. Yung (2014) posited that “attraction to policy-making” is quite different from the motivation of an official who is expected to be other-regarding rather than self-regarding (in emphasizing the derivation of satisfaction and sense of self-importance from policy formulation) in a Confucian context (p. 286). As the Korean context is influenced by Confucian values—and may thus embrace both affective and normative standards—Korean civil servants are asked to sacrifice their personal interest for the public good through dedication and devotion to national development to prove their professional integrity (S. G. Kim, 2009).

In sum, regarding the PSM dimensions, arguments have been raised that the construct of rational PSM is underdeveloped or not included with PSM due to the use of inappropriate measurement items, the lack of rational motives within PSM, low factor loadings, or the use of negative expressions such as “dislike of politicians” (see Ritz, 2011). Contrastingly, a number of studies support the existence of rational PSM (Kim, 2009; Vandenabeele, 2008). In addition, Ritz (2011) argued that rational PSM is a fundamental component of PSM, as work in public organizations is inherently related to policymaking and the political environment. Public policymaking is an incentive largely confined to the public sector and thus a unique trigger for employee motivation in the public sector (Ritz, 2011). Discussions on PSM dimensions seem highly controversial, and sociohistorical backgrounds such as Confucian values could affect the dimensionality (Kim, 2009; Yung, 2014). Although the main purpose of this research is not to show whether rational PSM is valid in Korea, given the discussion above, it is worth examining the effects of independent variables on each PSM dimension to further develop PSM theory.

**Role of Trust in Top Management in PSM: Social Exchange Theory (SET)**

This research investigates the role of trust within an organization, drawing on Zucker’s (1986) perspective that trust is related to positive expectations grounded in the exchange of strong beliefs, reliable attitudes, and shared values between colleagues. Several studies have demonstrated that trust is a predictor of employee outcomes such as commitment, motivation, and intention to remain in the public sector (Gould-Williams, 2003, 2007; Gould-Williams & Davies, 2005). Greenhaus and colleagues (2010) maintained that organizational effectiveness, as indicated by motivation, job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and low turnover, can be attained by exchanging trust within the organization. Nyhan (2000) maintained that organizational
productivity is boosted by trust, showing that a trust-based organizational paradigm is a novel model for public sector management. Park, Kim, et al. (2013) explored the impact of trust on the PSM of Korean public employees, suggesting that trust has a significant and positive effect on PSM, such that trust processes, such as mentoring, on-the-job training (OJT), communicative leadership, and practices designed to promote socialization, are necessary to cultivate individual PSM. S. M. Park (2012) posited that a high-trust climate within an organization is related to several outcomes, including (a) loyalty to the organization, (b) PSM, (c) customer service, (d) quality of work, (e) efficiency, and (f) effectiveness.

Considering previous research on the construct of trust, it is pivotal to delineate the different aspects of trust. S. M. Park (2012) categorized trust into cognitive trust and affective trust depending on the process of establishing trust within the organization. Chen et al. (2014) proposed a different classification based on the object of trust: trust in citizens, trust in colleagues, and trust in agency leaders. The current study limits the concept of trust to trust in top management, including cognitive and affective trust.

Trust in top management includes trust in leaders, management, and senior groups. It originates from the organizational level (Ruiz-Palomino, Martínez-Cañaso, Fontrodona, 2013); trust in top management captures organizational climate, practices such as the extent of fairness within organizational practices, and support by executive members including the top leader; it is distinct from trust in leaders as individuals. Trust in top management helps reduce organizational barriers such as tension and conflicts; therefore, organizations that improve trust levels in top management can reduce the overall transaction costs and attain more positive organizational outcomes (Moon, 1999).

Trust and respect between top management and organizational members can cultivate effective collaboration in an organization. Through effective collaboration and interaction, members are willing to participate in decision-making (Kearney & Hays, 1994). Giauque, Anderfuhrer-Biget, and Vareone (2013) emphasized that trust is an exchange process; motivation is associated with trust in management, which is defined as a “psychological state comprising the intention to accept vulnerability based upon positive expectations of the intentions or behavior of another” (Rousseau, Sitkin, Burt & Camerer, 1998, pp. 393-404). Employees’ trust in organizational leaders and managers engenders positive work attitudes such as organizational citizenship behavior, altruism, civic virtues, and conscientiousness, adding that these can even spill over to the general public (Chen et al., 2014).

SET supports the relationship between trust in top management and positive organizational outcomes. Trust is an essential component underpinning social exchanges, which require mutual trust between originators and recipients (Gould-Williams & Davies, 2005). SET serves as a useful tool for understanding the individual attitudes and behaviors within an organization (Clark, 2016). A number of studies have used it as a framework for explaining positive outcomes of human resource management (HRM) practices (Bos-Nehles & Meijerink, 2018; Chang & Chen, 2011). When HRM engages in practices, such as high-performance work systems (HPWS), fair performance
management, reward systems based on performance, and investments in individual training and development programs, it generally leads to increased trust between the organization and members; this is especially true when HRM models and states the desirable attitudes and behaviors for the organization (Gould-Williams, 2003, 2005). Social exchanges occurring through affection, trust, and reciprocity relate not only to material goods but also to emotional values. As members find their organization satisfying their self-interest, including material goods or emotional values, they reciprocate with positive attitudes and behaviors. This process can be reinforced by repetition.

Moynihan and Pandey (2007) proved that leaders’ and high-level managers’ empowerment fosters public managers’ PSM. Chen et al. (2014) argued that PSM, which is a socially grounded predisposition (Perry & Hondeghem, 2008), can be promoted by cultivating trust through social interactions. Trust in agency leaders positively impacts policymaking PSM, public interest PSM, and self-sacrifice PSM, explaining that public employees interact with colleagues, modify their trust, and accordingly cultivate their PSM (Chen et al., 2014).

According to self-determination theory (SDT), which focuses on the self-motivation behind choices people make without external interference (Ryan & Deci, 2000), satisfaction with relatedness can encourage individuals to internalize their extrinsic work values, which transform controlled motivation into autonomous motivation (Chen et al., 2014). When public employees have high levels of trust in top management, they tend to be satisfied with their sense of relatedness within the organization, that is, with their need to feel connected to others (Hollensbeak & Amorose, 2005), formulated by trust and reciprocity.

Applying SET and SDT to our research model, we believe that trust in top management strongly motivates the members to behave in a positive way toward the organization, such as through strengthened PSM. From the discussion above, we have established the following hypotheses:

**Hypothesis 1a (H1a):** Trust in top management in Korean public sector will have a positive effect on individual rational PSM.

**Hypothesis 1b (H1b):** Trust in top management in Korean public sector will have a positive effect on individual norm-based PSM.

**Hypothesis 1c (H1c):** Trust in top management in Korean public sector will have a positive effect on individual affective PSM.

**Role of Organizational Culture in PSM: Social Learning Theory (SLT)**

As PSM has received attention in public management, efforts have been made to determine which factors formulate PSM. Perry and Wise (1990) see work environment as one of the crucial antecedents of PSM. Perry (1997) investigated the effects of parental socialization, religious socialization, professional identification, political ideology, and demographic factors (education, age, income, and gender) on each PSM construct. He determined that an individual’s PSM develops from exposure to a variety of experiences related to childhood, religion, and professional life. Noting the
importance of socialization in influencing PSM. In response to Perry’s (1997) suggestion, Moynihan and Pandey (2007) investigated the role of organizations in fostering PSM, and consistent with Perry’s argument they asserted that PSM is an intrinsic motivation rooted in cognitive and affective responses to social contexts. Moynihan and Pandey (2007) analyzed the effects of sociohistorical context (level of education and membership in a professional society) and organizational institutions (culture, hierarchical authority, red tape, reform orientation, and length of organizational membership), and determined that both sociohistorical background and organizational environment influence PSM. Specifically, sociohistorical factors were robustly and positively related to PSM, and institutional factors had a bidirectional influence—red tape and length of organizational membership were negatively related, whereas hierarchical authority and reform efforts were positively related to PSM (Moynihan & Pandey, 2007). Notably, culture was not significantly associated with PSM; however, the authors noted that this is likely attributable to the complexity in measuring organizational culture and that the measure utilized did not capture all aspects of PSM; they asserted that the results on culture should thus be considered preliminary (Moynihan & Pandey, 2007). Furthermore, they maintained that given the robust results of in-depth case analyses on the role of culture in shaping beliefs, it is ill-advised to dismiss culture as a promising factor in PSM and further underscored the necessity of testing this relationship using alternative measurements of culture, additional survey populations, and the full PSM scale (Moynihan & Pandey, 2007).

Because it is difficult to examine the level of PSM when selecting new employees in the public sector, organizational culture is among the most crucial contextual factors, as it affects employees’ perspectives and attitudes over a long time and in the overall post-selection process (Pyo, 2013). Accordingly, this study recognizes the importance of investigating the role of culture in affecting PSM and focuses on organizational culture as an antecedent of PSM to address the limitations of the previous work.

Despite the importance of research on PSM and organizational culture (Perry, 2000), surprisingly, very few studies have been conducted on their relationship in Korea. S. G. Kim (2009a) found that group culture, hierarchical culture, and rational culture affect PSM in local governments in Korea. Other similar studies have demonstrated that only rational culture has a positive effect on PSM (Kim & Kim, 2010). Go (2013) found evidence to support the idea that organizational cultures have significant effects on PSM in a local government in the Korean public sector, arguing that organizational culture formulates individual belief, attitudes, perspectives, and behaviors.

The relationship between organizational culture and PSM can be captured through the lens of SLT. Most scholars have used SLT to explain the effects of leadership on employees’ attitudes and behaviors (Brown, Treviño, & Harrison, 2005). Extending it to encompass an organizational culture perspective, this study proposes that organizational culture plays an essential role in SLT. According to SLT, individuals learn appropriate behavior and attitudes by observing the behaviors of role models. As social learning is a cognitive process, individuals acquire new behavior by imitating
others (Bandura, 1986). Learning also occurs through observation of not only behavior but also rewards and punishments—vicarious reinforcement. SLT can be applied to management, and the process by which organizational culture affects individuals may be applied to employees working in the public sector (Riivari & Lämsä, 2014). Imitation or observation is affected by organizational culture (Chong, Shang, Richards, & Zhu, 2018), which guides core values that are widely shared and communicated by organizational members (Robbins & Barnwell, 1998). Particular cultures affect managerial strategies and leadership styles, modeling certain behaviors that are perceived as effective (or ineffective) in an organization. Organizational culture comprises members’ learning experiences (Chong et al., 2018), which implies that members learn about organizational culture through the social learning process (Santos-Vijande, López-Sánchez, & Trespalacios, 2012). These experiences formulate beliefs and values of organizational members (Schein, 2010). Thus, on the logic underlying social learning dynamics, we expected that organizational culture would influence individual values, motivation, and attitudes such as PSM.

Performance-Driven and Ethics-Driven Culture in Korea

Management reforms in public administration have raised demand for more performance-based public institutions, influencing organizational structure and culture (Ritz, 2009). Considering the new public management (NPM) reform in the Korean public sector since the 1990s, performance is one of the underlined values. For instance, the Korean government introduced an appraisal system, including performance contracts for higher level public officers and work performance evaluation for middle- and street-level public officers (Park, Park, et al., 2013). Criticism on public agencies regarding their ineffective management has led to the creation of a performance-driven culture. In addition, recent issues with corruption and unhealthy links between business and politics have resulted in public indignation; thus, the government has been pressured to reflect the public’s demand for increased levels of integrity and ethical behavior. The intensified standards of the Improper Solicitation and Graft Act, called the “Kim Young Ran Law,” legislated in 2016, reflect the public’s push for ethical public sector performance. The introduction of this act has happened to initiate a set of ethical management systems in the public sector. Moreover, there have been many social issues related to whistle-blowing in Korea since 2017. Organizational members have disclosed unethical and illegal behaviors of CEOs or executive members belonging to large corporations, which is active reporting of unethical behavior witnessed not only in the public sector but also in the private sector, and the pervasive criticisms of malfeasance among the public suggest that people have become increasingly sensitive to ethics. To reflect the reality in the Korean public sector, this study examines the effects of performance-driven culture and ethics-driven culture on PSM.

Performance-Driven Culture

Although no previous research has suggested a direct relationship between performance-oriented culture and PSM, this study presumed a positive relationship based on
the theoretical implications of stewardship theory and SLT. *Stewardship theory* proposes that stewards seek to achieve their principals’ goals, not their individual goals (Davis et al., 1997). Considering the leaders of public organizations as principals and public employees as stewards (Kim, Oh, & Park, 2018), we expected that public employees would identify performance as an essential component of public value and as something that could provide them with increased opportunities to deliver more and better public service (Shim & Park, 2018). At this point, in accordance with SLT, we assumed that public employees in a performance-driven culture internalize the sense of goal achievement through the social learning process based on factors such as their performance and opportunities for development. Eventually, public employees’ value-oriented motivation (i.e., PSM), which is congruent with the organizational goals, might be encouraged.

Previous studies analyzing organizational culture and practices similar to performance-driven culture could support our hypotheses. An empirical study (Pyo, 2013) demonstrated that a rational organizational culture emphasizing goal achievement and productivity has a positive effect on PSM among Korean police officers. Regarding performance-driven culture, organizations tend to reward employees based on their performance, which likely results in desirable outcomes, such as employees’ satisfactory perception of the degree to which their contributions are valued (Valentine, Greller, & Richtermeyer, 2006). Such performance-driven practices engage employees in the social learning process; when their performance is appropriately evaluated, their motivation to increase their performance, which is congruent with public interest, is strengthened. Giauque et al. (2013) investigated the impacts of professional development on PSM and concluded that when public employees are encouraged by the organization to improve performance, their PSM is also more likely to increase. This supports Marsden and Richardson’s (1994) finding that “merit pay” increased motivation among British public sector employees. The practices of valuing performance turn out to be an effective antecedent of increased motivation.

Incorporating the assumptions of the two theories—stewardship theory (employees perceiving improved performance as increasing public value) and SLT (employees learning values emphasized in the organizational culture)—into the aforementioned results, we established several additional hypotheses:

**Hypothesis 2a (H2a):** A performance-driven organizational culture will have a positive effect on individual rational PSM.

**Hypothesis 2b (H2b):** A performance-driven organizational culture will have a positive effect on individual norm-based PSM.

**Hypothesis 2c (H2c):** A performance-driven organizational culture will have a positive effect on individual affective PSM.

**Ethics-Driven Culture**

The ethics-driven culture, which is grounded in deontological values (Victor & Cullen, 1988), could be positively associated with PSM because those values are congruent with the core components of PSM (Shim & Park, 2018). Under the ethics-driven
culture, an ethical codes, rules, or laws as behavioral guidelines are emphasized, and public employees internalize those values through the social learning process. The ethical values that public employees hold within organizations can spill over to the general public (Chen et al., 2014), appearing as PSM. In short, it is reasonable to assume that ethics-driven cultures encourage individuals to act with the intention of helping others and benefiting society.

Extant studies revealing the positive relationship between PSM and leadership-shaping organizational cultures (e.g., Brewer et al., 2000) similar to ethics-driven culture could support our hypotheses. Stazyk and Davis (2015) demonstrated the positive effects of the agency and of ethical behavior in which public value is emphasized as a matter of public interest corresponded with PSM. Tyler and Blader (2005) reported that employees are more intrinsically motivated to comply with the ethical standards of an organization when they are encouraged to identify with its ethical values. Empirical research by Wright, Hassan, and Park (2016) demonstrated that ethical leadership positively influences public employees’ PSM and reasoned that public employees are encouraged to have higher levels of PSM through social learning processes.

We found previous studies showing that ethical cultures’ impact on employees is in line with public interest. Kaptein (2009) found that ethical culture has positive effects on transformation from inaction to whistle-blowing when employees observe wrongdoing in their organization, indicating that organizational ethical culture encourages employees to behave ethically. Brewer and Selden (1998) noted that “whistle blowers act on attitudes akin to the public-service ethic in another way, for it is well known that whistle blowing involves self-sacrifice,” and they further explained that “it appears that many whistle blowers willingly put themselves at risk to preserve the common good and further the public interest—motives closely associated with public service motivation” (p. 420). Drawing on previous studies discussed above, we established additional specific hypotheses:

**Hypothesis 3a (H3a):** Ethics-driven organizational culture will have a positive effect on individual rational PSM.

**Hypothesis 3b (H3b):** Ethics-driven organizational culture will have a positive effect on individual norm-based PSM.

**Hypothesis 3c (H3c):** Ethics-driven organizational culture will have a positive effect on individual affective PSM.

**Moderating Effects of Organization: Social Identity Theory (SIT)**

Through the lens of SIT, we expected that organizational culture would reinforce the positive effects of trust in top management and individual PSM. According to SIT, people tend to have self-identification through social identification; individual perceptions, tendencies, and behaviors can be determined and modified by recognizing the group to which they belong (Turner et al., 1987). If individuals’ tendency to define social status through their in-group is higher, they are more willing to conform to the values, beliefs, and norms of that group (J. H. Park, 2015). The values emphasized by
an organizational culture are highly linked to the individuals’ value systems. Theoretical assumptions of SIT support our research hypotheses when we considered that Korea has strong collectivism or “we-ness.”

Korea is included in the cluster of Confucian Asia, which has been determined to have high levels of performance orientation, institutional collectivism, and in-group collectivism, according to GLOBE (Global Leadership and Organizational Behavior Effectiveness) research (Hofstede, 1980, 2010). Collectivism describes those where people are integrated into the cohesiveness of in-group (Hofstede, 2010). People engaged in collectivism are motivated by their group’s interests and guided by what is good for the group through sharing and cooperation (S. Kim, 2017); thus, they are willing to fulfill their obligations toward their group, whether that is their organization or their country (Hofstede et al., 2010). This argument is consistent with several recent studies showing that collectivism is positively associated with public employees’ PSM (S. Kim, 2017) and that employees’ identification with institutional values is associated with their PSM level (Shim & Park, 2018).

In sum, we expected that Korean public employees would be more likely to be affected by organizational factors, applying SIT and GLOBE research to this research framework. The effects of trust, a kind of psychological contract (Rousseau, 1995) based on the social exchange within the organization, have a stronger impact on individual PSM when organizational cultures are strong.

**Hypothesis 4a (H4a):** Performance-driven organizational culture will moderate the relationship between trust in top management and rational PSM.

**Hypothesis 4b (H4b):** Performance-driven organizational culture will moderate the relationship between trust in top management and norm-based PSM.

**Hypothesis 4c (H4c):** Performance-driven organizational culture will moderate the relationship between trust in top management and affective PSM.

**Hypothesis 5a (H5a):** Ethics-driven organizational culture will moderate the relationship between trust in top management and rational PSM.

**Hypothesis 5b (H5b):** Ethics-driven organizational culture will moderate the relationship between trust in top management and norm-based PSM.

**Hypothesis 5c (H5c):** Ethics-driven organizational culture will moderate the relationship between trust in top management and affective PSM.

### Research Methods

#### Sample Characteristics

We utilized quantitative and qualitative data from the Global Research Network research team’s “Public Sector Entrepreneurship Survey.” Through the survey data collected from March to July 2015, 1,216 public employees working in government agencies, executive agencies, public agencies, or quasi-public agencies were included in the sample for the quantitative analysis. Table 1 summarizes the information on the quantitative data used. Through the interview data collected from May to August 2016,
seven public employees were included into the sample for the qualitative research. Table 2 shows the information on the qualitative data used. To better understand the fixed organizational nature in public organizations over the long term, we examined the interview contents of public employees who have worked at a government or a public agency.

**Analytical Method**

To test our research hypotheses, exploratory factor analysis, reliability analysis, correlation analysis, and hierarchical multiple regression analysis were performed. To identify moderating effects, regression lines were also examined. After the statistical analyses, to enhance the robustness and quality of our results, we also analyzed the
interview contents of public employees. For better interpretation of the results, we examined the qualitative interview content of members with various experiences. Moreover, we extracted the emphasized or demanded features to elicit personal and organizational positive, active changes for the interviewees to suggest meaningful managerial implications.

**Research Model**

The research model used to investigate the relationship among the variables is shown in Figure 1. First, demographic factors including gender, education, and job tenure, which can have a strong effect on members’ attitudes within an organization, were included as control variables.\(^3\) Second, trust in top management, which is an individual factor, was included as the independent variable at Level 2. Next, organizational factors, including performance-driven culture and ethics-driven culture, were included as the independent variables at Level 3. In addition, the interaction terms of Levels 2 and 3 were included as the moderating variables at Level 4 to explore whether the effects of PSM differ depending on the type of culture. Finally, PSM, the dependent variable, was included in three different dimensions: rational, norm-based, and affective PSM.

**Variable Measurement**

All respondents were asked to indicate the level of trust in top management, organizational culture, and PSM in their public organizations using a 7-point Likert-type scale. Trust in top management comprised three questions, reflecting the level of trust in the senior or top managers in their organizations, including the level of individual respondent’s perceived trust and the level of effort that they exerted toward their employees. Performance-driven culture was assessed using two questions on how much individual respondents were encouraged to improve their performance within their public organization, and ethics-driven culture was assessed using three questions on how much emphasis their organization placed on employees’ ethical behavior. Rational PSM was assessed using three questions measuring individual respondents’ willingness to maximize their social utility by participating in the policy process. Norm-based PSM was

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**Table 2. Sample Characteristics**

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assessed using three questions on individual respondents’ motives to faithfully perform their duties as members of the community. Affective PSM was assessed using five questions measuring individual respondents’ willingness to contribute to the community based on human emotions. The full inventory of the survey questions is provided in the Supplemental Appendix.

### Validity and Reliability Tests

Exploratory factor analysis and reliability analysis were performed to measure the validity and reliability of the survey questions used in the study. Principal component analysis was used as the factor extraction method in exploratory factor analysis, and varimax was used as the factor rotation method. The computed Kaiser–Meyer–Olkin (KMO) value confirmed the suitability of variables. The questions used in this study had eigenvalues above 1.0, and all factor loadings were above 0.6. Furthermore, all Cronbach’s alpha values were identified to be above .7. The analysis results are shown in Table 3.

### Analyses and Results

#### Correlation Results

Pearson’s correlation analysis was performed to identify the correlations among the variables. Control variables including gender, education, and job tenure were also
included. Table 4 shows the results of the correlation analysis. Overall, significantly positive correlations were found between the main independent variables and dependent variables.

Hierarchical Multiple Regression Analysis Results

Table 5 summarizes the results of the hierarchical multiple regression analysis with rational PSM as the dependent variable. Trust in top management was found to have a meaningful and positive effect on rational PSM. Of the two types of organizational culture, only ethics-driven culture was found to have a meaningful and positive effect on rational PSM. Regarding the verification of moderating effects, ethics-driven culture was found to moderate the influence of trust in top management on rational PSM.

Table 6 summarizes the results of the hierarchical multiple regression analysis with norm-based PSM as the dependent variable. Trust in top management was found to have a meaningful and positive effect on norm-based PSM. Of the two types of organizational culture, only performance-driven culture had a meaningful and positive effect on norm-based PSM. Regarding the verification of moderating effects, performance-driven culture was found to moderate the influence of trust in top management on norm-based PSM.

Table 7 summarizes the results of the hierarchical multiple regression analysis with affective PSM as the dependent variable. Trust in top management was found to have a meaningful and positive effect on affective PSM. Of the two types of organizational culture, only performance-driven culture was found to have a meaningful and positive effect on affective PSM. With respect to the verification of moderating effects, performance-driven culture was found to moderate the influence of trust in top management on affective PSM.

Moderating Effects

Significant moderating relationships were expressed as regression lines. Figure 2 shows the moderating effect of ethics-driven culture on the relationship between trust in top management and rational PSM. When the effect of ethics-driven culture was high, the relationship was more positively strengthened. Figure 3 shows the moderating effect of performance-driven culture on the relationship between trust in top management and norm-based PSM. When the effect of performance-driven culture was high, the relationship was more positively strengthened. Figure 4 shows the moderating effect of performance-driven culture on the relationship between trust in top management and affective PSM. When the effect of performance-driven culture was high, the relationship was more positively strengthened.

Qualitative Analysis: Interviews

In this study, we additionally identified and analyzed the contents of relevant interviews to obtain a more nuanced interpretation of the quantitative analyses. In doing so,
Table 4. Correlation Results.

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Note. DV = dependent variable; IV = independent variable; PSM = public service motivation.

*p < .05. **p < .01.
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</table>

*p < .10. **p < .05. ***p < .01.
Table 8. Important Role of Trust in Top Management.

Interviewee 1: Public service motivation or organizational trust is the most important concept, and entrepreneurship is well displayed based on organizational trust.

Interviewee 2: I think organizational trust is the most important element. I become more active if my position and ability are recognized and trusted in the organization . . .

Interviewee 7: Organizational trust and loyalty to the organization are prerequisites securing the spontaneity of employees, so these can be very effective assets for internalized entrepreneurship and achieving active agreement . . .

Table 9. Important Role of Organizational Culture.

Interviewee 2: A ministry with a strong organizational culture does not change on the whole even if one person tries to change. There will be an influence from the section chief as the whole organization is influenced, but such influence is not significant. It is not a problem of position, but a problem of the overall organizational culture . . .

Interviewee 5: I think that organizational culture is very important . . . In most public organizations, most ideas die out in the first brainstorming process. Therefore, an organizational culture that would allow employees to freely express their ideas should be established, and a culture that provides financial means or time to support such employees in the mid-term and long-term and that encourages and supports such employees again in case of failure should be established to promote innovation . . .

Table 10. Cultural Issues and the Korean Context.

Interviewee 3: Efforts to share value are required from members in order to implement the business vision across the enterprise, and the motivation for fostering performance then becomes clear, contributing to organizational performance . . .

Interviewee 3: A culture that values individual self-esteem is necessary to create change and galvanize the organizational commitment of members. In this regard, this part must be integrated with rational values and culture to create an objective and fair culture . . .

Interviewee 4: A strong sense of familism does not seem to be good. I don't think familism helps in setting the direction of a future-oriented organization. On the positive side, familism appears to have a warm image, but on the negative side, familism can be thought of as some kind of incestuous culture . . .

Interviewee 6: The participation of women in social activities is increasing, and the range of public work is globalizing. Therefore, the possibility for women to contribute to organizational performance is increasing, but the idea of the supremacy of men forces women to remain in relatively lower level positions . . .

Interviewee 7: A culture of command and discipline and authoritarianism may improve the short-term productivity of an organization based on the consistent and prompt handling of business, but these elements are not helpful in terms of improving the voluntary capacity and initiative of members in the long term . . .
we aimed to gain a richer understanding of the realistic psychological condition of public employees as they relate to the effects of trust and culture on employee attitudes and behavior in Korean public organizations. The results of the analysis of the qualitative data suggest that organizational trust and culture strongly influence members’ positive motivation. Individual positive and active behavior and attitudes were found to depend on the depth of the relationship within the organization and the strength of the effect of organizational culture.
Important role of trust in top management. As evidenced by the results, the interview content strongly suggested that trust in top management within public organization is pivotal for employees to cooperate with each other and have an active attitude (see Table 8). Similar to the statistical results, the results of our qualitative analysis suggest that the extent to which employees trust their organization or top management strongly influence their motivation in the Korean public sector. These results confirm that the leader’s influence is strong in Korean public organizations and that it may be key to employees’ motivation.

Important role of organizational culture. As demonstrated by the results of the interview content analysis, organizational culture is crucial for inducing active change and positive behavior among public employees (see Table 9). As suggested by the results of the statistical analysis, organizational culture strongly influences the motivation, attitude, and behavior of employees in the Korean public sector, which is characterized by strong communalism. Public employees themselves admitted that the culture in their public organization was fully functional and that it should be considered first in organizational management.

Cultural issues and the Korean context. The analysis of the interview content further suggests that public employees are internally motivated and possess strong commitment to rational and fair organizational values (see Table 10). As with the statistical results, the analysis of the interview contents confirmed that organizational cultures that value performance and ethics help realize positive attitudes regarding public value. Particularly, employees of Korean public organizations expect a positive effect when these issues are improved, as they noted that their current cultural system is very immature and unethical.
Discussion

In this study, we explored mechanisms that increase all PSM dimensions by analyzing major variables such as individual and organizational factors in the Korean public sector. Although previous research has investigated the antecedents of PSM (e.g., Moynihan & Pandey, 2007; Naff & Crum, 1999), it is necessary to investigate the role of organizational culture with respect to this construct. In addition, the Korean public sector has faced mixed organizational cultures owing to the introduction of law, social issues, and practices led by the NPM reform. In short, this research is motivated by theoretical and practical inquiries.

First, in support of H1a, H1b, and H1c, this study lends evidence to the notion that trust in top management promotes individual rational, norm-based, and affective PSM in the Korean public sector. That is, trust plays a crucial role in organizations, which prompts members to have a high level of PSM. These results are further supported by the interviewees’ statements indicating that trust within the organization is vital. In addition, these findings are in line with research suggesting that successful trust-based human relationships engender desirable attitudes and behavior among employees (Kouzes & Posner, 2001) and that a high level of trust within an organization reinforces employees’ PSM (Chen et al., 2014). Thus, if an organization requires public officers with a high level of all PSM dimensions, it should prioritize efforts to build-up trust in top management, for instance, by creating channels through which employees and the organization can exchange positive resources, which strengthen psychological contracts (Rousseau, 1995) and thus encourage intrinsic motivation, resulting in altruism and pro-organization behavior.

Second, in support of H2a and H2b, the results showed that performance-driven culture facilitates norm-based and affective PSM in the Korean public context. Although it is difficult to elucidate the direct impact of organizational culture on PSM from previous research, some studies provide empirical evidence suggesting that performance-driven culture is beneficial in increasing organizational effectiveness, as indicated by job satisfaction and organizational commitment (S. A. Park & Oh, 2006). In this context, we provide evidence for another positive influence of performance-driven culture that it exerts a positive influence on intrinsic motivation grounded in norms and altruism. Employees can learn about the importance of performance in the public sector from organizational culture through an emphasis on performance and reward system based on it. We can conclude that performance is perceived to comprise ultimate concern for the public and the pursuit of the public interest; thus, performance-driven culture seems to help motivate members to be active and devoted to their work. H2a was nonetheless rejected, indicating that performance-driven culture is not positively associated with rational PSM. We assume that this result may be because of the survey items measuring performance-driven culture and rational PSM. Specifically, questions on performance-driven culture asked whether the organization encourages employees to improve performance continuously and whether they are rewarded for their performance. Such questions capture how the organization motivates employees to increase performance through organizational support and reward.
Contrastingly, all items capturing rational PSM concerned politics, such as perception of politics, importance of compromises, and interest in politicians. Hence, the significance of performance in the organization does not seem to have a relationship with favorable impressions regarding politics. Considering that the Korean governmental system is in principle divided into legislative, judicial, and administrative branches and that all public employees in this study belonged to administrative branches, the extent to which performance is encouraged in administrative branches was not found to be empirically associated with perceptions regarding politics. In this context, this result may support

the criticism related to non-appropriate measurement items, missing rational motives within PSM, low factor loadings and to the lack of dimension discrimination attraction to policy-making, professional rule-making and administration versus the dislike of politicians, cynicism or negative affect toward politics. (Coursey & Pandey, 2007; Kim, 2009; Ritz, 2011, p. 1129)

Third, in support of H3a, the results indicated that ethics-driven culture is a crucial cultivator in increasing rational PSM, which shows the importance of ethics-driven culture among Korean public officers. The more they consider their organization values ethics, the higher is their rational PSM. Specifically, when individuals strongly believe in the ethics of their organization, fear of participating in active decision-making is greatly diminished (Kaptein, 2009), given the assumption that no disadvantageous action such as retaliation will be taken against them. This is because individuals calculate the costs they may have to pay in case of retaliation (Miceli et al., 2009). Another reason for the result may be that public employees working in organizations with highly promoted ethical values are likely to have more positive perceptions of politicians and politics. Such a belief in organizational ethics may diffuse to other public sectors, such as the legislature, through spillover effect; the experiences transferred from one domain to another can either be negative or positive (Westman, 2002).

Fourth, H4a was rejected, as performance-driven culture is not statistically associated with rational PSM (H2a) and has no moderating effects on the relationship between trust in top management and rational PSM. Contrastingly, H4b and H4c that performance-driven culture promotes the effects of trust in top management on norm-based and affective PSM were confirmed. These results support the argument that performance-driven culture does not harm public officers’ intrinsic motivation, such as keeping norms and sacrificing oneself for others so long as they trust top management. Although there have been concerns that performance-driven culture is not appropriate for the public sector in Korea (H. J. Kim, 2002), our results show that performance-driven culture with trust in top management is valuable for reinforcing norm-based and affective PSM. Previous research also explains that there are concerns with performance-driven culture when the reward system is not well executed or not based on performance (Lee, 2005). As the present research has demonstrated that performance-driven culture impacts norm-based and affective PSM, unconditional criticism on performance-driven culture should be avoided.
Finally, in support of H5a, ethics-driven culture has a positive moderating effect on the relationship between trust in top management and rational PSM. It can thus be understood that ethics-driven culture can promote individual participation in decision-making in public policymaking based on trust in top management (i.e., a psychological contract). In sum, if certain public agencies demonstrate a higher level of ethical culture, more positive roles of trust toward PSM can be anticipated in a way that makes employees feel confident enough to participate in decision-making and express their own opinions. Contrastingly, H5b and H5c were not statistically supported, as ethics-driven culture was not statistically associated with norm-based and affective rational PSM (H3b and H3c) and was not found to have any moderating effects on the relationship between trust in top management and norm-based and affective PSM.

The following implications can be drawn from the above results. First, this is the first research to expand the understanding of the link between trust, culture, and PSM by analyzing the relationship between the three dimensions of PSM. Furthermore, this study provides new empirical evidence by showing the key moderating role of different types of organizational cultures in shaping positive motivational directions differently.

The positive role of PSM in the public sector has been supported by many scholars. To suggest practical solutions to increase PSM, we actively included variables such as performance-driven culture and ethics-driven culture, which are existent and encouraged in the Korean public sector. Notably, this research partly meets the necessity of bringing organizational ethics into the PSM discussion. Maesschalck, van der Wal, and Huberts (2008) strongly criticized limiting references to the organizational ethics literature in research on PSM. Although PSM is deeply related to public ethics theoretically, there is a gap in the literature regarding the effect of ethical culture on PSM. Our basic research questions are consistent with those of Kim (2014), who empirically examined varying levels of each PSM dimension across a multitude of country clusters and asserted the significance of context when discussing PSM. Above all, we recognized the necessity of research investigating variables that reflect current practices from the field. Thus, this research aimed to meet the needs of the field and address research gaps.

To this end, this research responded to the research community calling for more empirical research on organizational culture and PSM (see Moynihan & Pandey, 2007) and statistically supported the effectiveness on each PSM dimension. Based on the results of this research, performance-driven culture and ethics-driven culture seem to influence the intention of active, intrinsic, and altruistic motivation. In other words, forming and developing PSM can be reinforced through a well-established organizational culture. As systems seem to be more tangible, and easy to implement, compared with culture, HR managers tend to approach their members with policy and system changes rather than focusing on culture adaptations, which require more long-term efforts. However, culturally influenced outcomes, such as PSM, must be treated with a long-term perspective.
Second, this research contributes to the usefulness and appropriateness of applying SET, SLT, and SIT for explaining the positive effects ascribed to an organization. In other words, this study facilitates interdisciplinary dialogue by incorporating psychological and sociological theories into PSM research.

Finally, this research attempted to elaborate on each type of PSM by demonstrating that each type of PSM is positively associated with different types of culture. For instance, depending on the characteristics of the task, position, or organization, the type of PSM that is primarily desired may vary. In this context, this study suggests that it may be helpful for HR managers to determine which type of organizational culture must be promoted according to the type of PSM required.

Limitations and Future Research

Despite its contributions and findings, the study has some limitations that should be addressed in future research. First, better methods should be used in the design of future studies on this topic. Despite collecting data in three waves, common method bias risk could not be fully eliminated. Second, as culture varies with nation, context, era, and region, the findings are not universally applicable given our focus on the Korean public sector. Finally, given that this research revealed that rational, norm-based, and affective PSM are associated with different types of organizational culture, research showing how each PSM dimension results in different outcome variables would offer more profound theoretical and practical implications.

Authors’ Note

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Supplemental Material

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Notes

1. Despite various structural changes in the past, the Korean government has recently lost public trust because of various events (such as bureaucratic corruption, as exemplified by
the Sewol Ferry Disaster in 2014; the incompetent enactment of disease-control procedures, as demonstrated by MERS diffusion in 2015; and unhealthy links between business and politics, as exemplified by the Choi-gate Scandal in 2016) (Kang, 2019).

2. Using survey methods, GLOBE collected data on several thousand middle managers in various industries across 61 countries and compared their cultures and effective leadership attributes. In the process, national cultures were examined in terms of nine dimensions: (a) performance orientation, (b) future orientation, (c) assertiveness, (d) power distance, (e) humane orientation, (f) institutional collectivism, (g) in-group collectivism, (h) uncertainty avoidance, and (i) gender egalitarianism.

3. There may be slight differences in characteristics (e.g., organizational culture and organizational structure) between organizations, as different types of public organizations are included. However, employees of several organizations with distinct characteristics were not selected for the sample; rather, the sample includes various types of individual public organizations. In addition, this study targeted organizations within the public sector with similar characteristics. Therefore, the type of organization was not included as a control variable.

4. The interviews focus on organizational values or culture in bringing out positive attitudes, behaviors, or achievements among public employees. The interview content was transcribed and organized, and keywords and themes related to the organizational value or cultural components that determine positive attitudes, behavior, and achievement were extracted for each interviewee. Finally, the factors that showed common aspects were categorized, organized, and subsequently analyzed.

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