EXAMINING SHORT-TERM STABILITY IN MOTIVATION FOR WORK IN PUBLIC SERVICE

A thesis presented to the faculty of the Graduate School of Western Carolina University in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in Psychology.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

ABSTRACT

EXAMINING SHORT-TERM STABILITY IN MOTIVATION FOR WORK IN PUBLIC SERVICE

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Numerous studies have demonstrated that public service motivation (PSM) is positively associated with various work-related outcomes such as performance, commitment, and satisfaction. However, recent research has begun to question whether PSM influences or is influenced by these workplace factors. The construct has historically been conceptualized as a trait-like characteristic of an individual. This trend of research has demonstrated that PSM can be affected by workplace experiences, like exposure to and internalization of values held by others, but these findings illustrate only long-term effects. Factors that can influence an immediate change in levels of PSM have yet to be investigated. Demonstrating that PSM can be immediately influenced may indicate that the construct also contains state-like qualities. The present research therefore sought to test the short-term stability of PSM with experimental manipulation meant to influence participants' regard for public service values. Participants were exposed to one of three video conditions and then asked to complete Perry's (1996) PSM instrument. Analysis found little substantial evidence that PSM was affected in the short-term by the experimental manipulation. The lack of significant findings is discussed in terms of limitations that extend to PSM research in general. The author suggests that the present research was limited by issues of content and construct validity. There seemed to be a mismatch between

the instrument and sample used for the study and, more importantly, the results did not provide

evidence that the latent construct of motivation was assessed by the instrument. Suggestions for

future PSM research are provided and the author also proposes a framework for further research

investigating the stability of the construct.

INTRODUCTION

Motivation is a commonly used word that refers to a feeling that almost everyone experiences. For an average person, though, it is seldom acknowledged as an intricate theoretical construct used to explain behavior. As Maehr and Meyer assert, motivation "is a word that is part of the popular culture as few other psychological concepts are" (1997, p. 371). Indeed, claims of what motivates people (for work, exercise, waking up, etc.) and what keeps them motivated are popular topics in magazines and media, but these reports likely scratch the surface of a mountain of complexities. These reports help illustrate the ubiquity of the concept, but research helps lead to a deeper level of understanding. The study of motivation should be considered important and meaningful because its effects can be felt in nearly all aspects of our lives. One such aspect in which motivation has clear and particular importance is the motivation for work.

The motivation for work has widespread implications and plays an important role in influencing workplace behavior and performance (Jex & Britt, 2008). Having or gaining the motivation for work should therefore benefit the employer as well as the employee. Its well-recognized significance has prompted many researchers to investigate the sources of work motivation, among many other factors. A match in strengths and values between employee and employer has received substantial support as a potential source. Employees who believe that an organization holds values and interests similar to their own are more satisfied, have higher performance ratings, and are less likely to leave the organization (Bright, 2008; Steijn, 2008; Vandenabeele, 2009). Accordingly, similar research demonstrates the benefits for employees as well as employers when the individual finds his work to be meaningful and fulfilling (Dik,

Eldridge, & Steger, 2012; Steger & Dik, 2010; Yeoman, 2014). Researchers typically find that those who find their work meaningful tend to also find it intrinsically motivating (Chalofsky & Vijay, 2009). Intrinsic motivation is in contrast to extrinsic motivation, both of which refer to the types of rewards that motivate a person. The differentiation between intrinsic and extrinsic motivation suggests that different people can be equally motivated by different things (Chalofsky & Vijay, 2009). Extrinsic rewards are usually tangible or physically given to a person (e.g., salary raise, benefits, etc.). On the other hand, intrinsic motivation is driven by rewards that are intrinsic to the person (e.g., sense of meaningfulness, personal fulfillment, etc.). One particular area in which intrinsic motivation is thought to play an important role is work in public service. This intrinsic drive for public service work is commonly referred to as public service motivation.

Public service motivation (PSM) is a theoretical construct measuring individual disposition that is used in public administration research to predict a large variety of work-related outcomes. In any occupational setting, it is important to have an idea of what type of personal characteristics are consistently associated with factors such as production, efficiency, motivation, and overall satisfaction or well-being. As Kjeldsen and Jacobsen (2013) assert, "[m]atching organizational and employee characteristics is crucial for the success of organizations" (p. 899). Especially in highly competitive markets, knowing which particular dispositions tend to lead to the highest level of performance could determine the difference between a company's success and its failure. Literature on PSM unravels some of these associations, focusing on person characteristics that are best suited for public service work.

However, recent findings in the literature have brought into question the stability of PSM, demonstrating that levels are susceptible to change over a period of time. This change is suggested to be the result of individual experience at work and exposure to values and beliefs

held by others. These work-related factors have been demonstrated to influence PSM by several

researchers (Coursey, Perry, Brudney, & Littlepage, 2008; Quratulain & Khan, 2015;

Vandenabeele, 2011). Finding that PSM can be affected by workplace experiences presents

potential problems for research on the construct. For example, using a particular variable to

predict ideal performance in a certain environment is not likely to remain accurate if the levels of

that variable are inconsistent over time. One of the many ways PSM research is applied is

recruitment for public programs. If PSM levels are liable to ebb and flow, then recruitment

based on these levels is not likely to be consistently effective. Furthermore, these measures are

meant to reflect the level of a person's motivation for public service. So, if a person's level of

PSM is malleable, as these findings suggest, then the indication is that experience can affect an

individual's motivation. By demonstrating this effect, the conceptualization of PSM as an

inherent and stable quality of a person, as it has traditionally been viewed in research, is put into

question. Offering evidence of PSM malleability has influenced research questions in a new

direction, which is addressed shortly.

However, one limitation to assumptions based on the findings of the previously cited

studies is the span of time over which each was conducted. These findings demonstrate a change

in PSM over a fairly long period of time (>6 months), but potential sources of *immediate* change

are not investigated. The sources of change demonstrated, though, may apply in the short-term

as well. Findings by Kjeldsen and Jacobsen (2013) and Vandenabeele (2011) demonstrate that

work experience in public service influences higher levels of PSM in contrast to work in private

organizations. This difference could be the result of exposure to and internalization of public

service values (or lack thereof). Internalized values should be held in high regard by the

individual. Therefore, the current study investigates short-term malleability of PSM and asks the

3

principle question: Can levels of PSM be *immediately* affected by influencing an individual's regard for public service values?

Public Service Motivation (PSM)

Public service motivation is defined as "an individual's predisposition to respond to motives grounded primarily or uniquely in public institutions and organizations" (Perry & Wise, 1990, p. 368). The concept was introduced by Rainey (1982) and was elaborated in an influential paper by Perry and Wise (1990). It stands as an important construct in public administration literature that is thought to be characteristic of a person and involves intrinsic motivation and high regard for public service values. Existing literature finds that public and private managers tend to report comparable levels of overall motivation, though there are clear differences in extrinsic rewards (Perry & Wise, 1990; Rainey, 1982). This type of finding inspired researchers like Knoke and Wright-Isak (1982) and Perry and Wise (1990) to ask if there are specific motives linked with public service and, if so, what are they?

The term "motives" is used in this context to describe psychological needs or compulsions. Knoke and Wright-Isak (1982) suggest that the motives involved in PSM fall into three distinct categories: rational, norm-based, and affective. Rational motives refer to actions intended to maximize our own usefulness, or reach our full potential. Norm-based motives refer to actions that are fueled by an effort to conform to a certain norm. Lastly, affective motives refer to thoughts or actions that are the result of an emotional response to the social environment (Knoke & Wright-Isak, 1982). PSM is thought to be driven by certain and unique motives that can be delineated by these three categories.

Rational Motives

Although motives for public service are characteristically thought of as entirely altruistic, some literature acknowledges motives that are rational in nature (Perry & Wise, 1990). Kelman (1987) suggests that people may be drawn to government and other public institutions in order to help establish a better public policy. Some individuals would undoubtedly find this work exciting and fulfilling. Furthermore, *public policy making* could lead individuals to an improved self-image and a feeling of great importance. Another proposed rational motive is *commitment to a public program* (Perry & Wise, 1990). If an individual feels a sense of personal identification with a public program, that person may be motivated to work due to this feeling of commitment. While serving social interests, these motives are rational in that they also satisfy personal needs.

Norm-Based Motives

A norm-based motive for public service that is frequently recognized is a *desire to serve the public interest*. Though this desire at times reflects a personal opinion, it is generally thought of as essentially altruistic. This motive is characterized by an employee who is dedicated to serving the public and not interested in any personal gains possibly resulting from his work. Another norm-based motive proposed by Perry and Wise (1990) is *social equity*, which involves intentions to improve the well-being of underprivileged or underrepresented minority groups. Motives such as *desire to serve the public interest* and *social equity* are influenced by a basic human need to conform to cultural or social norms.

Affective Motives

Affective motives stem from an emotional trigger and include *commitment to a program* as well as *patriotism*. Commitment to a public program is thought to be generated by personal

identification with the program or a "genuine conviction about its social importance" (Perry &

Wise, 1990, p. 369). Patriotism is thought to provide motivation to protect and serve the people

within our country and also involves a willingness to *sacrifice* for others (Fredrickson & Hart,

1985). Commitment and patriotism are thought to originate from an emotional reaction that

leads to the motivation to act.

Public Service Motivation Research

Research in this field typically measures levels of PSM to demonstrate its effect on

various work-related outcomes (Bright, 2007; 2008; 2013; Christensen & Wright, 2011; Kim,

2012). A common point of emphasis in the literature is distinguishing between those who

choose to work in the public sector and those who choose to work in the private sector. The

public sector represents part of our economy in which goods and services are provided by

federal, state, or local government organizations. Operating funds for producing and distributing

goods and services are provided by government. The private sector represents part of our

economy in which goods and services are provided by individuals and businesses that are not

under direct government control. Private-sector organizations operate for profit which benefits

owners and shareholders. Examples of public-sector jobs are government and public

management positions, while examples of private-sector jobs are businessmen and stockbrokers.

Individuals who choose public-sector jobs are generally thought to be higher in PSM and more

motivated by intrinsic rewards such as the gratification of making a difference. On the other

hand, those who choose private-sector jobs are thought to be lower in PSM and more motivated

by extrinsic rewards such as an increase in salary or benefits (Carpenter, Doverspike, & Miguel,

2012; Crewson, 1997). Public and private sector organizations have clear differences in the

types of rewards that are offered by each. The knowledge of the potential rewards that can be

6

gained by an individual is thought to influence his decision. Additionally, those who choose to work for non-profit or non-governmental organizations (NGO) tend to be higher in PSM than those who choose to work in private organizations (Carpenter et al., 2012). The differences in PSM between employees in private organizations versus those in public or non-governmental organizations could be influenced by a difference in values, or regard for values related to public service (e.g., facilitation of under-provided services for the good of the public).

The differences between employees of different sectors was not tested empirically until Perry (1996) was able to establish that those employed in the public sector tended to differ from those employed in the private sector on four proposed dimensions: *Compassion, Self-Sacrifice, Commitment to Public Interest* (or *Civic Duty*), and *Attraction to Public Policymaking*. Each of these four dimensions is thought to fall into one of the previously mentioned categories of motives. *Civic Duty, Compassion*, and *Self-Sacrifice* are associated with affective and normative motives, while *Attraction to Public Policymaking* is associated with rational motives. In his 1996 study, Perry created an instrument to measure overall PSM as well as these facets. As the concept gained popularity, Perry's (1996) instrument, measuring four dimensions with 24 items, became the primary measurement technique used in research.

Perry (1996) initially suggested a 40-item scale measuring six dimensions (proposed by Perry and Wise, 1990), but through confirmatory factor analysis discovered the four facets on which most items loaded parsimoniously and eliminated items that did not. This resulted in the heavily used, 24-item questionnaire which has been found to be highly reliable (alpha = .85; Clerkin, Paynter, & Taylor, 2009). This original instrument uses a five-point Likert-type scale ranging from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree." Eight questions are combined to assess *Compassion*, another eight assess *Self-Sacrifice*, five assess *Commitment to the Public Interest*

(or *Civic Duty*), and the final three assess *Attraction to Public Policy Making*. An example of a question assessing *Compassion* is: "I am often reminded by daily events about how dependent we are on one another." The full instrument is included in Appendix A.

Though there have been some criticisms of Perry's (1996) original scale (Alonso & Lewis, 2001; Coursey & Pandey, 2007; Kim, 2009), they typically cite measurement issues with societies outside of the United States. Many other measurement techniques also include a different number of dimensions than Perry's (1996) proposed four (Kim, 2005; Vandenabeele, 2011). Given that the focus of the study was to investigate change in levels of PSM, the inclusion of underlying dimensions allowed for exploring the latent motives that potentially contributed to influencing any observed change. Researchers have suggested that the dimensions of *Compassion* and *Self-Sacrifice* fall into the category of affective motives. Motives that are affective in nature may be more susceptible to short-term change, as they are thought to generate from an emotional reaction. For these reasons, Perry's (1996) original instrument was chosen for use in the present study, as the original four dimensions can be grounded in theory by Perry and Wise (1990), allowing a strong framework for explaining results.

Largely using Perry's (1996) instrument, PSM has received a lot of attention in public administration. The most commonly studied outcomes of PSM are commitment, job performance, and satisfaction (Quratulain & Khan, 2015), but connections have also been found with volunteer activity, family relations, and economic factors (Clerkin, Paynter, & Taylor, 2009) as well as with job characteristics and job satisfaction (Taylor, 2014). Clerkin, Paynter, and Taylor (2009) found that undergraduate students with higher levels of PSM are more likely to engage in charitable activities like volunteering and donating. They also found positive correlations with these activities and individual characteristics such as family income, religiosity,

family socialization, and high school volunteering experiences. Taylor (2014) demonstrated that employees with high levels of PSM working in public organizations tend to report high levels of job satisfaction. While connections with satisfaction have often been found, a great deal of PSM research is also concerned with job performance.

A major tenet of the research is that the greater an individual's PSM, the more likely the individual will seek membership in a public-sector organization. The idea that PSM leads to participation in public service has seen mixed empirical results. Oldham and Hackman (1981) were able to support this connection with their findings, but more recent research has found little to no evidence that PSM is linked to post-graduate employment in the public sector (Perry, Hondeghem, & Wise, 2009; Wright & Christensen, 2010). Taking this a step further, researchers like Perry and Wise (1990) argue that PSM should also lead to greater *performance* in public service: "The level and type of an individual's public service motivation and the motivational composition of a public organization's workforce have been posited to influence individual job choice, job performance, and organizational effectiveness" (p. 370). Thus, PSM is thought to lead to greater individual performance as well as organizational performance. Perry and Wise (1990) would likely argue that higher level of performance is the result of responding to motives grounded primarily in this type of institution, according to their definition of PSM.

However, various researchers have offered slightly differing definitions of PSM (Perry & Porter, 1982; Rainey & Steinbauer, 1999; Vandenabeele, 2007) and some also suggest measurement techniques different from Perry's (1996) scale (Alonso & Lewis, 2001; Coursey & Pandey, 2007; Kim, 2009; Ward, 2014). For example, Perry and Hondeghem (2008) define PSM as the motivation to "do good for others and shape the well-being of society" (p. 3). Many of the different techniques for measuring PSM include subtracting old or adding new dimensions

within the overall construct (Kim, 2005; Vandenabeele, 2008). Kim (2005) questions the validity of the dimension of *Attraction to Public Policymaking*, and Vandenabeele (2008) suggests the addition of a dimension of *Democratic Governance*. In nearly all PSM research, though, the theoretical rationale is based on arguments made by Perry and Wise (1990) and Perry's (1996) article introducing the original instrument. Research questions and directions, on the other hand, have seen larger changes.

A recent trend in the literature cites studies that have demonstrated, sometimes unintentionally, that PSM levels can be affected by certain experiences. This stream of research investigates predictors of PSM, instead of treating the construct as an independent variable that affects or predicts certain outcomes (Moynihan & Pandey, 2007; Wright & Grant, 2010; Wright, Moynihan, & Pandey, 2012). Coursey, Perry, Brudney, and Littlepage (2008) sought to verify Perry's (1996) instrument psychometrically and subsequently found that participation in a volunteer program during college was significantly related to levels of PSM. Specifically, college students who had participated in a volunteer program during their undergraduate education scored significantly higher on Perry's (1996) instrument than those who did not have the volunteer experience. This finding builds on previous research by Gabris and Simo (1995), who found that employees of non-profit organizations exhibited a higher need to serve their communities than employees in the public or private sectors. Aside from volunteer experience, Quratulain and Khan (2015) propose that an employee's level of PSM is affected by his work experiences as well as his perceptions of the organization at which he is employed. Quratulain and Khan (2015) actually suggest that the perceived fit of the person with the organization should predict the level of PSM rather than using PSM as a predictor of organizational fit. Suggesting the opposite direction for this type of correlation indicates a shift in thinking in the

literature. This recent trend focuses on attempting to understand the mechanisms that can shape or reduce an individual's PSM.

PSM has historically been used as an independent variable to predict a number of important outcomes. This recent research has begun to investigate predictors of PSM (Moynihan & Pandey, 2007; Wright & Grant, 2010; Wright, Moynihan, & Pandey, 2012), as well as sources that influence a person's level of PSM (Brewer & Ritz, 2013; Quratulain & Khan, 2015; Vandenabeele, 2011). Much of this research documents the role of organizational, structural, and cultural factors as well as the influence of work experiences. Vandenabeele (2011) found substantial evidence that exposure to public service values through coworkers and direct supervisors "seems to socialize individuals into internalizing public values themselves, thus engendering a higher degree of public service motivation" (p. 101). Notably, Kjeldsen and Jacobsen (2013) found that while PSM does not predict attraction to nor employment in public or private organizations, the type of organization actually moderates a change in PSM. This study demonstrated that upon job entry, PSM levels drop sharply, but this decline is significantly less severe for public-sector employees in comparison to private-sector employees. These findings suggest that values held by an organization can be internalized by employees of the organization. A public employee may experience exposure to public service values through his work and subsequently internalize and highly regard those values. This sequence of events seems to influence higher levels of PSM for such employees.

The idea that PSM levels can be affected by experiences that are likely to occur at work could have significant implications for applied research and practice and is the primary inspiration for the current study. However, though emphasized in contemporary research, the idea that levels of PSM may be susceptible to change is not necessarily a recent notion. In what

11

is considered a seminal article, Perry and Wise (1990) state that "…public service motivation should be understood as a dynamic attribute that changes over time and, therefore, may change an individual's willingness to join and to stay with a public organization" (p. 370). Given that the "dynamic" nature of the construct is clearly stated in one of the most commonly cited articles on the topic, it has remained relatively unacknowledged until fairly recently.

As mentioned, previous research has demonstrated the malleability of PSM levels over long periods of time (e.g. Coursey et al., 2008; Gabris & Simo, 1995; Quratulain & Khan, 2015). While these are certainly substantial findings, a decrease in motivation over a long period of time could reflect a slow, steady decline. A gradual decline in levels of motivation may be a natural occurrence. Though deviating from the traditional viewpoint of PSM as a stable predictor, these findings are still framed by the conceptualization that the motivation for public service is inherent in a person, or has predominately trait-like qualities. Demonstrating a significant increase or decrease in motivation over a very short period of time may signify that the construct also involves state-like qualities. Given that PSM is thought to have some underlying motives that are affective in nature (*Compassion* and *Self-Sacrifice*), hypothesizing a state-like quality of the construct does not deviate from theory (Perry & Wise, 1990). Furthermore, the possibility of a significant increase or decrease in motivation over a very short period of time may have different implications than a change over a long period of time. For example, state-like qualities of PSM may affect day-to-day performance, while trait-like qualities affect a performance evaluation over a fiscal year. While the long-term performance is probably more likely to be used for evaluation, the measure reflects average performance over the year. Day-to-day performance may demonstrate a pattern that could be reflective of different strategies or policy implementations used throughout the year by the organization. The effectiveness of such

12

strategies or policies would therefore possibly be better measured in terms of day-to-day performance. Thus, as PSM is used to predict work-related outcomes, demonstrating its state-like qualities may broaden its utility.

The present study therefore sought to investigate the short-term malleability of PSM due to exposure to public service values. Immediate change in PSM should reflect the presence of state-like qualities of the construct. The present research hypothesizes that (1) participants exposed to a video meant to elicit high regard for public service values (High Regard condition) would report higher levels of PSM immediately afterwards than participants exposed to a control video, and that (2) those exposed to a video meant to elicit low regard for public service values (Low Regard condition) would report lower levels of PSM than those in the control condition. Though the inclusion of the underlying dimensions was primarily exploratory, an argument can be made that state-like qualities of PSM may theoretically stem from its affective motives. Therefore, additionally hypothesized is that (3) any observed changes in overall PSM will be influenced mostly by changes in the dimensions of *Compassion* and *Self-Sacrifice*.

METHODS

Participants

Because assessment of levels of PSM may be most important at the college age, given that recent graduates are a commonly targeted demographic for recruitment to public programs, we felt that undergraduate students were the most appropriate subject pool. Previous authors have argued that recent graduates entering the labor market make ideal subjects when examining the dynamics related to job choice, because this point in time represents the intersection of education and occupation (Lau & Pang, 1995). Also, several previously mentioned studies argue a case for work experiences shaping levels of PSM (e.g., Brewer & Ritz, 2013; Quratulain & Khan, 2015; Vandenabeele, 2011), so by including only undergraduates, this effect should be minimized. Participants consisted of undergraduate students attending a small regional institution in the southeastern United States. Out of the 123 respondents, the average age was 19.7 years old and participants were 66.7% female. Table 1 illustrates the demographic information of our sample.

Table 1. Characteristics of Survey Respondents (N = 118)

	N	%
Gender		
Male	36	30.5%
Female	82	69.5%
Average Age	19.7	
Ethnicity		
White	104	88.1%
Black/African American	7	5.9%
Hispanic/Latino	4	3.4%
American Indian	4	3.4%
Asian	1	0.8%
Average Volunteer Hours (in the past year)	4.05	

Measures

As mentioned, to measure PSM, Perry's (1996) original instrument was used. The instrument consists of 24 items on a 5-point Likert-type scale. Of the 24 items, nine are reverse coded to detect subjects mechanically responding the same to every item. The range of mean scores overall and for each dimension is therefore one to five, with higher scores indicating a higher level of public service motivation. Previous research has found the questionnaire to be highly reliable (alpha = .85; Clerkin, Paynter, & Taylor, 2009). The full instrument is included in Appendix A.

To manipulate regard for public service values, three videos were chosen after an extensive online search. The videos that served as experimental conditions were selected with thorough consideration of the motives theorized to underlie public service motivation. For the condition attempting to influence higher regard for public service values (High Regard), videos involving acts of compassion and self-sacrifice were sampled. The video clip that was selected for this condition shows teenagers painting graffiti on a wall in an alley, presumably in a large city. A storeowner yells at the teenagers, who run off laughing, and the storeowner looks sadly at the defaced wall on the side of his store. A much younger and smaller boy sees the storeowner, later returns with buckets of paint, and begins painting over the graffiti-covered wall. A passerby sees the boy and proceeds to help a stranger in a different but similarly altruistic manner (as if he internalized the values the boy held). The video follows a chain of compassionate acts as each is observed by a passerby who then continues the chain. The video finishes with people flooding from the streets into the alley with buckets of paint to help the boy paint over the entire wall. Altruism and contributing to the greater good are values related to

public service. Exposure to the benefits of these values was meant to raise participants' regard for such values.

For the condition attempting to influence lower regard for public service values, videos were sampled that devalued the usefulness of public programs. While several involved the abuse of public programs, like fraud in programs that provide food stamps and other funding for the poor or underprivileged, the video that was selected involves government spending. The video clip presents 25 government expenditures that have very little importance and are seemingly very costly. For example, one reported expenditure was stated: "$10,000 of U.S. taxpayer money was actually used to purchase talking urinal cakes in Michigan." Stating these types of expenditures puts the values of the funding organizations into question. This exposure was meant to lower participants' regard for public service values. For the control condition, a video was chosen with no message and neutral emotionality. This video clip informed viewers about the voice actors for the video game called Street Fighter.

The videos ultimately chosen to serve as experimental conditions can be found on http://www.youtube.com and are entitled: "Video that will change your life. I have no words left" (TheCorpfa, 2013), "25 Of The Most Baffling Ways The American Government Is Spending Its Money" (list25, 2014), and "Street Fighter Characters – Did You Know Voice Acting?" (Niosi, 2014). These conditions will be referred to as High Regard, Low Regard, and Control, respectively. Each video was embedded into the Qualtrics section in full screen, so video titles were hidden from viewers. Embedding the videos also kept advertisements and suggested videos from appearing at any point.

Procedure

Students at the university who are enrolled in an introductory psychology class participate in psychological research as part of the class requirements. This is carried out through an online participation system, which was used to collect participants for this study. Though signing up to participate in research is a requirement for the class, students are made aware that consenting to actually participate is entirely voluntary and that if they feel uncomfortable, they may choose not to consent and still receive credit for signing up. Upon registering for participation through the university's system, respondents were explicitly informed of the voluntary nature of their participation in this research and were also ensured of the confidentiality of their responses.

Using survey software provided by Qualtrics, a company contracted with the university, a questionnaire was created for participants to complete online. The first section provided participants information regarding the outline of the study, what they could expect to see, and how they may benefit from participating. This page also included informed consent, and only those who chose to participate and declared so continued into the questionnaire. The next section included demographic questions and then participants went on to watch one of three videos. Qualtrics software allowed for random assignment of participants to one of the three video conditions, so that all three were equally represented. Immediately after the watching the video, all participants completed Perry's (1996) PSM instrument. Upon completion of Perry's (1996) instrument, respondents were told the survey was finished and were thanked for their participation.

RESULTS

To create a score for each dimension within the overall construct of PSM, the scores for the questions regarding each dimension were combined and averaged to create overall scores for PSM-Compassion, PSM-Self-Sacrifice, PSM-Civic Duty, and PSM-Attraction. Scores for the entire instrument were combined to create a score of overall PSM, or PSM-Total. Subjects with a missing response on no more than one item have been assigned the mean value of the other respondents on that item. Using Cronbach's alpha (Cronbach, 1951) as a measure of internal consistency, the instrument demonstrated good reliability, with alpha = .837 for the overall scale. The subscales showed variability, with alpha = .650 for PSM-Compassion, alpha = .819 for PSM-Self-Sacrifice, alpha = .745 for PSM-Civic Duty, and alpha = .611 for PSM-Attraction. Though some of these measures are below the generally accepted guidelines for indication of reliability (alpha > .70; Frankfort-Nachimas & Nachimas, 1999), they are consistent with measures found in previous research (Clerkin et al., 2009).

The mean score overall and for each dimension is reported for ease of interpretation, with closer to one indicating a low score and closer to five a high score. Across all conditions, the mean score for PSM-Total was 3.45 (SD = .45), PSM-Compassion was 3.41 (SD = .56), PSM-Self-Sacrifice was 3.77 (SD = .62), PSM-Civic Duty was 3.47 (SD = .67), and PSM-Attraction was 2.64 (SD = .77). As this indicates, with all conditions collapsed, participants responded most to the *Self-Sacrifice* (affective) motive and least to the *Attraction to Public Policymaking* (rational) motive. Responses on items relating to *Attraction to Public Policymaking* also had the largest range (means ranging from 1.0 to 5.0) and were the most variable (SD = .77). This was to be expected, as this is generally the dimension chosen to exclude in many instrument revisions

18

(e.g., Kim, 2009). The descriptive statistics for the PSM measures are reported also reported in

Table 2.

Table 2. Public Service Motivation (PSM) Descriptive Statistics (N = 118)

PSM Measure	M	SD	Min.	Max.
Compassion	3.41	.67	1.75	4.88
Self-Sacrifice	3.77	.62	2.00	5.00
Civic Duty	3.47	.67	1.80	5.00
Attraction to Public Policy	2.64	.77	1.00	5.00
Overall PSM	3.45	.45	2.50	4.67

The random assignment of participants to conditions resulted in a fairly equal

distribution, with High Regard condition receiving N = 41, Low Regard condition receiving N =

35, and Control condition receiving N = 41. A one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was

used to analyze differences between the groups on scores for PSM-Total, PSM-Compassion,

PSM-Self-Sacrifice, PSM-Civic Duty, and PSM-Attraction. Differences in mean scores for

overall PSM between the conditions were found to be negligible (F = 1.35, ns). This remained

true with a three-dimension design that excluded items regarding PSM-Attraction from analysis.

However, a significant difference was found in scores for one dimension: PSM-Compassion (F

= 3.41, p = .036). One-way ANOVA results are illustrated in Table 3.

Table 3. ANOVA Results (df = 2, 115)

	Mean Square	F	Sig.
PSM-Total	.224	1.096	.338
PSM-Compassion	1.030	**3.408**	**.036**
PSM-Self-Sacrifice	.113	.291	.748
PSM-Civic Duty	.085	.185	.831
PSM-Attraction	.216	.360	.699

Using Tukey's honestly significant difference test (Tukey, 1953) for *post hoc* analysis,

multiple comparisons in scores within PSM-Compassion reveal a significant difference between

High Regard and Low Regard (mean difference of .31, p < .05), but no substantial difference

between High Regard and Control (mean difference of .051, ns) or Low Regard and Control (mean difference of -.259, ns). Additionally, a measure of effect size (Cohen, 1966) determined that the observed differences were of little practical significance (eta-squared = .06), suggesting that for a sample of this size, even the statistically significant difference that was discovered is substantively trivial.

DISCUSSION

This study sought to demonstrate short-term change in levels of PSM as the result of

influencing regard for public service values. The panel allowed for investigation of the

malleability of the construct in an important demographic in terms of application. The results

provide little substantial evidence to support the hypotheses, though the study design was

methodologically sound. While differences in overall PSM were not found between

experimental conditions, a significant difference was discovered in one underlying facet. The

results reveal that participants in the High Regard condition scored significantly higher on PSM-

Compassion items than those in the Low Regard condition. This finding offers evidence that the

present manipulation was not enough to affect the level of motivation for public service in

general, but regard for public service values may immediately influence underlying motives

related to *Compassion*. As *Compassion* is an affective motive, this result is not unexpected.

Importantly, this result could indicate that PSM has state-like qualities as opposed to being a

trait-like characteristic of a person. However, given the poor reliability of the subscale as well as

the effect size for the finding, there is shaky grounding for such an assumption.

Additionally, low subscale reliability was not just a problem for PSM-Compassion.

Though the reliability for the total instrument was good (alpha = .84), subscale reliabilities were

quite poor (alpha = .61 for PSM-Attraction), indicating that a large amount of individual

variation was not picked up by the instrument. While these reliabilities are fairly consistent with

previous studies, it suggests that Perry's (1996) instrument was the wrong tool for the job. This

instrument is likely not designed to be used for a sample of predominately white, female,

college-aged students. These students probably do not have extensive work experience and may

21

not be aware of how they are affected by public programs. There are also several items that

involve contributions to the community and it is not entirely clear whether the students identify

with the community of the university, the community of their parents', or possibly not at all.

This type of item therefore may not apply to this audience. Perry's (1996) instrument has been

used to demonstrate differences between people already employed in public versus private

organizations, but as mentioned, scores on Perry's (1996) instrument can be affected by work

experiences, so there are numerous factors that could be involved in creating these differences.

The instrument is not as effective at predicting employment in one sector versus the other or at

picking up differences in individuals who may soon seek employment in one or the other. For

these reasons, some of the limitations of the current study are in essence an issue of content

validity—Perry's (1996) instrument did not fit the sample that was used.

There are other issues with the present study that potentially larger implications, and

those issues regard construct validity. The results of the present research do not provide

substantial evidence that motivation was actually assess by Perry's (1996) instrument. As Ward

(2014) suggests, the continuous research on PSM is perhaps complicating the conceptualization

of concept rather than clarifying it. Suggesting various dimensions underpinning PSM may be

further confusing a concept that already lacks empirical evidence on its theoretical foundations

(Vandenabeele, 2008). Furthermore, the original dimensions proposed by Perry (1996) were

generated via factor analysis of scores on his instrument, and dimensions were labeled based on

factor loadings of particular items. The possibility that the dimensions of PSM may apply in

measurement but not in concept may represent a problem with the construct as a whole. The

motivation for public service is a theoretical concept that is not directly observed. Does Perry's

(1996) instrument assess the latent construct of motivation, or something else?

The construct that is measured by instruments like Perry's (1996) is perhaps better conceptualized as a combination of personal characteristics and values that have often been correlated with employment, satisfaction, and/or performance in public service occupations. This is a notion that could be supported by the present findings—no change was demonstrated in overall PSM because personal characteristics should not have been affected. Motivation, though, is not a stable, trait-like characteristic. It involves an interaction of internal (e.g., traits, values, affect) and external (e.g., environment, situation) factors. People gain and lose motivation for various reasons, some of which are better understood than others. As Festinger (1957) famously argued, we are motivated to behave in a manner consistent with our held beliefs and values, as inconsistency causes tension and discomfort. So, we should be motivated for work that enables us to remain consistent with our cognitions. Therefore, it follows logically that an individual who holds values consistent with those of a public organization should have motivation for work in that organization. However, the present author argues that this motivation is not what is measured by Perry's (1996) instrument, and is therefore not accurately represented by the current study's results.

If instruments intended to measure PSM are in fact measuring values and characteristics that fall in line with those of a typical public organization (or public service work in general), then they may have use in assessing person-organization fit. Person-organization (P-O) fit is a topic with many similarities to PSM that has also inspired substantial research (e.g., Bright, 2007; Cable & Judge, 1996; Steijn, 2008). Following the argument that people seek consistency, a high level of P-O fit should lead to motivation for work in that organization. Indeed, Carpenter, Doverspike, and Miguel (2012) found that perception of fit with a public organization was a better predictor of attraction to public service work than a measure of PSM. In terms of

applying a construct like PSM to recruitment to a public organization, finding individuals with views consistent with those of the organization seems to be more efficient than attempting to determine which individuals are highly motivated for the work. As consistency in values should lead to motivation, using P-O fit instead of PSM to recruit employees to public service could be more effective and straightforward.

Adopting this perspective, P-O fit should also predict attraction and motivation for work in the private sector. As previously mentioned, a curious finding that sparked interest PSM research is that public employees report equal levels of overall motivation to private employees despite a clear deficit of extrinsic rewards. An argument could be made that P-O fit is largely responsible for the motivation for work in both sectors and that the extrinsic rewards associated with private-sector occupations is a shared value of private organizations and their employees. Motivation is not measured on an operational level in P-O research, though, as it is considered a conceptual or theoretical variable. Motivation can be theorized to stem from perception of fit, but is not objectively assessed.

The present study contributes to the literature by offering a new framework for studying and understanding the stability of PSM (and work motivation in general). Perry's (1996) PSM instrument measures individual characteristics and values that match those of a typical public organization. Higher scores should signify a better match with public service values, which should lead to a higher level of motivation for the work. The degree of perceived fit is assumed to influence motivation, but the relationship is not well understood. Thus, changes in levels of PSM may not necessarily indicate changes in motivation. The stability of an employee's motivation for work is certainly important for any organization, but fostering high levels of

motivation may depend on the environment provided by the organization rather than an unchanging trait of the employee.

The consistency of motivation for public service work was the focus of the present study, which asked how easily it could be manipulated. While the measures and results do not provide an adequate answer to this question, incorporating theories of P-O fit and the need for consistency may guide research in a more promising direction. As such, higher scores on a measure of PSM (or perception of fit with public service) should denote stronger values, and individuals with the strongest values should have the highest need to behave consistently with those values. So, while perception of fit may imply the capacity for a high level of motivation, the stability of an employee's motivation for work should depend on the regularity at which the organization provides opportunities for him to act on his values and beliefs. This notion extends beyond public service work and could apply to almost any occupational field. Because motivation is influenced by both internal and external factors, employee motivation requires contributions from both employee and employer. Future research should incorporate external factors involving the organization of employment when investigating the motivation for public service work. Specifically, factors that affect the regularity of provided opportunities for an employee to act in accordance with his values should be investigated. Such factors may offer more insight than was allowed for by the design of the present study.

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Perry's (1996) PSM Scale with Dimensions

Dimension	Item
Compassion	1. I seldom think about the welfare of people I don't know personally. -r
	2. I have little compassion for people in need who are unwilling to take the first step to help themselves. -r
	3. Most social programs are too vital to do without.
	4. It is difficult for me to contain my feelings when I see people in distress.
	5. I am often reminded by daily events about how dependent we are on one another.
	6. I am rarely moved by the plight of the underprivileged. -r
	7. To me, patriotism includes seeing the welfare of others.
	8. There are few public programs I wholeheartedly support. -r
Self-Sacrifice	9. Much of what I do is for a cause bigger than myself.
	10. I am one of those rare people who would risk personal loss to help someone else.
	11. Making a difference in society means more to me than personal achievements.
	12. I think people should give back to society more than they get from it.
	13. I believe in putting duty before self.
	14. Doing well financially is definitely more important to me than doing good deeds. -r
	15. Serving citizens would give me a good feeling even if no one paid me to do it.
	16. I am prepared to make enormous sacrifices for the good of society.
Civic Duty	17. I unselfishly contribute to my community.
	18. Meaningful public service is very important to me.
	19. I consider public service my civic duty.
	20. It is hard to get me genuinely interested in what is going on in my community. -r
	21. I would prefer seeing public officials do what is best for the community, even if it harmed my interests.
Attraction to Public Policy	22. Politics is dirty work. -r
	23. The give and take of public policymaking doesn't appeal to me. -r
	24. I don't care much for politicians. -r

-r signifies reverse coded item