



Print ISSN: 1738-3110 / Online ISSN 2093-7717
 JDS website: <http://www.jds.or.kr/>
<http://dx.doi.org/10.15722/jds.20.09.202209.1>

Personality Traits versus Public Service Motivation: Motive Distribution of Vietnamese Generation Z

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Received: May 15, 2022. Revised: June 15, 2022. Accepted: September 05, 2022.

Abstract

Purpose: Public sector is usually not an attractive career choice for the youths, due to the uncompetitive income and the working environment. Therefore, understanding the motivations of the Generation Z, the currently early-career employees, to work in the public sector is important. This research aims to address a gap in the literature on the linkage between Personality Traits of Generation Z and Public Service Motivation (PSM). **Research Design, Data, and Methodology:** Using the sample of Vietnamese generation Z, it shows how individual personality, as defined by the Big Five, affects PSM. A quantitative survey of 355 university students, who are members of this generation and are preparing to join the labor market, was undertaken. We used SEM to examine the results. **Results:** Our findings show that Agreeableness, Neuroticism, and Conscientiousness are significant antecedents of PSM. Agreeableness, which leads to three PSM dimensions, namely Compassion, Self-Sacrifice, and Commitment to Public Values, is the best predictor of this motivation. Meanwhile, Neuroticism and Conscientiousness only affect the dimension of Compassion. **Conclusion:** This study adds to the limited current knowledge on the personality-PSM relationship among generation Z. The distribution of affective (Compassion, Self-Sacrifice) and norm-based (Commitment to Public Values) motives provide insight for both career counselors and recruiters in public service delivery.

Keywords: Public Service Motivation, Personality Traits, Generation Z, SEM, Motive Distribution

JEL Classification Code: J17, J24, J45

1. Introduction

While Generation Z is beginning to enter the workforce, the public sector around the world is affected by the silver tsunami, also known as the gray wave. The study of Ng and Gossett (2013) showed that people under the age of 30 are less likely to choose jobs in the public sector. The importance of recruiting young human resources, who are the driving force behind reforms and efficiency improvements, is well acknowledged. However, more research is needed to help public sector organizations around

the world attract this generation. Unlike most current studies on the Gen Z workforce that have been conducted in Western countries (Csiszárík-Kocsír & Garia-Fodor, 2018; Graczyk-Kucharska & Erickson, 2020; Stillman, & Stillman, 2017), this study focuses on personality traits and the motivation to serve the public interests of this generation in Vietnam, a non-western country with a developing economy and an authoritarian government.

Public Service Motivation (PSM) was defined as an individual's predisposition to respond to motives grounded primarily or uniquely in public institutions (Perry & James,

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1990). It is regarded as a central construct in the public administration literature. Although whether PSM leads to actual public sector choice is debatable, this distinct drive has been acknowledged as an important factor in predicting a selection for public sector employment (Gans-Morse et al., 2022; Holt, 2018). This is because people would seek employment in organizations that are compatible with their interests and ideals. Given that reason and the declining labor supply in the public sector, this article contributes to our understanding of PSM among young people who is about to enter the workforce. Understanding this generation's PSM is the first step in nurturing their PSM and enticing them to public services.

For successful recruiting staff, public service providers must be able to identify PSM-oriented people. Previous studies have indicated a link between personality and work values (Berings et al., 2004; Duffy et al., 2009; Furnham et al., 2005; Furnham et al., 2009), however, the relationship between personality and PSM has not been thoroughly investigated. The study of Carpenter et al. (2012), Jang (2012), and Van Witteloostuijn et al. (2017) were among a few studies that considered the relationship. Carpenter et al. (2012) examined PSM at a pre-entry level and linked it with personality, however, these authors limited the measurement of personality to only the Agreeableness element. Jang (2012) investigated all components of the Big Five model's personality traits (McCrae & Costa, 1987), however, his study focused on PSM at post-employment. The limitation of using a sample of Taiwanese public officials in that study is that work socialization may also influence PSM. Additionally, the suitability of using 'a very succinct measure' of personality in Jang's study was also questioned (Van Witteloostuijn et al., 2017). By using a sample of bachelor students, Van Witteloostuijn et al. (2017) particularly focused on the personality – PSM linkage and eliminated the impact of occupational socialization. However, the sample included students pursuing a bachelor's degree in Business and Economics. Considering that Vietnamese students who are interested in legislating and governance tend to select a public sector career, we chose a sample of this population to provide additional insight into PSM, the urge to serve the public interest grounded in the public sector. The study of Vandenberg (2008b) revealed that PSM exists at a pre-entry level, however, it is still unclear how PSM emerges (Kjeldsen, 2012) and why some people have higher PSM than others. For PSM research in Vietnam, when looking at the distribution of sample respondents, it is clear most studies have focused on civil servants and public employees, neglecting PSM in the pre-employment stage or PSM among students. Our study responds to the call for more PSM measurements before entry and it explains psychological drivers of PSM. On the other hand, studies in

Vietnam have mostly investigated relationships between PSM and work outcomes, such as job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and work performance (Hoang et al., 2021). Meanwhile, the impact of personality traits on PSM has not been examined. Our study aims to explore the personality traits of Vietnamese generation Z and provide a fresh perspective on the Personality - PSM linkage. We seek to answer the following question: "What personality traits best predict elements of PSM?". It is also worth mentioning that this study is among few PSM research using SEM. Looking at the distribution of analytical methods used, Ritz et al. (2016) found that SEM was utilized in only 5.7 percent of 323 articles related to PSM. The three most common types of analytical methods employed in these studies were descriptive statistics (27%), measures of association or tests of differences (20.2%), and factor analysis (15.5%). As there is a wide variety of personalities, with intricate linkages to the multidimensional construct of PSM, we used SEM instead of other analytical methods.

To summarize, this study contributes to the PSM literature in a number of ways. While research into how personality traits could predict PSM remains scant, this study confirms the linkage between personality traits and particular elements of the PSM construct. It employs SEM instead of other typical analytical methods. It also adds to our understanding of PSM at a pre-entry level among generation Z, which may help public and non-profit organizations with hiring solutions. The article is structured as follows. We begin this paper by examining the Vietnamese context. We then draw on literature about PSM and the Big Five Personality Factors. Following that, we formulate hypotheses regarding how personality influences PSM. The research methodology is described next, followed by data analysis and research findings. In the next section, we discuss our findings and their implications. Finally, we consider the study limitations.

2. The Vietnamese Context

Vietnam is considered a collectivist and Feminine society where the dominant value in society is caring for others. The people are known for a sense of community, compassion, solidarity, and patriotism (Hai, 2021). Given these characteristics, we are interested in studying PSM among the young generation in the country. It is unclear whether these values continue to stimulate the younger generation as the market economy develops. While old generations regard jobs in the public sector as desirable because of their prestige, privilege, and employment security, young people may have a different perspective. With the recent government downsizing, employment in the sector is less stable and appealing than it used to be. A high

level of Corruption, moreover, may impact young people's opinions of government service delivery and their desire to serve the public interest. Since Doi moi, Vietnam has transformed into a vibrant economy with expanded private-sector prospects. As more people choose to work in the private sector, the public sector and its service provision face an alarming labor shortage.

One notable employment feature in public service delivery in Vietnam is a low wage. Public servants' monthly pay is computed by multiplying a fixed base salary set by the government with a varying 'salary coefficient' based on their seniority and position. Most public servants must rely on outside sources of income or non-salary income due to low compensation and an inflexible payment. In that context, unless public servants are bound by PSM, corruption is likely to occur, making it difficult for citizens to access quality public services.

To relieve the burden on the state budget, the government has recently allowed and encouraged private businesses to participate in public service delivery. However, the level of socialization of these services remains low in comparison to real demand. Furthermore, a lack of government oversight over the socialization process has negatively affected beneficiaries' rights. As private businesses are generally motivated by profit, they normally raise service pricing arbitrarily and without transparency. It is crucial to explore PSM among young people in this setting.

3. Literature Review and Hypothesis Development

3.1. Public Service Motivation

In addition to Perry's definition of PSM, many scholars have contributed to the understanding of this unique motivation. Among them, Vandenabeele et al. (2018) clarified PSM by separating it from related but distinct concepts such as intrinsic motivation, altruism, and prosocial motivation. Accordingly, intrinsic motivation is self-oriented while PSM is other-oriented. Unlike altruism, which focuses on behavior, PSM focuses on motivation. For prosocial motivation, there would be some sort of identification with beneficiaries. Meanwhile, PSM is aimed at anonymous beneficiaries, in other words, 'society at large'.

PSM consists of three bases including rational, norm-based, and affective motives (Perry & Wise, 1990). Rational motives refer to when individuals join in a policy process or public program for maximizing their self-interest. Affective motives center on emotional feelings and are associated with a desire to assist others, altruism, empathy, and prosocial tendency. Norm-based motives are associated with patriotism, duty, and devotion to the state. They reflect a

sense of obligation and a desire to serve the public benefit.

To measure the construct of PSM, Perry (1996) developed a valid measurement scale with 24 items and 4 factors, namely Attraction to the Policy-Making, Commitment to the Public Interest, Compassion, and Self-Sacrifice. Kim (2011) recommended scholars include all four dimensions in their studies as removing one could change the meaning of PSM. Notably, many authors (Kim, 2009b, 2011; Kim & Vandenabeele, 2010; Ritz, 2011) expressed concern about insufficient items for the element of Attraction to Public Policy-making. To resolve measuring issues and reflect better the interest of engaging in public services, this element was then revised to Attraction to Public Service in studies of Kim (2016) and Kim et al. (2013).

Although PSM literature has taken 30 years to develop, there is still room for more research to be done. The study of Kjeldsen and Jacobsen (2013) revealed that PSM works as both an antecedent and a consequence of public sector employment in a far more nuanced way than previously thought. Therefore, research on how PSM are shaped psychologically may provide practical implications for public sector recruitment. Also, more PSM research in non-US settings is needed as the meaning of PSM varies across cultures and languages (Kim et al., 2013; Vandenabeele, 2008a).

3.2. Personality

Personality traits represent differences between individuals that are unaffected by their surroundings and almost unchanged with time (McCrae, 2000; McCrae & Costa, 1987). Personality is fundamental to comprehending human attitudes and behaviors, yet empirical research on it appears to be underrepresented in the Public Administration literature (Cooper et al., 2013; Cooper et al., 2014). Only a few studies have used it to explain individual motives and job outcomes (Cooper et al., 2013, 2014; Gerber et al., 2010; Jang, 2012; Van Witteloostuijn et al., 2017).

Numerous attempts to conceptualize personality have resulted in a plethora of components and/or variables, making cross-study comparisons complex and time-consuming. When The Big Five was introduced, scholars finally agreed on the taxonomy of consistent personality traits (McCrae & John, 1992). Accordingly, there are five personality components including Extraversion (sociable, extroverted, talkative), Agreeableness (kind, caring, considerate, trustable), Conscientiousness (goal-oriented and ascertained), Neuroticism (anxiety, depression, vulnerability), and Openness (inventive, curious, sensitive to beauty). The Five-factor model (FFM) reflects personality at its most abstract level, and each one summarizes a vast number of different traits. The FFM has

emerged as the dominant framework for personality research in psychology and it has been recognized as a reliable, theoretically solid, and empirically validated model (Cooper et al., 2013). However, only a few articles in public administration literature have used it (Carpenter et al., 2012; Cooper et al., 2013; Jang, 2012; Jiang et al., 2009).

3.3. Personality and Public Service Motivation Relationship

The tendency to be gregarious, aggressive, active, upbeat, cheery, optimistic, and talkative is known as Extraversion. Extraversion is found to be positively associated with an interest in making policy, but negatively links with self-sacrifice (Jang, 2012). This personality trait is characterized by rapid tempo, vigorousness, and busyness. Besides, being dominating, forceful, and ascending are all aspects of Extraversion (Cooper et al., 2014). Therefore, we can predict Extraversion to be negatively associated with Compassion. Additionally, the literature has suggested that those with the Extraversion trait tend to incline toward enterprise interest (Berings et al., 2004), rather than the public interest or values. Thus, we hypothesize that:

H1: Extraversion is positively associated with (a) Attraction to Public Service but negatively associated with (b) Commitment to Public values, (c) Compassion, (d) Self-Sacrifice.

Carpenter et al. (2012) discovered that a person's level of PSM was strongly and positively associated with Agreeableness. Van Witteloostuijn et al. (2017) reveal that Compassion and Self-Sacrifice, which are classified as PSM affective motives, are positively influenced by Agreeableness. Agreeableness was also found to be positively related to Compassion in Jang's study (2012). Meanwhile, it could be argued that individuals with a high level of Agreeableness are caring and more sympathetic toward others. They are also trustworthy and adept at cooperating. Therefore, they are more likely to be committed to public values and express an interest in public services. This formed the following hypothesis:

H2: Agreeableness is positively associated with (a) Attraction to Public Service, (b) Commitment to Public values, (c) Compassion, (d) Self-Sacrifice.

There has been a lack of consistent results regarding the relationship between Conscientiousness and PSM elements. According to Jang (2012), Conscientiousness was positively related to Commitment to the Public Interest, Compassion, and Self-Sacrifice. Whereas Van Witteloostuijn et al. (2017) found that Conscientiousness has a negative impact on Compassion and Self-Sacrifice. Based on Jang's study, we

expect that Conscientiousness is positively associated with Commitment to the Public Values. We also hypothesize that Conscientiousness individuals associate with Self-Sacrifice, Compassion, and potentially Attraction to Public Service as well. This is because individuals with high levels of Conscientiousness are competent and determined; they are also skilled at planning, organizing, as well as being cautious, and deliberate (Cooper et al., 2014). These characteristics match with policy-making activities. Additionally, one of the distinguishing characteristics of Conscientiousness is that they have a predisposition to act responsibly (Moon, 2001). They are also strict in their ethics and principles (Cooper et al., 2014). Therefore, Conscientiousness individuals are more likely to incline toward civic duty, Compassion, and Self-Sacrifice.

H3: Conscientiousness is positively associated with (a) Attraction to Public Service, (b) Commitment to Public values, (c) Compassion, (d) Self-Sacrifice.

In the literature, Neuroticism is found to be negatively correlated with a commitment to the public good and compassion, but positively associated with interest in policymaking (Jang, 2012). According to (Diefendorff et al., 2005), the Neuroticism trait has a negative relationship with deep acting, but a positive relationship with rational motives, bureaucratic routine, and a great craving for power to alleviate the sense of insecurity. Therefore, we expect that Neuroticism is also negatively associated with Self-Sacrifice.

H4: Neuroticism is positively associated with (a) Attraction to Public Service but negatively associated with (b) Commitment to Public values, (c) Compassion, (d) Self-Sacrifice.

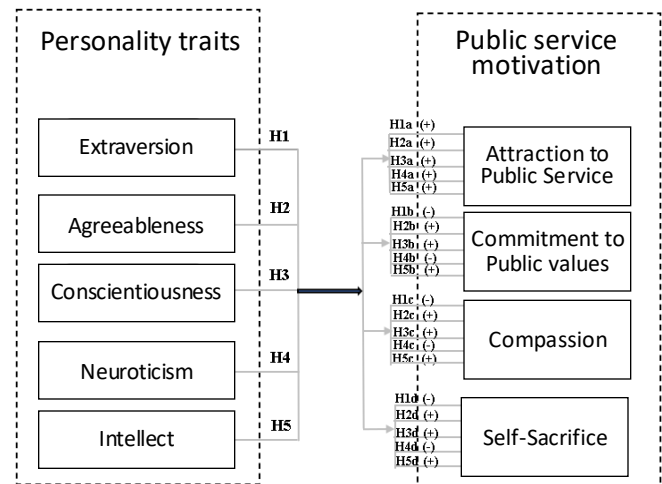


Figure 1: Research framework

In Jang's study (2012), Openness was positively associated with all components of PSM, including Attraction to Public Policymaking, Commitment to Public Values, Compassion, and Self-Sacrifice. The study of Van Witteloostuijn et al. (2017) also confirmed that the Openness to Experience trait is positively related to nonaffective PSM motives such as Attraction to Policymaking and Commitment to the Public Interest. In this study, we used Intellect instead of Openness for the fifth personality trait, as suggested by Donnellan et al. (2006). Thus, the following hypothesis was formed:

H5: Intellect is positively associated with (a) Attraction to Public Service, (b) Commitment to Public values, (c) Compassion, (d) Self-Sacrifice

4. Research Methodology

4.1. Sample and Data Collection

Our study was based on an online quantitative survey and the target population included students who pursued Law and Public Management. They come from Ho Chi Minh University of Law, the largest educational institution providing law-related courses in the south of Vietnam, and University of Economics and Law, one member of Vietnam National University, Ho Chi Minh City. These selective public universities have a large number of alumni who are working in the public sector, where understanding of legislation and governance is particularly useful. Every year, each university enrolls around 2,000 new students from 63 provinces and municipal areas across the country. The questionnaire was distributed to these university communities on social media. A total of 355 valid respondents were returned. The sample profile is presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Sample profile

Characteristic	Frequency	Percentage
Gender		
Female	272	76.6
Male	80	22.5
No information	3	0.8
Age group		
Students aged 19-20	93	26.2
Students aged 21-22	199	56.1
Students aged 23-24	63	17.7
Location of hometown		
South of Vietnam	141	39.7
Central of Vietnam	116	32.7
North of Vietnam	98	27.6

All respondents were given an information sheet outlining the study's goals and assuring them that their responses would be kept confidential and used only for research purposes. Screening questions were utilized to gather information about the students' present ages and study disciplines. The use of screening questions at the beginning of the survey ensured that only students from generation Z who were already enrolled in law or public administration programs completed it. An explanation of PSM was given to respondents to ensure that they understood the concept.

4.2. Construct Measure

Questions were designed to assess the study's primary constructs, including personality traits and PSM. The measurement scales were adopted from the works of Donnellan et al. (2006) and Kim et al. (2013). First, we used the FFM as it is the most popular model for conceptualizing and measuring personality. There are several Big Five measures, including the 60-item NEO Five-Factor Inventory (Costa & McCrae, 1992), the 50-item International Personality Item Pool – Five-Factor Model, the 44-item Big Five Inventory (John & Srivastava, 1999), the 40-item Big Five Mini-Markers (Saucier, 1994), and the Ten-Item Personality Inventory (TIPI) measure (Gosling et al., 2003). However, our study employed the 20 items Mini-IPIP developed by Donnellan et al. (2006) as this miniature measurement scale has been shown as 'tiny-yet-effective' in capturing the Big Five Personality Factors. In this 20-item short version, the fifth factor is called Intellect/Imagination rather than Openness/Openness to Experience as it is in the 50-item questionnaire. We chose this scale because we favor a short questionnaire, but we also agree with Donnellan et al. (2006) that the TIPI may be too short to be an effective Big Five measure. Second, the PSM scale measure proposed by Kim et al. (2013) was employed in this study. Example items include 'I admire people who initiate or are involved in activities to aid my community', 'I think equal opportunities for citizens are very important', 'I feel sympathetic to the plight of the underprivileged', and 'I am prepared to make sacrifices for the good of society'. All items were graded on a five-point Likert scale, with 1 indicating 'strongly disagree' and 5 indicating 'strongly agree'.

5. Data Analysis and Results

To brief, the data were analyzed first with IBM SPSS analysis and subsequently with IBM SPSS Amos. Finally, path analyses were conducted, using SEM, to test the association between personality traits and PSM.

Table 2: Results of the measurement model assessment

Measures	Factor loading
Commitment to public values (AVE = .571; α = .722; CR = .727)	
It is important that citizens can rely on the continuous provision of public services	.775
Fundamentally, the interests of future generations are taken into account when developing public policies	.693
Compassion (AVE = .640; α = .834; CR = .840)	
I feel sympathetic to the plight of the underprivileged	.857
I empathize with other people who face difficulties	.875
I get very upset when I see other people being treated unfairly	.633
Self-sacrifice (AVE = .597; α = .815; CR = .816)	
I am prepared to make sacrifices for the good of society	.804
I believe in putting civic duty before self	.742
I am willing to risk a personal loss to help society	.768
Extraversion (AVE = .511; α = .784; CR = .801)	
Am the life of the party	.621
Don't talk a lot	.605
Talk to a lot of different people at parties	.580
Keep in the background	.986
Agreeableness (AVE = .513; α = .793; CR = .804)	
Sympathize with others' feelings	.915
Am not interested in other people's problems	.676
Feel others' emotions	.559
Am not really interested in others	.638
Conscientiousness (AVE = .524; α = .805; CR = .812)	
Get chores done right away	.654
Often forget to put things back in their proper place	.654
Like order	.680
Make a mess of things	.892
Neuroticism (AVE = .542; α = .820; CR = .823)	
Have frequent mood swings	.745
Am relaxed most of the time	.565
Get upset easily	.874
Seldom feel blue	.726
Intellect (AVE = .411; α = .673; CR = .676)	
Am not interested in abstract ideas	.621
Have difficulty understanding abstract ideas	.615
Do not have a good imagination	.671
<i>Model Fit indices: Chi-square = 423.252, df = 296, p = 0.000, Chi-square/df = 1.430, Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) = 0.035, PClose = 1.000, Tucker Lewis Index (TLI) = 0.955, Normed Fit Index (NFI) = 0.885, Comparative Fit Index (CFI) = 0.962, and Goodness of Fit Index (GFI) = 0.918</i>	
<i>N = 355 α = Cronbach's alpha; CR = Composite reliability; AVE = Average variance extracted.</i>	

Cronbach's alpha values, which evaluate internal consistency, were used to investigate the reliability of the FFM subscales (prior to item parceling) and the PSM subscales (Table 2). The Commitment to Public Values, Extraversion, and Agreeableness subscales were found to have acceptable levels of reliability, while the Compassion, Self-Sacrifice, Conscientiousness, and Neuroticism subscales were considered good levels of reliability. The Cronbach's alpha of Intellect was .673, which is also acceptable according to Nunnally, J.C., and Bernstein

(1994).

After testing the scale's reliability, we conducted an Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA). To determine if all of the FFM and PSM indicators loaded cleanly into their respective factors, the principal axis factor method was used, along with varimax rotation. We decided that the factor loading threshold must be larger than or equal to 0.5 (Hair et al., 2013). For personality, an observed variable of Intellect was excluded as it loaded isolatedly to one factor (INTEL1: Have a vivid imagination). With factor loadings

of less than 0.5, eight observed variables of PSM were excluded from further analysis to guarantee the measurement's quality (including CPV1: I think equal opportunities for citizens are very important, CPV4: To act ethically is essential for public servants, COM4: Considering the welfare of others is very important, SS4: I would agree to a good plan to make a better life for the poor, even if it costs me money, and all variables of APS). Following the findings of the EFA, three PSM dimensions of Commitment to public values, Compassion, and Self-sacrifice are validated in this study.

There were eight factors extracted with eigenvalues over 1.137, and the cumulative explained variance was 55,207%. The items' suitability was confirmed by a Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) statistic of 0.771, as KMO values more than 0.60 are regarded sufficient for factor analysis (Hair et al., 2013). Using the Model Fit Measures tool, we concluded that the model had an excellent fit with CMIN/DF = 1.430, CFI = 0.962, SRMR = 0.046, RMSEA = 0.035, and Pclose = 1.000.

For Confirm factor analysis (CFA), we used average variances extracted (AVE) and composite reliability (CR)

indicators to confirm convergent validity. According to Bagozzi and Yi (1988), when CR reaches 0.6, it is eligible to hold. Table 2 shows that all constructs met the CR criteria and their AVE were greater than 0.5, except for Intellect. However, when CR is larger than 0.6 and AVE is less than 0.5, the validity of the convergence is still adequate (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). Therefore, we proceed with the next analysis process, which is SEM. We were unable to test H1a, H2a, H3a, H4a, and H5a because our factor analysis of the PSM scale did not yield a factor analogous to Attraction to Public Service. As a result, we only looked at H1b, H1c, H1d, H2b, H2c, H2d, H3b, H3c, H3d, H4b, H4c, H4d, H5b, H5c, and H5d.

As can be seen from Table 3, path analyses supported Hypotheses H2b, H2c, H2d, H3c, and H4c on the association between three personality traits (Agreeableness, Conscientiousness, Neuroticism) and different PSM dimensions. In a detailed manner, Neuroticism had a significant positive influence on Compassion ($\beta = .204$, $p < 0.001$). A considerable positive effect of Conscientiousness on Compassion had also been demonstrated ($\beta = .128$, $p < 0.050$).

Table 3: Results of path analysis

	Standardized Estimate	p-value	Hypotheses
Extraversion $\square$ Commitment to public values	-.026	.704	H1b: Not supported
Extraversion $\square$ Compassion	.021	.729	H1c: Not supported
Extraversion $\square$ Self-sacrifice	.104	.111	H1d: Not supported
Agreeableness $\square$ Commitment to public values	.340	***	H2b: Supported
Agreeableness $\square$ Compassion	.363	***	H2c: Supported
Agreeableness $\square$ Self-sacrifice	.253	***	H2d: Supported
Conscientiousness $\square$ Commitment to public values	.094	.176	H3b: Not supported
Conscientiousness $\square$ Compassion	.128	*	H3c: Supported
Conscientiousness $\square$ Self-sacrifice	.069	.292	H3d: Not supported
Neuroticism $\square$ Commitment to public values	.025	.714	H4b: Not supported
Neuroticism $\square$ Compassion	.204	***	H4c: Supported
Neuroticism $\square$ Self-sacrifice	.099	.125	H4d: Not supported
Intellect $\square$ Commitment to public values	.027	.741	H5b: Not supported
Intellect $\square$ Compassion	.017	.813	H5c: Not supported
Intellect $\square$ Self-sacrifice	-.006	.934	H5d: Not supported
<i>N</i> = 355; *** $p < 0.001$; * $p < 0.050$			

Agreeableness showed significant impacts on all three validated PSM dimensions, including Commitment to public values ($\beta = .340$, $p < 0.001$), Compassion ($\beta = .363$, $p < 0.001$), and Self-sacrifice ($\beta = .253$, $p < 0.001$). It also had higher impacts on PSM dimensions, compared to that of the two previously mentioned personalities. Meanwhile, the effects of other personality traits on PSM dimensions were weak (p -values > 0.05), so H1b, H1c, H1d, H3b, H3d, H4b, H4d, H5b, H5c, H5d were not supported.

6. Discussion

This study's findings support the link between personality traits and PSM, and it shows that not all personality traits correlate with PSM, except for Agreeableness, Conscientiousness, and Neuroticism. It adds to evidence that Agreeableness is highly linked to PSM. In addition to the positive relationship with Compassion (Jang, 2012; Van Witteloostuijn et al., 2017) and Self-Sacrifice (Van Witteloostuijn et al., 2017) found in the literature, we

discover a positive relationship between Agreeableness and Commitment to Public Values. As a matter of fact, collectivism and a sense of community are key features of Vietnamese cultural identity. Since Agreeableness tend to be compatible with adhering to conventional cultural norms, this personality trait is inclined to fulfill social obligations and commitments. In this study, Agreeableness can be regarded as the most important predictor of PSM because it is the only personality associated with all three validated PSM dimensions and has the highest impact on Compassion. Meanwhile, we found no effect of Extraversion and Intellect on PSM as suggested by Jang (2012), and Van Witteloostuijn et al. (2017). The disparities in results could be explained by sample differences, as our study focused on students instead of public servants, as Jang (2012) did, and it was conducted in a non-western country, unlike Van Witteloostuijn et al. (2017).

While Jang (2012) revealed that Conscientiousness is linked to Commitment to Public Value, Compassion, and Self-Sacrifice, we only found a correlation between Conscientiousness and Compassion. Unlike the findings of Van Witteloostuijn et al. (2017), the relationship is positive as we expected. Our result was in line with the negative relationship between Conscientiousness and psychoticism as suggested by (McCrae & Costa, 1985). While psychoticism is characterized by a lack of sympathy and egocentricity in those who suffer from it, Conscientiousness individuals tend to express compassion for others.

Similar to Conscientiousness, Neuroticism was only associated with Compassion in this study. However, the relationship was positive, unlike what we expected. The reason for this must be linked to the fact that Compassion has long been seen as a defining feature of Vietnamese culture (Hai, 2021). This is evidenced by the telling phrase “*Bầu ơi thương lấy bí cùng. Tuy rằng khác giống nhưng chung một giàn*”, meaning that people within the same country should show compassion for and help each other. With internal insecurity and anxiety, Neuroticism individuals also find it effortless to comprehend others' difficulties and worries. So, the self-centered aspect and lacking empathy of Neuroticism, suggested by Diefendorff et al. (2005), is unappropriated when it comes to the Vietnamese young generation.

Given that only a few core personality traits are significant antecedents of PSM, we suggest public service providers focus their recruiting efforts on individuals classified as Agreeableness, Neuroticism, and Conscientiousness. On the other hand, it's interesting to note that none of the five personality traits correlate with the PSM's Self-Sacrifice element. As the market economy has expanded, the Vietnamese young generation has become much more rational. The findings also imply that low-wage public service delivery occupations with strict processes to

follow may not provide adequate stimulation for Extraversion and Intellect people. These implications may be valuable to career counselors as well.

7. Conclusion and Limitation

For now, we have shown that PSM is not evenly distributed among different personality traits of young generation in Vietnam. This study contributes to the literature of PSM by revealing the distribution of affective (Compassion, Self-Sacrifice) and norm-based (Commitment to Public Values) motives among Agreeableness, Neuroticism, and Conscientiousness. However, there are certain limitations to this research. First, it is based on self-reported data, which may result in a common method bias. Second, the literature suggested that PSM and its dimensions could change over time (Kjeldsen, 2014; Kjeldsen & Jacobsen, 2013) but we have not considered this in our study. Third, there is still much room for improvement in measuring PSM as well as personality traits. Finally, future studies could dissect more on the psychological causes of PSM while considering other significant factors, such as exposure to extreme events and societal characteristics.

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