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# **A Strategy for Building Public Service Motivation Research Internationally**

**Sangmook Kim**

(Seoul National University of Technology, Korea)

**&**

**Wouter Vandenabeele**

(Katholieke Universiteit Leuven, Belgium)

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Sangmook Kim  
Department of Public Administration  
Seoul National University of Technology  
172 Gongneung2-Dong, Nowon-Gu  
Seoul, 139-743 Korea  
Phone: +82 2 970 6495  
Fax: +82 2 971 4647  
E-mail: smook@snut.ac.kr

Wouter Vandenabeele  
Public Management Institute  
Katholieke Universiteit Leuven  
Parkstraat 45 Bus 03609  
B-3000 Leuven Belgium  
Phone: +32 16 32 32 73  
Fax: +32 16 32 32 67  
E-mail: woutervandenabeele@sockuleuvenbe

# **A Strategy for Building Public Service Motivation Research Internationally**

## **ABSTRACT**

As the scholarly research on public service motivation (PSM) has grown and the geographic scope of the research has expanded, there is growing concern about whether the conceptual composition and dimensionalities of PSM are appropriate for explaining and predicting public service–related behavior in different countries and internationally. For doing cross-national research and comparison, we need to assure that the dimensionalities are stable and a measure of PSM can be used confidently. This article sets out a strategy for convergence internationally in research and measurement approaches. It will review research to assess commonalities in the content of PSM internationally, and revise the construct and operational definition of PSM to develop a more universal construct that can be used globally and is more likely to generate cumulative knowledge.

There are three significant subjects that need to be analyzed in this study. They are to sharpen the concept of PSM by refining the conceptual components in Perry and Wise’s (1990) study, to clarify the dimensionalities of PSM by refining the four dimensions in Perry’s (1996) scale, and to specify the relationship between PSM and its dimensions by comparing a reflective measure with a formative one.

After reviewing the previous studies, we propose that public service motives are based on self-sacrifice and can fall into three categories (instrumental, value-based, and identification motives) and that the dimensions of the PSM construct are refined as attraction to public participation, commitment to public values, compassion, and self-sacrifice. We also suggest that developing more appropriate items for better discriminant validity is essential for further research. The careful consideration of the relationships between PSM and its dimensions shows that it is more reasonable to define PSM as a formative construct: first-order reflective and second-order formative.

## **Introduction**

In 1982, the term “public service motivation” (PSM) was first used as a way to express the specific motivation associated with public service (Rainey 1982). Perry and

Wise (1990) offered the first conceptual definition and identified a typology of motives associated with public service that includes rational, norm-based, and affective motives. Perry (1996) developed a measurement scale that empirically reduced the typology of motives to four dimensions: attraction to public policy making, commitment to the public interest and civic duty, compassion, and self-sacrifice. In the past two decades, scholars have built upon these foundations. The research on PSM can be summarized around five main themes: the construct and its measurement, the incidence, the antecedents, the outcomes, and the organizational systems. The state of theory and research on PSM is well reviewed in the book, *Motivation in Public Management: The Call of Public Service* (Perry and Hondeghem 2008a).

A theory can be divided into two parts: one that specifies relationships between theoretical constructs and another that describes relationships between constructs and measures. A construct refers to a phenomenon of theoretical interest, and a measure is a multi-item operationalization of a construct (Edwards and Bagozzi 2000). The initial research about PSM began in the United States (Perry and Wise 1990; Rainey 1982), but scholars in many countries have found the construct useful (Kim 2006; Liu, Tang and Zhu 2008; Taylor 2007; Vandenabeele, Scheeper and Hondeghem 2006). One reason for the broad international interest is long-standing beliefs about and interest in the public service ethic (Horton 2008). The salience of the public service ethic for public administration scholars has, in turn, led to international efforts by scholars to measure PSM in their respective countries. A result of the growth of international research is the need for elaborating the construct and measurement of PSM (Perry and Hondeghem 2008c). For facilitating research internationally, we need to develop a more universal construct that can be used globally and is more likely to generate cumulative knowledge. However, the previous studies have employed

multiple measures of PSM, and such diversity in operational definitions of PSM suggests important differences in the appropriate meaning or number of PSM dimension and limits the ability to replicate and build upon previous findings (Wright 2008).

This article sets out a strategy for convergence internationally in research and measurement approaches. It will review research to assess commonalities in the content of PSM internationally and establish common metrics for PSM cross nationally. There are three significant subjects that need to be analyzed in this study for strengthening the PSM construct and its measurement. The first one is to sharpen the concept of PSM by refining the conceptual components in Perry and Wise's (1990) study. The next one is to clarify the dimensionalities of PSM by refining the four dimensions in Perry's (1996) scale. The third is to specify the relationship between PSM and its dimensions by comparing a reflective measure with a formative one.

### **Sharpening the Concept of Public Service Motivation**

PSM is about the motives people have for behavior (Wise 2000). PSM is defined as "an individual's predisposition to respond to motives grounded primarily or uniquely in public institutions and organizations" (Perry and Wise 1990, 368). Brewer and Selden (1998, 417) describe it as "the motivational force that induces individuals to perform meaningful public service." Rainey and Steinbauer (1999, 23) define it as "a general altruistic motivation to serve the interests of a community of people, a state, a nation or mankind." Recently Vandenberg (2007, 547) define it as "the belief, values and attitudes that go beyond self-interest or organizational interest, that concern the interest of a larger political entity and that motivate individuals to act accordingly

whenever appropriate.” PSM is thought of as “an individual’s orientation to delivering services to people with a purpose to do good for others and society” (Perry and Hondgehem 2008a, vii). Even though the definitions of PSM itself vary slightly among authors, its definition has a common focus on motives and action that are intended to do good for others and shape the well-being of society (Perry and Hondgehem 2008b).

As evidence for PSM extends across a range of countries, PSM is generally accepted as a universal concept.<sup>1</sup> Most of the research on PSM emanates from the United States, but there is increasing evidence that it is also found in countries in Europe and Asia (Perry and Hondgehem 2008c). Hondgehem and Vandenabeele (2005) contend that PSM is a concept that is found in Europe under different names and appearances. For instance, in the United Kingdom it is described as public service ethos (Horton 2006), whereas in France, public administrators speak of “l’*éthique du bien commun*” that would have a significant influence on the motivation of civil servants. Hence, Hondgehem and Vandenabeele (2005) suggest that the widespread and extensive emergence of PSM-like constructs in different countries indicates the presence of a robust phenomenon that is entrenched in Western culture. Every public service regime has its own unique public service ethos that reflects fundamental values, beliefs, and ideals held by politicians, public servants, and the public about that regime. Each ethos is embedded in its own specific institutional and historical context and culture (Horton 2008). Vandenabeele and Van de Walle (2008), using survey data from the International Social Survey Program, also showed that PSM is a more or less universal concept, but that its constituent dimensions are not necessarily universal. Historical and institutional differences might explain the different pattern of PSM in different countries.

PSM is a multidimensional construct with an overarching meaning (Perry and

Hondeghem 2008c). Building upon the research of Knoke and Wright-Isak (1982), Perry and Wise (1990) proposed that PSM was associated with three types of motives: affective, norm-based, and rational. These three types of human motives are the foundation for the distinct dimensions of PSM. An individual may have rational, norm-based, and affective motives that contribute to a single behavior (Brewer, Selden, and Facer II 2000). These three categories provide a useful framework for understanding PSM, but they also have limitations. First, some argue that the rational motives consider the possibility of self-interested motives (Wise 2000; Wright and Pandey 2008). The underlying premise of rational motives is that individual choice among a set of possible alternatives is motivated by an assessment of the potential utility maximization from each option. Rational motives would include a desire to represent some special interest as well as desires for personal gain and personal need fulfillment (Wise 2000). From the rational motives, it was suggested that individuals could participate in the process of policy formulation as ways of maximizing their own needs of power and self-importance or to advocate a special interest that would provide personal benefits. The opportunity to participate in policy formulation or program implementation may be anchored in needs for power, esteem from others, and self-esteem. While the theory of PSM is principally based on altruistic motives that lie beyond self-interest (Brewer 2002; Piliavin and Charng 1990), the rational motives can be understood as the motives for realizing private interests, not public interests. Thus the rational, self-serving motives, by definition, are not public service motives, regardless of the social or public good they produce (Wise 2000).

Second, some argue that these categories do not distinguish between normative and affective motives conceptually (Wright and Pandey 2008). Normative orientations are based on social values and norms of what is proper and appropriate, while motives

such as patriotism of benevolence seem to be grounded in an individual's emotional state (Perry and Wise 1990). The patriotism of benevolence combines love of regime values and love of others (Frederickson and Hart 1985) that are also closely connected with enhancing social equity, loyalty to duty and to the government as a whole, and serving the public interest in the normative motives. Also both normative and affective motives overlap with the concept of altruism, the deliberate pursuit of the interests or welfare of others or the public interest (Batson and Shaw 1991; Dovidio 1984; Hoffman 1981; Piliavin and Charng 1990). Commitment to a program due to a genuine conviction about its social importance in the affective motives is not clearly distinguished from the desire to serve the public interest as a result of feeling a duty to one's government and community (Wright and Pandey 2008). Thus the rational motives are not appropriate for PSM, and there is considerable overlap between the norm-based motives and the affective motives. The PSM construct needs to be improved conceptually for facilitating and cumulating research internationally.

Public service motives are at the root of the behaviors and actions taken to achieve outcomes that serve the public interest (Wise 2000). The research of Knoke and Wright-Isak (1982) provides a useful basis, but the three motivational components (Perry and Wise 1990) need to be refined for providing a more suitable understanding of PSM. Motivation is the general term that covers all processes in which realizing targeted behavior is the core element (Heckhausen 1991). Motivation exists only in the interaction of individual values and an actual situation that enables an individual to put these values into practice (Vandenabeele, Scheepers, and Hondeghem 2006). We propose, therefore, that PSM is associated with three types of motives: instrumental, value-based, and identification.

The instrumental motives concern choosing the means to perform meaningful

public service.<sup>2</sup> Principally based on the altruistic motives, the instrumental motives include working in the public sector, participating in the policy process and community activities, participating in activities for social development, and advocating for special public policies and programs, in order to perform meaningful public service and to do good for others and society. Individuals are likely to work in the public sector because they think that public organizations are more likely to provide them with an opportunity to engage in public service. They are likely to pay attention to or participate in the policy process because they think this is an appropriate means for enhancing public interest. They are likely to actively participate in community programs and activities for performing community and social service.

The value-based motives concern the terminal public values (Beck Jørgensen and Bozeman 2007; Bozeman 2007) that individuals want to achieve through their behaviors and actions. Individuals are likely to internalize the public values; that is, they are likely to regard the public values as their ones, and they are likely to have a feeling of satisfaction and accomplishment when they contribute to realize these values. The public values may include public interest, social responsibility, democracy, social equity, fairness, social justice, neutrality, accountability and so on (Frederickson 1997; Moe and Gilmour 1995; Rosenbloom 1996). Although individual countries have created their own principles of public service, a common understanding of the foundation of public service remains in Western countries (Raadschelders 2003). In Asian countries, the mixture between Western liberalism and the indigenous cultural Confucianism can provide a fascinating new synthesis. The Western ideas of constitutionalism, human rights, equity, the rule of law, democracy, and free markets resonate in Confucian cultures. Non-Western civilizations have attempted to pursue modernization with a combination of Western influence and their own preferred culture

(Yun 2006). Thus the basic public values may be commonly pursued in the global system. The importance and priority order of these values may be varied according to national and social conditions, but individuals are likely to put these values before private values.

The identification motives concern the people, groups, or objects that individuals want to serve. Individuals are likely to identify themselves with others, such as vulnerable people, the disadvantaged, the public, community, society, country, and so on. Affective bonding with the others is the emotional basis of behavior for serving the others (Knoke and Wright-Isak 1982). The sense of oneness between themselves and those with whom they identify brings a willingness to do good for and even sacrifice themselves for the identified objects. Frederickson and Hart (1985) suggest that “a special relationship” should exist between public servants and citizens, and along with the commitment to correct principles, public servants must genuinely care for their fellow citizens.

These three refined motivational components are focused on value (for what), attitude (for whom) and behavior (how): the instrumental motives are related to behavior, the value-based motives to value and ethics, and the identification motives to attitude. Also they are based on the original model of Perry and Wise (1990). The self-serving motives are excluded from the rational motives that are correspondent with the instrumental motives; the conceptual overlap between the norm-based and affective motives is eliminated; and the norm-based motives correspond with the value-based motives and the affective motives with the identification motives.

PSM is part of a behavioral process in which public service motives lead to behaviors for the public. In relation to the motivation literature, Perry (2000) asserts the importance of PSM as an alternative to rational and self-interested theories of

motivation, which tend to focus on pecuniary rewards. Public service motives are founded on an ethic to serve the public. Public service requires an individual's self-sacrifice, that is, the willingness to substitute service to others for tangible personal rewards (Perry 1996). For satisfying the instrumental, value-based, and identification motives of public service, individuals may be willing to sacrifice some private interests and to accept less monetary rewards, while giving more efforts and commitment for public service. Thus self-sacrifice is a foundation of realizing the three public service motives (Batson and Shaw 1991; Piliavin and Charng 1990). Based on self-sacrifice, individuals are likely to perform acts that are intended to do good for others and shape the well-being of society as a way of satisfying their personal needs. The greater the strength of one's PSM, the more likely he (or she) is to engage in behaviors that benefit the public, even with the loss in tangible rewards (Wise 2000). The concept of PSM is sharpened to develop a more universal construct that can be used globally. The conceptual components of PSM can be shown as follows:

**[Figure 1 here]**

### **Clarifying the Dimensionalities of Public Service Motivation**

A theory is useful if it can explain and predict. An explanation establishes the substantive meaning of constructs, variables, and their linkages, while a prediction tests that substantive meaning by comparing it to empirical evidence (Bacharach 1989). A construct is defined in terms of its measure, and thus measures of PSM should be designed to explain and predict public service-related behavior (Brewer 2002). For

improving the cumulateness of research and its application internationally, it is necessary to develop a common operational definition of PSM that can enhance the confidence in the findings and interpretation of studies conducted in different countries and cross-nationally. The dimensionalities of PSM will be examined to develop a more appropriate measure of PSM.

Perry (1996) developed a measurement scale for PSM. Forty survey items were devised to correspond to six dimensions of PSM: attraction to public policy making, commitment to the public interest/civic duty, civic duty, social justice, compassion, and self-sacrifice. Using data from a survey of 376 respondents from a variety of primarily public sector backgrounds, Perry identified the four empirical components of the PSM construct as attraction to public policy making, commitment to the public interest/civic duty, compassion, and self-sacrifice. Attraction to policy making is a public service motive based on the desire to satisfy personal needs while serving the public interest. Compassion is a public service motive that entails love and concern for others and a desire that others be protected. Commitment to the public interest is based on one's desire to fulfill a societal obligation or standard and thus is categorized as a norm-based motive. The self-sacrifice dimension was retained as an independent dimension due to its historical connection with the perception of the public service. The outcome of Perry's (1996) study was the development of a list of 24 items measuring the four subscales of PSM. Perry (1997) supported the distinctiveness of the different dimensions, finding that they often had different antecedents or the same antecedents but different relationship directions.

Using the dimensions of Perry's (1996) scale, a significant number of researchers have examined the antecedents and effects of PSM. However, the previous studies (Coursey and Pandey 2007; Moynihan and Pandey 2007a, 2007b; De-Hart-

Davis, Marlowe, and Pandey 2006; Wright and Pandey 2005, 2008) show that the four dimensions of PSM have limitations. Moreover, Great diversity exists in the operational definitions of PSM. Such diversity will limit the ability to replicate and build upon previous findings (Wright 2008). So the dimensionalities of PSM need to be refined for better explaining and predicting public service–related behavior cross-nationally.

First, the dimension of attraction to policy making needs to be refined as the dimension of attraction to public participation. The items of the original dimension are not appropriate for measuring personal attraction to public policy making.<sup>3</sup> This dimension of attraction to public participation needs to focus more on a disposition to work in the public sector, to participate in the policy process and in activities for community and social development; and it needs to develop the items with more face validity as indicators of instrumental motives (*cf.* Kim 2009a; Taylor 2007).

Second, the dimension of commitment to public interest needs to be refined as the dimension of commitment to public values. This dimension needs to focus more on a personal disposition to pursue public values.<sup>4</sup> Some of the original items need to be excluded because they overlap with the dimension of self-sacrifice,<sup>5</sup> and new items need to be developed for representing the value-based motives and having better discriminant validity. This refinement will help to solve the problem of considerable overlap with the dimension of self-sacrifice.

Third, new and more appropriate items should be developed for the dimension of compassion. The original items of compassion need to be revised for better representing a unique and salient quality of affective motives,<sup>6</sup> and so the new items need to be more focused on affective bonding with the identified objects such as others, vulnerable people, the disadvantaged, the public, community, society, and country.<sup>7</sup>

Fourth, the four-dimension model is a better theoretical fit. Seeking to refine the concept of PSM, we propose that public service motives are founded on self-sacrifice (Batson and Shaw 1991; Dividio 1984; Hoffman 1981; Piliavin and Charng 1990) and can fall into three categories: instrumental, value-based, and identification motives. Self-sacrifice is fundamental to the construct of PSM and so it should be a component of the operational dimensions. Each category of public service motives represents a unique aspect of PSM and so needs to be independently included in the operational dimensions. Even though it is not essential to develop a one-to-one correspondence between the conceptual components and the operational dimensions, and there is no mutually exclusive relationship,<sup>8</sup> the four-dimension model is more suitable than the three-dimension model because each dimension can capture a distinct and unique component of PSM,<sup>9</sup> and the four-dimension model is better for explaining and predicting the various aspects of public service–related behavior. We suggest the four dimensions of attraction to public participation, commitment to public values, compassion, and self-sacrifice.

To summarize, the conceptual components need to be empirically estimated through operational definition, and operational dimensions need to be backed up by the conceptual components. Dimensions and items should be based on supporting theory. We propose that public service motives are based on self-sacrifice and can fall into three categories such as instrumental, value-based, and identification motives, and that the dimensions of PSM construct are refined as attraction to public participation, commitment to public values, compassion, and self-sacrifice. We also suggest that developing more appropriate items for better discriminant validity is essential for the four dimensions (*cf.* Kim 2009a; Taylor 2007; Vandenberg 2008b).

Efforts to extend research about the PSM construct to Europe, Asia, and

Australia have raised issues about dimensionalities and operational measures for non-U.S. contexts (Perry and Hondeghe 2008c). It is necessary to develop a more universal construct of PSM that can be used globally and is more likely to generate cumulative knowledge. The refined construct and four dimensions of PSM are more in tune with PSM around the world. This refinement will decrease the diversity in the operational definitions of PSM and promote a common operational definition for facilitating research and generating cumulative knowledge globally.

### **Measurement Model of PSM: Reflective versus Formative**

The measurement model specifies the relationship between constructs and measures. The failure to correctly specify the measurement model can lead to different conclusions about the empirical relationships between latent constructs (Jarvis, MacKenzie, and Podsakoff 2003). PSM is assumed to be a multi-dimensional construct that has four factors: attraction to public participation, commitment to public values, compassion, and self-sacrifice. This multi-dimensional construct should be properly operationalized, because measurement model misspecification can have very serious consequences for the theoretical conclusions drawn from that model (Jarvis, MacKenzie, and Podsakoff 2003).

There are two different measurement models using multiple indicators of latent constructs: the reflective or principal factor model and the formative or composite latent variable model. Constructs are usually viewed as causes of indicators, meaning that variation in a construct leads to variation in its indicators. Such indicators are termed “reflective” because they represent reflections, or manifestations, of a construct. In other situations, indicators are viewed as causes of constructs. Such indicators are

termed “formative,” meaning that the construct is formed or induced by its indicators (Edwards and Bagozzi 2000). The measure development procedures associated with the two approaches are very different. For reflective measures, scale development places major emphasis on the intercorrelations among the items, focuses on common variance, and emphasizes unidimensionality and internal consistency. For formative measures, index construction focuses on explaining abstract variance, considers multicollinearity among the indicators, and emphasizes the role of indicators as predictors rather than predicted variables (Diamantopoulos and Siguaw 2006).

Formative measures are commonly used for constructs conceived of as composites of specific component variables (Bollen 1989; Bollen and Lennox 1991; Edwards and Bagozzi 2000). A typical example of the formative measurement model is socioeconomic status (SES), which is formed as a combination of education, income, occupation, and residence. If any one of these indicators increases, SES would increase; conversely, if a person’s SES increases, this would not necessarily be accompanied by an increase in all indicators (Diamantopoulos and Winklhofer 2001). On the other hand, a typical example of the reflective model is the Organizational Commitment Questionnaire (Mowday, Steers, and Porter 1979): Dropping an indicator does not alter the conceptual domain of organizational commitment, and indicators are expected to covary with each other. Several of the most commonly researched constructs in behavioral and organizational research have formative measures that are incorrectly modeled as though they were reflective measures. “This is a problem, because ... measurement model misspecification can inflate unstandardized structural parameter estimates by as much as 400% or deflate them by as much as 80% and lead to either Type I or Type II errors of inference, depending on whether the endogenous or the exogenous construct is misspecified” (MacKenzie, Podsakoff, and Jarvis 2005,

728).

A construct should be modeled as having formative indicators if the following conditions prevail (Jarvis, MacKenzie, and Podsakoff 2003, 203):

(a) the indicators are viewed as defining characteristics of the construct, (b) changes in the indicators are expected to cause changes in the construct, (c) changes in the construct are not expected to cause changes in the indicators, (d) the indicators do not necessarily share a common theme, (e) eliminating an indicator may alter the conceptual domain of the construct, (f) a change in the value of one of the indicators is not necessarily expected to be associated with a change in all of the other indicators, and (g) the indicators are not expected to have the same antecedents and consequences.

On the other hand, a construct should be modeled as having reflective indicators if the opposite is true. Whereas reflective indicators are essentially interchangeable—and therefore adding or removing indicators, although it may affect reliability, does not change the essential nature of the underlying construct (Diamantopoulos and Winklhofer 2001)—“omitting an indicator is omitting a part of the construct” in a formative model (Bollen and Lennox 1991, 308). A change in a formative indicator leads to changes in the construct, without necessarily affecting any of the construct’s other indicators.

When the construct is complex, we should use higher-order models because such models treat each dimension as an important component of the construct (Ruiz, Gremler, Washburn, and Carrión 2008). PSM is conceived as a superordinate multidimensional construct because it represents a general concept that consists of specific dimensions (Edwards 2001). PSM is best viewed as a second-order factor, with its four dimensions as first-order factors and items of the dimensions as observed variables. The four first-order dimensions can be served as reflective or formative indicators of PSM (MacKenzie, Podsakoff, and Jarvis 2005).

First of all, we can agree that first-order dimensions have reflective indicators based on the following criteria (Jarvis, MacKenzie, and Podsakoff 2003): the relative homogeneity and interchangeability of indicators pertaining to each dimension, the high degree of covariation among indicators, and the expectation that the indicators are likely to be affected by the same antecedents and have the same consequences. Thus, PSM can be modeled as first-order reflective and second-order reflective (Figure 2) or first-order reflective and second-order formative (Figure 3) In Figure 2 the meaning generally does not alter when dropping a dimension, while in Figure 3 it is necessary to include all first-order dimensions that form PSM because dropping one may alter the meaning of PSM.

**[Figure 2 here]**

**[Figure 3 here]**

The choice between a formative and a reflective specification should primarily be based on theoretical considerations regarding the causal priority between the indicators and the latent variable involved (Diamantopoulos and Winklhofer 2001). We need to discuss the causal priority between the four dimensions and PSM with the conditions for formative indicators. The important criteria to define a construct as formative (Jarvis, MacKenzie, and Podsakoff 2003) are the interchangeability of dimensions pertaining to PSM and the expectation that the dimensions are likely to be affected by the same antecedents and have the same consequences. In PSM, first, the dimensions are not interchangeable. The dimensions represent different aspects of PSM; each dimension captures a distinct and potentially unique form of PSM (Perry

1996); each dimension is not necessarily highly correlated with the others; a change in the value of any one dimension is not necessarily expected to be associated with a change in the others.

Second, the dimensions are not expected to have the same antecedents and consequences. The dimensions are either related to different variables or are differently related to the same variables. Perry (1997) found some significant differences in the influence of independent variables on the four different aspects of PSM. Taylor (2007) confirmed that, when the multiple dimensions of PSM are analyzed simultaneously, certain dimensions are found to be more important than others in influencing work outcomes. Moynihan and Pandey (2007a) reported that red tape is negatively and significantly related to attraction to policy making, but not to commitment to the public interest, while reform orientation and hierarchical authority are positively related to commitment to the public interest, but not to attraction to policy making. Thus the dimensions may have different antecedents and consequences as well as different characteristics and theoretical backgrounds.

This careful consideration of the relationships between PSM and its dimensions shows that PSM is formative in nature. Thus it is more reasonable to define PSM as a formative construct, as Wright (2008, 85) said: "Researchers should consider operationalizing this four-dimension conceptualization as first-order reflective and second-order formative." An individual's PSM is determined by the individual's attraction to public participation, commitment to public values, compassion, and self-sacrifice. While the items reflecting each dimension may be interchangeable, each dimension provides a unique contribution to an individual's PSM. Therefore, it is necessary to include all first-order dimensions that form PSM in the study because omitting one may alter the meaning of PSM. It is, of course, necessary to analyze

which model has more desirable statistical properties because “when constructing a measure, one has to reconcile the theory-driven conceptualization of the measure with the desired statistical properties of the items comprising the measure as revealed by empirical testing” (Diamantopoulos and Sigauw 2006, 276).

The diversity in operational definitions of PSM limits the confidence in the findings and interpretation of any single study and the ability to replicate and build upon previous findings (Wright 2008). By defining PSM as a formative measurement model, we can develop a common operational definition and measure of PSM that can reduce the diversity and improve the cumulativeness of research and its application internationally.

## **Conclusion**

Building upon the research of Knoke and Wright-Isak (1982), Perry and Wise (1990) proposed that PSM was associated with three types of motives: affective, norm-based, and rational. These three categories provide a useful framework for understanding PSM, but they also have limitations: The rational motives consider the possibility of self-interested motives; and these categories do not distinguish between normative and affective motives. Thus the PSM construct needs to be improved conceptually. We propose that public service motives are based on self-sacrifice and can fall into three categories such as instrumental, value-based, and identification motives: The instrumental motives are related to behavior; the value-based motive to value and ethics; and the identification motives to attitude. Perry (1996) identified the four empirical dimensions of the PSM construct as attraction to public policy making, commitment to the public interest/civic duty, compassion, and self-sacrifice. However,

the four-dimension model has limitations. We propose that the dimensions of PSM construct be refined as attraction to public participation, commitment to public values, compassion, and self-sacrifice. We also suggest that developing more appropriate items for better discriminant validity of each dimension is essential for further research.

The consideration of the relationships between PSM and its dimensions shows that it is more reasonable to define PSM as a formative construct: first-order reflective and second-order formative. Assuming that a formative measurement model is appropriate, it is necessary to resolve the identification problem with the construct level error term. The best option for resolving this problem is to add two reflective indicators to the formative construct, when conceptually appropriate (Jarvis, MacKenzie and Podsakoff 2003). The two items tapping the overall level of PSM need to be developed.

For facilitating research internationally, the PSM construct needs to be improved conceptually and operationally (Perry and Hondeghem 2008c). It is necessary to develop a more universal concept that can be used globally and is more likely to generate cumulative knowledge. We have dealt with the issues of the conceptual composition and operational dimensionalities as well as the measurement model of PSM. The revisions to the construct and operationalizations of PSM will enhance cross-national research and comparison and generate cumulative knowledge internationally.

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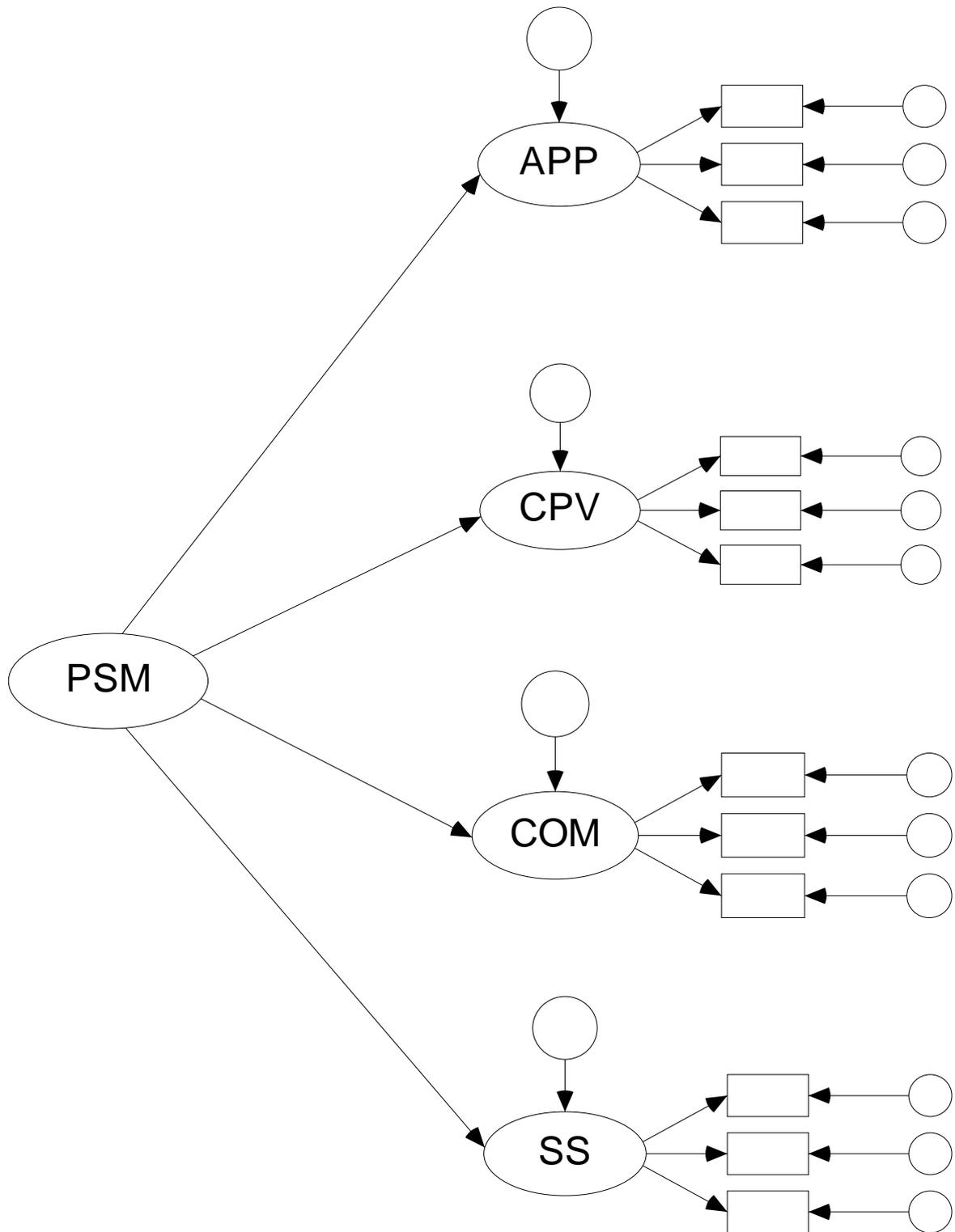
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**Figure 1**  
The Conceptual Components of PSM



**Figure 2**

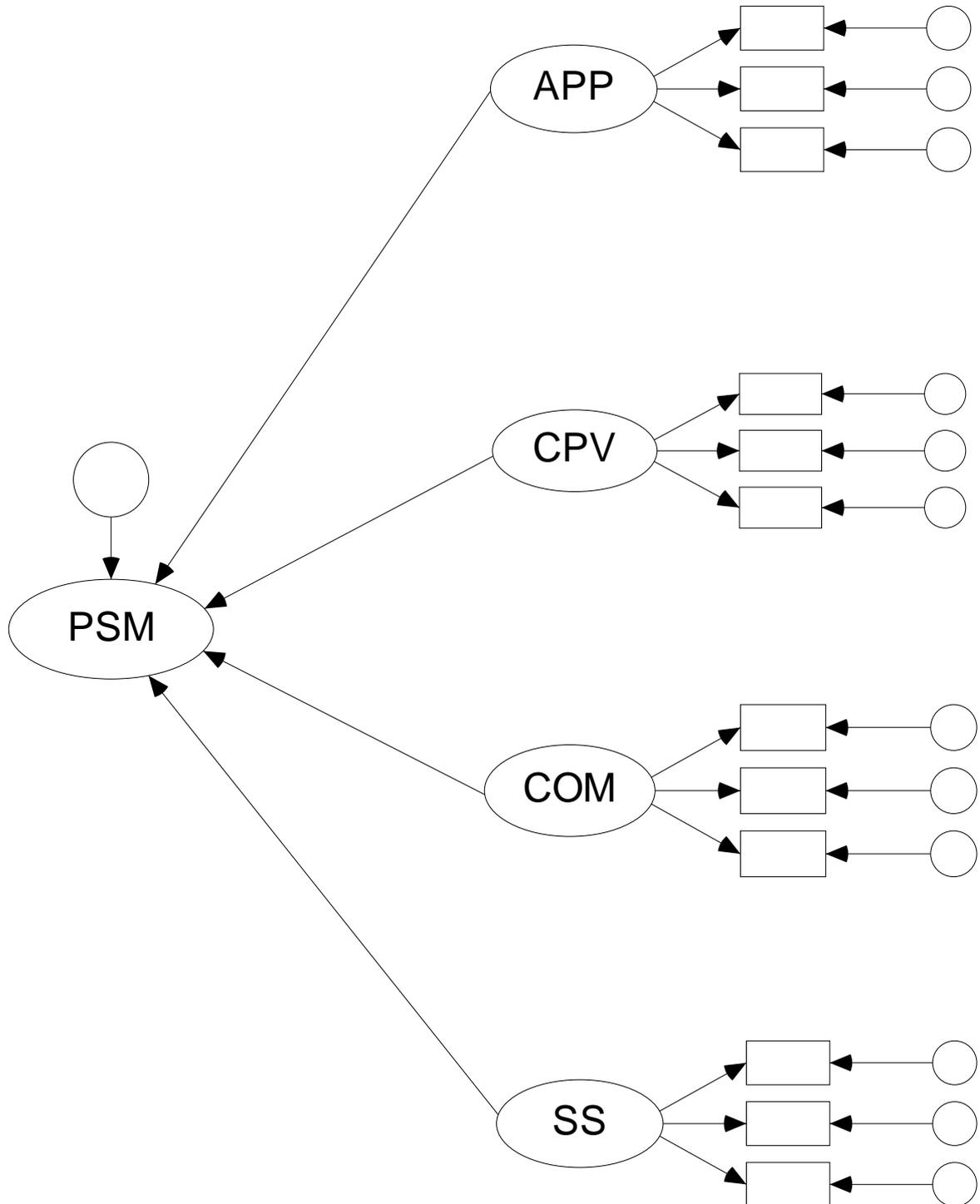
Type I: First-Order Reflective and Second-Order Reflective



Note. APP = Attraction to Public Participation, CPV = Commitment to Public Values, COM = Compassion, SS = Self-Sacrifice.

**Figure 3**

First-Order Reflective and Second-Order Formative



Note. APP = Attraction to Public Participation, CPV = Commitment to Public Values, COM = Compassion, SS = Self-Sacrifice.

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<sup>1</sup> PSM is an individual, not a sector-specific, concept (Brewer and Selden 1998). PSM is prevalent in the public sector, but it is different from public *sector* motivation or public *employee* motivation (Brewer 2002; Pandey, Wright and Moynihan 2008; Perry and Hondeghem 2008b). Public service motives are more likely to be found among those seeking public sector employment (Wise 2000) because the public sector provides individuals with superior opportunities to perform meaningful public service, and individuals who are attracted to public service are likely to self-select into the public sector (Brewer 2002; Perry 2000). However, the public sector has traditionally offered strong extrinsic motivators that might attract people to it, such as job security, power, prestige, career development, fringe benefits, pension, work-family balance, and so on. By definition, these extrinsic motivators of the public sector are not included in PSM. Public service motives may be found in any sector of employment (Wise 2000). Public service-motivated employees in the private sector may engage in positive extra-role behavior, especially when they perceive the organizational culture to underline values that fit in with their concern for others and for society at large (Steen 2008). Therefore, PSM does not cover all motives in the public sector, but it can be found among individuals in both the public domain and the private sector (Perry and Hondeghem 2008a).

<sup>2</sup> Rainey and Steinbauer (1999) refer to rational motives as instrumental motives.

<sup>3</sup> Some scholars have raised questions about the dimension of attraction to public policy making. DeHart-Davis, Marlowe, and Pandey (2006) say that attraction to policy making is a curious dimension of PSM, given that the public administration field was launched from the assumption of a “politics-administration dichotomy” that separated the workings of elected officials from those of bureaucrats. The dimension of attraction to policy making has not fared as well as others, with variance and path coefficients generally poorly accounted for (Perry 1996), partly because the items may tap dissatisfaction with politicians more than the idea of interest in public policy making (Coursey and Pandey 2007; Coursey, Perry, Brudney and Littlepage 2008). In two surveys, one of Maltese public

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officials and the other of Korean public servants, the factor loading of the attraction to policy making dimension on PSM as a superordinate multidimensional construct was markedly lower than for the others, and this dimension did not load meaningfully on the PSM construct (Camilleri 2006, Kim 2009b). The items of this dimension have little face validity as indicators of the dimension itself or of a rational motivational base (Kim, 2009b).

<sup>4</sup> Vandenabeele, Scheepers, and Hondeghem (2006) suggested such additional elements of PSM measurement scale as equality, service delivery, technical competence, and bureaucracy. Vandenabeele (2008b) included client-orientation, equality, and bureaucratic values in the PSM measurement scale. He also found a fifth dimension, labeled democratic governance, that includes accountability and traditional values of public service—“*les lois Rolland*”— such as permanence of the civil service, equity, neutrality and adaptation to circumstances. This dimension of democratic governance is related to the value-based motives.

<sup>5</sup> Some point out that there is considerable overlap between commitment to the public interest and self-sacrifice. The strong relationship between dimensions suggests considerable overlap between two of the three types of motives, as self-sacrifice represents affective motives and public interest represents normative motives (Wright and Pandey 2008). Although Perry (1996) introduced commitment to public interest as a normative form of PSM, it actually predicts affective organizational commitment more strongly than normative commitment. In the French context, commitment to the public interest seems to be an issue relative to the desire to serve others rather than the duty to serve others (Castaing 2006). Moynihan and Pandey (2007a) used an abbreviated version of the original scale, which focuses on attraction to policy making, because other measures of PSM or the larger scale failed to generate minimally acceptable Cronbach's alphas. The three items measuring commitment to the public interest subscale overlapped with those in the self-sacrifice subscale in the Australian public sector (Taylor

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2007). In Vandenabeele's (2008a) study with a sample of Belgian graduate students, commitment to public interest and self-sacrifice were collapsed into a single dimension. Leisink and Steijn (2009) performed a factor analysis with data from the Dutch public sector, and then only two factors came out of analysis: The dominant factor was formed by all items measuring commitment to the public interest plus one item of compassion and one of self-sacrifice; and the other was formed by the three items measuring attraction to policy making.

<sup>6</sup> Some have questioned the validity of the compassion dimension. Moynihan and Pandey (2007b) didn't employ the compassion dimension in their analysis because the scale employed for this dimension had a Cronbach's alpha of .40, below minimally acceptable standards. The reliability coefficients of this dimension were reported as .55 (DeHart-Davis, Marlowe and Pandey 2006) and .65 (Vandenabeele 2008a). This dimension could not be validated in the United States (Wright and Pandey 2005) and was also unconfirmed in the Chinese context (Liu, Tang and Zhu 2008). It has no unique correlation with individual performance when controlling for the other dimensions of PSM in Belgium (Vandenabeele 2009).

<sup>7</sup> It is recommended to change negatively worded items to positively worded ones. Colosi (2005) reported that respondents appear confused with the negatively worded items and report inconsistent data for those items. The use of negatively worded questions, a technique to correct for acquiescence, may introduce new error.

<sup>8</sup> James L. Perry suggested these points through personal communication (December 1, 2008).

<sup>9</sup> Some scholars have eliminated the self-sacrifice dimension from the PSM measurement scale. Scott and Pandey (2005) excluded the dimension of self-sacrifice largely because of its conceptual similarity to the dimension of compassion. Coursey and Pandey (2007) eliminated the self-sacrifice dimension because this dimension is not based on supporting theory. Moynihan and Pandey (2007b) excluded

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questions pertaining to the self-sacrifice dimension largely because it was not included in the original conception of PSM and because it is conceptually similar to and overlaps with the compassion dimension.