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**The Effect of Public Service Motivation on
Turnover Intention in Consultancy Firms: a
moderated mediation model**

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Abstract

With the current tight labor market, organizations face a growing challenge of retaining employees. Consultancy firms are not exempt of this trend. While Public Service Motivation (PSM) has been found to decrease turnover intention in the public sector, the effect of PSM on turnover intention in the private sector is still unclear. Though some studies find that PSM increases turnover intention in the private sector, this thesis argues that it is not the sector that determines the effect of PSM, but rather the publicness of the organization. This study looks at the mediating effect of Person-Organization fit (PO fit) and Person-Job fit (PJ fit) for the relationship between PSM and turnover intention. To account for publicness, Public Values and Societal Impact Potential (SIP) are included as moderators for the relationship between PSM and fit, creating a theoretical model of moderated mediation. Employees of various consultancy firms were subjected to a quantitative survey (N = 85). The analysis found that the model of moderated mediation did not hold, though SIP did moderate the relationship between PSM and PJ fit. The results of this study are limited due to a low sample size, and recommendations are made for future research, for a better data collection approach.

Table of contents

1	Introduction	4
	1.1 Introduction	4
	1.2 Scientific relevance	6
	1.3 Societal relevance	8
	1.4 Context	9
	1.5 Research question	10
2	Theoretical Framework	11
	2.1 Turnover intention	11
	2.2 PSM	13
	2.2.1 PSM & turnover intention	14
	2.2.2 PSM in the private sector	14
	2.3 Dimensions of person-environment fit	16
	2.3.1 PO fit, PJ fit & turnover intention	17
	2.3.2 PSM, PO fit, PJ fit & turnover intention	17
	2.4 Publicness	18
	2.4.1 Public Values	19
	2.4.2 Societal Impact Potential	19
	2.5 Theoretical Model	20
3	Methods	22
	3.1 Data & Design	22
	3.2 Operationalizing concepts	25
	3.2.1 PSM	25
	3.2.2 PO fit & PJ fit	26
	3.2.3 Turnover intention	27
	3.2.4 Public Values & Societal Impact Potential	27
	3.3 Control Variables	28
	3.3.1 Perceived Support	28
	3.3.2 Work Tension	29
	3.3.3 Continuance Commitment	30
4	Results	31
	4.1 Descriptive Results	31
	4.2 Moderated Mediation for PO fit and Public Values	32
	4.2.1 Moderated Mediation for PJ fit & SIP	34
	4.3 Further moderation testing	36
	4.4 Further mediation testing	38
5	Conclusion	39
	5.1 Discussion of study results and hypotheses	39
	5.2 Theoretical reflection	40
	5.3 Implications	42
	5.4 Limitations and recommendations for future research	43
	References	44
	Appendix	54

1. Introduction

1.1 Introduction

In the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, the labor market has become increasingly tight.

In the Netherlands, unemployment rates hit a decade-long low in 2022, and the demand on the labor market is considerably higher than the supply. In the second quarter of 2022, there were 143 job vacancies for every 100 unemployed laborers in the Netherlands. (CBS, 14-02-2023). This tightness in the labor market means that it becomes more difficult for organizations to attract the right employees. In the Netherlands, HR professionals from multiple sectors who were surveyed at the start of 2023 also expected recruitment and retention of employees would be a bigger challenge in 2023 than it already was in 2022 (consultancy.nl, 03-01-2023).

A sector where turnover is very prominent is the consultancy sector. In consultancy firms turnover has always been relatively high compared to other sectors. Where turnover is usually around 15 to 25 percent in the consultancy sector (Kubr, 2002), turnover intention in consultancy firms has been reported to be as high as 48 percent among employees in recent years (Consultancy.nl, 18-04-2016). The current tight labor market seemingly upholds this trend. In the Netherlands, more than two thirds of all consultants were approached for a job at a different company in the second quarter of 2022, the most of all occupations (Business Insider Nederland, 06-07-2022).

Besides focusing on improving employee recruitment, another way to remain competitive in a tight labor market is by focusing on employee retention. Willis Towers Watson undertook a survey among organizations across more than 130 countries. According to these organizations, attracting and retaining employees were the two biggest challenges they faced in 2022. When asked about their expectations for 2023, there is a shift toward employee retention being viewed as the biggest challenge for HR (Johansson & Nishiwaki, 02-08-2022). An important aspect of retaining employees in the workforce is turnover intention. Turnover intention can be explained as '*a conscious and deliberate willfulness to leave the organization*' (Tett & Meyer, 1993 p. 262). High turnover in an organization can be detrimental, because it can lead to higher cost in recruiting, selecting, hiring and training new employees. Having to train new employees to replace functions previously held by experienced workers may also lead to decreased productivity. Research has found that intrinsic and extrinsic motivation influence the decision of employees to stay in their organizations, both in the public and private sector (Samuel & Chipunza, 2009).

However, employees in the private sector are motivated less by intrinsic rewards compared to public sector employees (Rainey, 1982). To explain this difference, the concept of Public Service Motivation (PSM) was introduced by Perry & Wise (1990). PSM is explained as a predisposition that explains why some individuals have a desire to serve the public interest. It was thought that employees with high levels of PSM were more likely to seek employment in the public sector, and that it would be positively related to performance (Perry & Wise, 1990). In the literature, there is strong support for the notion that higher levels of PSM lead to lower turnover intention among employees (e.g. Crewson, 1997; Naff & Crum, 1999; Park & Rainey, 2008).

Although these studies provide an interesting insight into the effect of PSM on turnover intention, their findings are confined to the public sector. Research into PSM in the private sector has remained an underexplored area (Perry & Hondeghem, 2008). Despite this, not all public-service motivated individuals are likely to gravitate toward the public sector, and the presence of PSM in the private sector cannot be denied (Brewer & Selden, 1998; Steen, 2008), as studies have found evidence of the presence of PSM in the for-profit sector (Liu, Zhang, Du & Hu, 2015).

Despite this, studies still find that PSM levels are higher in the public sector compared to the private sector (Steijn 2008; Liu, Du, Wen & Fan, 2012). Furthermore, studies find that high levels of PSM have an opposite effect in the private sector, and are instead correlated with higher turnover intention and lower job satisfaction (Steijn, 2008; Steijn & Leisink, 2009).

However, rather than looking at the direct effect of PSM on turnover, some researchers instead argue that PSM only has a negative relationship to turnover intention when there is compatibility between the employee and their work environment, rather than focusing on the sector of employment per se. This compatibility is defined as person-environment fit (PE fit)(Kristof-Brown, Zimmerman & Johnson, 2005). PE fit consists of four dimensions of fit: person-organization fit, person-job fit, person-group fit, and person-supervisor fit. Previous research has found that especially person-organization fit and person-job fit are important predictors for employee turnover intention (Judge & Cable, 1997; Tak, 2011; Andela & van der Doef, 2019).

Studies have found that PSM had no relationship with turnover intention when 'fit' was taken into account (Bright, 2007; Bright, 2008; Steijn, 2008). These studies presume however, that employees with high levels of PSM will have a better 'fit' in the public sector (Steijn, 2008; Leisink & Steijn, 2009). Since this assumption was also part of the seminal work by Perry &

Wise (1990), it is logical that researchers have focused on the benefits of PSM in the public sector, but not in the private sector.

Taking all this previous research into account, there is still one missing link to connect PSM to turnover intention in the consultancy sector. These studies focused only on the dichotomy between the public and private sector to determine how fit mediates the relationship between PSM and turnover intention, rather than looking at the characteristics of the environment to determine this fit. In reality, the differences between public and private organizations are not as black and white as they are made out to be. Bozeman (1987) argues that all organizations have a degree of publicness. This degree of publicness is argued to be dependent on ownership, funding, and control (Bozeman & Bretschneider, 1994). This indicates that employees with high PSM can still have a strong PE fit outside the public sector. Consultancy firms play an important role in not only helping private companies, but also play a vital role in society by consulting the public sector. Therefore, consultancy employees might seek a fit with their employment not only being motivated by their own interest, but also a motivation to have an impact on society as a whole.

As already mentioned, most research finds PO fit and PJ fit the most relevant in explaining turnover intention. Relating this back to an environment that fits with high levels of PSM, there are possible explanations for a good PO fit and PJ fit that go beyond merely looking at the sector of employment. For PO fit, the public values of an organization could potentially explain if there is a good fit with high PSM employees. For PJ fit, the Societal Impact Potential (SIP) could explain if there is a good fit with high PSM employees.

This is why it is important to study PSM in consultancy firms. Many consultancy firms do projects for public organizations, or projects with societal benefits. Therefore, employees may view their firm as an organization with public values and high SIP. Consultancy could benefit from exploiting the potential benefits that come with PSM. This study will look at the relationship between PSM and turnover intention in consultancy firms. The effect of PO fit and PJ fit on this relationship will be taken into account, as well as the role of public values and SIP.

1.2 Scientific relevance

This thesis mainly contributes to the literature on the PSM-turnover intention relationship in the private sector. There is already strong evidence on the relationship between PSM and turnover intention in the public sector (Crewson, 1997; Naff & Crum, 1999; Park & Rainey, 2008), but there is very little known about PSM and turnover intention in the private sector.

Perry & Wise (1990) already argued that it is not just the locus of employment that matters for PSM, and though it is not refuted that PSM exists in the private sector (Perry & Hondeghem, 2008), studies often find PSM levels to be higher in the public sector (Crewson, 1997; Steijn, 2008; Liu et al. 2012).

Contradictory to these findings, other studies have found that PSM levels in the private sector can be equally high, when everything but ownership is accounted for (Andersen, Pallesen & Pedersen, 2011). Their study was undertaken in a very specific context, with a comparison made between Danish physiotherapists in the public and private sector. These findings are hard to generalize, and could be specific to their context according to the authors. Furthermore, the finding that PSM levels were equally high in the private sector still does not prove that PSM can have positive outcomes in the private sector. This study aims not only to improve the understanding of the presence of PSM in the private sector, but also to look at the relationship it has with turnover intention.

This study also takes into account the effect that person-organizations fit and person-job fit have on the PSM-turnover intention relationship. As already mentioned, some studies find that the relation between PSM and turnover intention is mediated by PE fit (Bright, 2007; Bright, 2008; Steijn, 2008). In the research regarding PSM and turnover intention, the dimensions of PO fit and PJ fit have the strongest relationship with turnover intention, and therefore this study focuses on these two dimensions. This study builds on previous literature including PE fit in PSM research, by adding public values and SIP as moderating variables for the relationship between PSM and PE fit.

Finally, this study contributes to the PSM literature by using moderated mediation. Mediation focuses on a causal pathway, assuming that PSM has an effect on for example turnover intention through an intervening variable. Using mediation analysis, Bright (2008) found that PSM had no significant relationship to job satisfaction and turnover intention when PO fit was considered. This implies that there is no direct effect of PSM on turnover intention, but rather that there is only an effect through another mediating variable.

Moderation on the other hand is about the conditional effect that a moderator has on the relationship between two variables. Liu, Tang & Yang (2015) looked at PO fit and Needs-supplies fit as moderators of the relationship between PSM and job satisfaction. Van Loon, Kjeldsen, Andersen, Vandenabeele & Leisink (2018) instead used Societal Impact Potential as a moderator in the relationship between PSM and perceived performance, and found that the relationship was indeed moderated by societal impact potential.

Mediation assumes that the relationship between PSM and turnover intention works through a mediating variable, that either partially or fully explains the relationship between the two concepts. Moderation on the other hand assumes that the relationship between the two is influenced by a conditional effect, meaning that there is an effect either way, but the effect differs depending on this conditional factor.

In the literature regarding the effect of PSM on differing outcomes, there is disagreement on whether the relationship between PSM and outcomes like turnover intention is one of moderation or mediation. Very few studies regarding PSM use a moderated mediation approach, and none have done so with turnover intention as an outcome. This study aims to add to the scientific debate by looking at both moderation and mediation simultaneously.

1.3 Societal relevance

This research aims to have a significant societal contribution by exploring the role of PSM in the private sector and the role it can play in reducing turnover intention. Organizations are using more incentives to attract new employees to their organizations, and as mentioned in the introduction, turnover intention can lead to higher cost and lower productivity. While the link between PSM and turnover intention is already explored in the public sector, there is also importance for understanding this relationship in the private sector, because of the growing impact of private sector organizations in the public sector.

Organizations in the private sector have become more important in providing public welfare. Ever since the trend of New Public Management, governments have been shifted towards an output orientation (Schedler & Proeller, 2000). With public sector organizations being pressured towards a market-orientation, this trend has shifted governments toward privatization, and a retrenchment of the public welfare (Diefenbach, 2009).

Running counter to the trend of welfare state retrenchment, is the trend of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR). The essence of CSR is that private organizations meet the economic, legal, ethical and philanthropic expectations that society has of organizations. The combination of New Public Management and CSR has created a situation in which private organizations are becoming more important in providing public welfare. This means that the performance of private sector organizations will become more important in providing public welfare.

With private sector organizations getting more responsibilities regarding public welfare provision, it can be assumed that these private sector organizations will shift towards public values and higher SIP. Due to this change in private organizations, the motivation to contribute to the public becomes a more important factor in the motivation of employees. In other words,

private sector organizations will provide a better PE fit for individuals with high levels of PSM, meaning PSM will play a bigger role in reducing turnover intention. Because turnover intention can be detrimental for costs and productivity, helping private sector organizations better understand the importance of PSM, may help improve their productivity and thus their public welfare provision.

Furthermore, this study will also contribute to the discussion on consultancy in the public sector. Increasingly, national governments rely on outsourced consultancy. In 2022, the total expenditure on consultancy was over two billion euros, almost double that of 2017 and almost fivefold the amount spent on consultancy in 2001 (Engelen, 23-08-2023). This development is not welcomed with open arms by everyone. In her book 'The Big Con', Mariana Mazzucato blames the consulting sector for the breakdown of public services, claiming that the consultancy industry infantilizes the government (Mazzucato & Collington, 2023). This study aims to contribute to the discussion on consultancy in the public sector, by focusing on PSM and on public values and societal impact potential as moderators. Mazzucato & Collington (2023) acknowledge that the picture they sketch is not exemplary for all consultancy firms. By focusing on the PSM of consultants and the presence of public values and societal impact potential, this study helps to create a more complete image of consultancy firms and may help the public sector make better decisions when utilizing consultancy firms for advice.

This study also aims to contribute to reducing employee turnover intention in consultancy firms. Consultancy firms are very high demanding workplaces, with high rates of turnover. Turnover intention can be viewed as one of the final steps towards actual turnover, implicating that the high rates of turnover intention in consultancy firms are indicators of a larger trend of dissatisfaction among consultancy firm employees. By drawing motivation from a source which has previously not been associated with the consultancy sector, in this case PSM, they could find unexplored opportunities for improving their work environment. By creating a better understanding of PSM in consultancy firms, they may not only be able to reduce turnover intention, but also improve employee well-being in general.

1.4 Context

This thesis will look at the consultancy sector to study the relationship between PSM and turnover intention. Consultancy firms are not exempt from the tight labor market, and they already deal with high levels of turnover (Consultancy.nl, 18-04-2016).

On top of that, the consultancy sector lends itself well to research into PSM. Even though consultancy firms are private organizations, they play a big role in the public sector. As

mentioned previously, government expenditure on consultancy has increased drastically. Through privatization the line between public and private has become blurred and the interests have become more intertwined (Engelen, 23-08-2023). Paired with the increasing need for legitimacy, and the call for consultancy in the public sector will probably continue to increase. This study attempts to test the research model by distinguishing between two types of consultancy firms. The first type of consultancy firms are those that focus solely on societal impact. This means that all their projects are done for public sector organizations, or organizations that are focused on making a positive impact on society. The second type of consultancy firms are those that have a broader scope of potential clients, and do not necessarily differentiate between the public sector and the private sector. For these consultancy firms, like ‘the big four’ for example, consulting in the public sector has become part of their strategy, and contributes to higher profits. These consultancy firms will take on projects for the public sector not necessarily based on their ideals, but rather from a commercial approach. The consultancy sector has been criticized for this approach; providing universal but superficial solutions for the public sector, that do not hold in the long term (Engelen, 23-08-2023).

This study focuses on consultancy firms in the Netherlands and Belgium. As mentioned above, the effect of consultancy on the public sector is noticeable in the government expenditure, With over 1.5 billion in Belgium since 2019, and over 2 billion in the Netherlands in 2022 alone (Romans, 23-05-2023; Mooijman, 03-06-2023). In both Belgium and the Netherlands, a similar sentiment towards consultancy is also noticeable. The similarity of the situation the Netherlands and Belgium find themselves in, makes them suitable to do research in simultaneously.

1.5 Research Question

By examining these two types of consultancy firms, the aim of this study is to look at the mediating effect of PO fit and PJ fit on the PSM-turnover intention relationship in private sector consultancy firms, while also looking at the moderating effect of public values and SIP on PO fit and PJ fit. In order to achieve these objectives, the goal of this thesis is to answer the following research question:

To what extent does the indirect effect of Public Service Motivation, mediated by PO fit and PE fit affect the turnover intention of Dutch and Belgian consultancy firm employees, and how is PO fit affected by public values and PJ fit affected by societal impact potential?

2. Theoretical Framework

In the Theoretical framework, the concepts from the research question will be explored through previous literature, and the hypotheses for the thesis will be formulated. First, the concept of turnover intention will be explored. After that the focus will be on public service motivation and the relationship between PSM and turnover intention. Then, the theoretical framework explores the concept of person-environment fit, and the dimensions that it consists of. Moreover, a decision will be made regarding which dimensions of person-environment fit will be examined in this thesis. The final concepts explored in the theoretical framework are publicness, public values, and societal impact potential. Finally, the hypotheses for the research question are formulated, and a theoretical model will be presented.

2.1 Turnover intention

Turnover intention is a widely researched topic in the scientific literature, and has also been expressed as the intention to quit or intention to leave. Turnover intention in scientific literature is argued to be a persistent problem for organizations and especially for HR, due to the cost of advertising, recruitment, selection, and hiring. In a tight labor markets turnover becomes more prominent, as the perception of available job alternatives is positively related to turnover (Cotton & Tuttle, 1986).

An important assumption underlying the importance of turnover intention, is that turnover intention leads to actual turnover behavior. If turnover intention did not lead to actual turnover behavior, then the negative outcomes attributed to turnover intention would not be validated. Although studies often find that turnover intention is a strong predictor of actual turnover - and sometimes even the strongest predictor or only predictor - (Mobley, Horner & Hollingsworth, 1978; Cotton & Tuttle, 1986; Tett & Meyer, 1993; Cho & Lewis, 2012) a point of attention is that although turnover intention is the strongest predictor, the strength of the relationship has been found to be modest. This implies that turnover intention cannot be viewed as a surrogate to actual turnover, since it does not fully predict turnover behavior (Tett & Meyer, 1993, Cho & Lewis, 2012).

Due to the modest strength between the two outcomes, and turnover intention not fully predicting actual turnover, some attention in the literature has aimed to answer the question when turnover intentions predict actual turnover behavior. Early research by Mobley et al. (1978) looked at the withdrawal process of employees, drawing on theoretical work on the job

satisfaction-turnover relationship. They hypothesized that between dissatisfaction and turnover a variety of cognitive and behavioral phenomena occur, and that turnover intention would be the immediate precursor for actual turnover. Their research findings supported this hypothesis, concluding that turnover intention was the only variable that was significantly related to actual turnover (Mobley et al. 1978).

To better understand when turnover intention leads to actual turnover, Vandenberg & Barnes Nelson (1999) argued that the variability between turnover intention and turnover behavior could be explained in part by the different motives that individuals have for stating a high turnover intention. They distinguish between two sets of motives. The first is the specific-motive, which is when the motive for turnover is linked to something very specific that has high salience to them and is not being fulfilled. The second is the global-motive, which entails employees who feel little commitment to the organizations, its goals, and its values as a whole (Vandenberg & Barnes Nelson, 1999). Since specific-motives are more easily resolved than global-motives, the assumption is that this latter group will show higher turnover behavior compared to the former. To test their hypotheses, they conducted a longitudinal study comparing turnover intention levels between three groups; a control group, employees with specific-motives, and employees with global-motives. Their findings supported their hypothesis that turnover intention motivated by disaffection with the organization and its values resulted in turnover behavior, while those with specific-motives saw their turnover intention decrease over time.

In the case of the consultancy sector, we know that consultancy firms deal with high turnover rates (Kubr, 2002), and therefore also deal with high turnover intention. Consultancy firms often implement practices for a better work-life balance or to reduce stress among consultants (Bouwmeester, Atkinson, Noury & Ruotsalainen, 2021). Relating this back to Vandenberg & Barnes Nelson (1999) these practices can be seen as a response to specific-motive turnover intention. However, based on their research it is known that it is employees who experience global-motives, little commitment and dissatisfaction with their organization, whose turnover intention more often leads to turnover behavior. The abovementioned practices do not seem to combat these motives. A way to possibly address commitment and dissatisfaction of employees is through motivation. In the next section the role of Public Service Motivation in reducing turnover is discussed.

2.2 Public Service Motivation

The term Public Service Motivation (PSM) was coined by Perry & Wise (1990), who defined it as *'an individual's predisposition to respond to motives grounded primarily or uniquely in public institutions and organizations'* (Perry & Wise, 1990 p. 368). They distinguished three potential behavioral implications regarding PSM. Firstly, that greater levels of PSM would make it more likely that an individual would seek employment in a public organization. Secondly, that PSM would be positively related to performance in public sector organizations. And finally, that public organizations that attract members with high PSM would be less dependent on other incentives to manage individual performance effectively (Perry & Wise, 1990). PSM was therefore thought to be related to a number of positive outcomes for employees in the public sector.

In later research, Brewer & Selden (1998) defined PSM more broadly, as *'the motivational force that induces individuals to perform meaningful ... public, community and social service'* (p. 417). Rainey & Steinbauer (1999) later added their own broader definition: *'a general altruistic motivation to serve the interests of a community of people, a state, a nation or humankind'* (p. 20). One of the more recent definitions of PSM that gained attention was that by Vandenabeele, who defined it as *'the belief, values and attitudes that go beyond self-interest and organizational interest, that concern the interest of a larger political entity and that motivate individuals to accordingly whenever appropriate'* (Vandenabeele, 2007 p. 547), also adding values as a component of the definition. These definitions are more global and fit better in a private sector context.

In order to further develop PSM, Perry developed a model for measuring PSM. His model initially consisted of six dimensions: attraction to public policy making, commitment to the public interest, civic duty, social justice, self-sacrifice and compassion. In the end, he ended with a four-dimensional model, consisting of attraction to public policy making, commitment to the public interest, compassion and self-sacrifice (Perry, 1996).

PSM remains a fuzzy concept, and the measurement of PSM is still debated in literature. Not only the measurement scale itself questioned (Kim, 2009; Ritz, 2011), but also its generalizability. Vandenabeele & Van de Walle (2008) did research in 38 countries, and found evidence of PSM in most countries, but with variance between regions. Because of the variance between regions, the measurement scale by Perry (1996) is found to not always be applicable outside the United States. Vandenabeele (2008) developed a measurement instrument in a non-United States environment, finding some evidence that *'democratic governance'* as an additional dimension could supplement the other dimensions. On the other hand, other

researchers have found that different measures of PSM were highly correlated, and have emphasized the usefulness of a global measure (Wright, Christensen & Pandey, 2013).

2.2.1 PSM & turnover intention

Regarding PSM and turnover intention, the assumption is that PSM is negatively correlated with turnover intention in the public sector. This assumption is embedded in the idea that employees with high levels of PSM are expected to pursue careers in the public sector and are more likely to endure the obstacles and stresses that come with public sector jobs (Shim, Park & Eom, 2017).

Research on the relationship between PSM and turnover intention does indeed often show that PSM has a negative relationship with turnover intention. Studies either find a direct relationship between PSM and turnover intention (Naff & Crum, 1999; Park & Rainey, 2008; Ritz, Brewer & Neumann, 2016; Shim, Park & Eom, 2017), or an indirect relationship through a mediating variable (Crewson, 1997; Bright, 2008; Steijn, 2008; Shim, Park & Eom, 2017).

Despite these findings, it cannot be said that the relationship between PSM and turnover intention is straightforward. According to the meta-analysis by Ritz et al. (2016), some studies find no negative relationship between PSM and turnover, but a neutral or positive relationship. Kim (2015) found that three dimensions of PSM had a negative relationship with turnover, whereas the dimension of self-sacrifice had a positive relationship with turnover. Furthermore, other studies find that PSM has no direct effect on turnover intention, but rather that another variable mediates the relationship (Crewson, 1997; Shim et al. 2017; Bright, 2008; Steijn, 2008)

2.2.2 PSM in the private sector

Though there is abundant literature on the effects of PSM on turnover intention, most studies on PSM and turnover intention focus on the public sector, with little focus being put on PSM in the private sector. This is not entirely surprising, given the fact that the initial definition of PSM given by Perry & Wise (1990) is about an individual's predisposition to respond to motives in public institutions and organizations. Furthermore, one of the main assumptions made is that greater levels of PSM make it more likely an individual seeks employment in a public organization. For the aim of this thesis however, it is important to explore the previous research on PSM done in the private sector.

Studies comparing PSM levels between the public and private sector initially supported the abovementioned assumption. Steijn (2008) found that levels of PSM were higher in the public sector compared to the private sector among Dutch employees. In addition, he hypothesized

that employees in the private sector with high levels of PSM, were more likely to seek employment in the public sector compared to employees in the private sector with low levels of PSM. This implicates higher turnover intention in the private sector among workers with high PSM. Liu, Hui, Hu, Yang & Yu (2011) also found that greater levels of PSM meant that employees were more likely to seek employment in the public sector. Liu et al. (2012) found that PSM levels of public-sector employees were higher than those of private-sector employees, especially in the dimensions attraction to public policymaking and commitment to the public interest. Further evidence substantiates this sector difference, with a study by Kjeldsen & Hansen (2018) confirming that PSM has a positive effect on job satisfaction in the public sector, but a negative effect on job satisfaction in the private sector.

If findings confirm that PSM levels are higher in the public sector than the private sector, why does further research on PSM and turnover intention in the private sector matter? As already mentioned, Perry & Wise (1990) emphasized that it is not only the locus of employment that matters. PSM signifies more than that. The aforementioned newer definitions that came after that of Perry & Wise (1990) also provide a more global definition for PSM, which transcends the public sector (Brewer & Selden, 1998; Rainey & Steinbauer, 1999).

This broader view of PSM was later substantiated by Houston (2011). In his research on employees from 11 different North-American and European countries, he finds that both the locus of employment, and the focus of employment are important to public service motivation. But other findings even go beyond that. Christensen & Wright (2011) found that employees with higher levels of PSM were more likely to accept jobs that emphasize service to others, regardless of the sector of employment. The notion that PSM is related more to the type of work than the sector itself is supported in further work by Kjeldsen & Jacobsen (2013), who studied PSM and attraction to public sector employment in Danish physiotherapy students.

As mentioned in the introduction, Andersen et al. (2011) even found that within the occupation of Danish physiotherapists, there were no differences in levels of PSM when an additional dimension of ‘user orientation’ was added to the PSM measurement.

Even though Andersen et al. (2011) were careful in generalizing their findings toward other contexts, these findings are promising for further exploration of PSM in the private sector. It seems that merely dividing organizations between public and private sector organizations does not tell the whole story. For consultancy firms, PSM could be relevant if their employees feel that they can positively contribute to society in their work.

2.3 Dimensions of Person-Environment fit

In the case of PSM and for example consultancy firms, the article by Andersen et al. (2011) can be used to argue that for PSM to have positive outcomes the employee needs to be able to exert their motivation in their job. A theory positing this idea is the theory of person-environment fit. Person-environment fit (PE fit) is defined by Kristof-Brown, Zimmerman and Johnson (2005) as *'the compatibility between an individual and a work environment that occurs when their characteristics are well matched'* (p. 281). In their meta-analysis they summarize the literature on PE fit regarding four critical domains: person-job (PJ), person-organization (PO), person-group (PG), and person-supervisor (PS) fit. Their meta-analysis found that studies that assessed multiple types of fit, most often report a unique prediction attributable to each type (Kristof-Brown et al. 2005). These results suggest that PE fit is a multidimensional concept, consisting of multiple subtypes of fit. With that in mind, it is possible to discern multiple subtypes of fit, and study them individually rather than all together as one concept of PE fit.

The first dimension, PJ fit, refers to the relationship between a person's characteristics and those of the job or tasks that are performed at work. There are two basic conceptualizations of PJ fit. The first is the demands-abilities fit, which occurs when an employees' abilities, knowledge and skills are proportional to the demands of the job. The second form of PJ fit is the needs-supplies fit, which occurs when an employees' needs, desires or preferences are met by the jobs they perform (Kristof-Brown et al. 2005).

The second dimension, PO fit, refers to the fit of an employee with the entire organization. The origins of PO fit lie with Tom (1971) who suggested that people tend to prefer organizations which they perceive to be similar to their own personalities. This is in line with later research on the attraction-selection-attrition framework, which is used to argue that individuals seek out situations that are attractive to them (Schneider, 1987), and confirmed in later research (Judge & Cable, 1997). The operationalization of PO fit is widely accepted to be value congruence (Kristof, 1996).

The third dimension, PG fit, refers to the fit between individuals and their workgroups. This dimension of fit has had the least attention of all types of fit according to Kristof-Brown et al. (2005), with only a handful of studies examining the fit on characteristics such as goals and values, and some studies also focusing on PG fit and personality traits.

The fourth and final dimension, PS fit, refers to a two-person relationship fit focused on the fit between an individual and supervisor. PS fit entails specifically the fit of an individual to a supervisors' characteristics (Kristof-Brown et al. 2005).

2.3.1 PO fit, PJ fit & turnover intention

Relating the theory on Person Environment fit back to turnover intention shows that there is already some evidence that an employees' environment does have an impact on turnover intention. The findings by Vandenberg & Barnes Nelson (1999) are relevant for this relationship because it supports the argument that when turnover intention is related to a bad fit between an individual and the organizational goals and values, this leads to actual turnover behavior. This suggests that Person-Environment fit is relevant for turnover intention. Studies have found evidence supporting this assumption. Tak (2011) looked at the relationship between three dimensions of PE fit (PJ fit, PO fit and PS fit), and found that all three dimensions were correlated to turnover intention, with person-job fit correlating more strongly than the other two. On the contrary, when it came to turnover behavior only PO fit was a significant predictor of actual turnover. Kristof-Brown et al. (2005) also found a relationship between PE fit and turnover intention, with the dimensions of PO fit and PJ fit correlating significantly to turnover intention. Another study by Andela & van der Doef (2019) found that all four dimensions of PE fit were positively related to job satisfaction and negatively related to burnout and turnover intention, but PJ fit and PO fit were correlated more strongly with these three outcomes compared to the other two dimensions.

2.3.2 PSM, PO fit, PJ fit & turnover intention

The relationship between PO fit, PJ fit and turnover intention raises the question whether PSM has a direct effect on turnover intention, or instead that the relationship is mediated by the variable fit. Bright (2008) leans on the inconsistencies in the PSM literature to build his argument for PO fit as a mediator between PSM and turnover intention. He mentions for example that one would expect employees with high levels of PSM to have lower turnover intention and therefore be working longer within public organizations. On the contrary, research has found that there is a significant negative relationship between PSM and tenure in public organizations (Moynihan & Pandey, 2007). In his study, Bright (2008) found that PSM had no significant relationship to turnover intention when PO fit was considered. Gould-Williams, Mostafa & Bottomley (2015) would substantiate this argument, also finding that PO fit had a mediating effect on the relationship between PSM and turnover intention in the Egyptian public sector. Steijn (2008) also found that employees with PSM who felt their needs were met had lower intention to leave. Furthermore, he found that employees with high PSM in the private sector were more likely to seek employment in the public sector.

In short, previous studies have found that PSM positively affects PO fit within the public sector (Gould-Williams et al. 2015), and that high PSM combined with a good 'fit' leads to positive outcomes regarding turnover intention (Bright, 2008; Steijn, 2008; Gould-Williams et al. 2015). When it comes to the private sector however, it seems that high levels of PSM are met with higher turnover intention, with Steijn (2008) concluding that employees with high levels of PSM are more inclined to seek employment in the public sector.

The assumption that employees with high levels of PSM whose needs are not met are more inclined to seek other employment might be true, but the underlying explanation why their needs are not met is limited. The conclusion that the sector of employment is the reason for a poor PE fit seems rash. What still misses in the theoretical model, is a better understanding of what provides a good PO fit and PJ fit for employees with high PSM, going further than just public sector versus private sector.

2.4 Publicness

Bozeman (1987) makes the bold claim that all organizations are public, and that organizations whether public or private have a degree of 'publicness'. In later research, he distinguishes between two approaches when it comes to defining organizations: the core approach, and the dimensional approach (Bozeman & Bretschneider, 1994).

In the core approach, it is assumed that organizations are either public or private based on their legal status. This is the traditional approach also taken when it comes to research on PSM. The main advantage of the core approach is that it is easy to classify organizations based on legal status (government owned vs. privately owned), and that there is plenty of empirical research on distinctive characteristics of public organizations (Bozeman & Bretschneider, 1994).

The main downside of the core approach is that it has become increasingly difficult to classify organizations as purely public or purely private. The boundary between the two has become blurred, with public organizations taking on private characteristics and the other way around (Antonsen & Jorgensen, 1997; Jorgensen, 1999). Furthermore, the core approach is descriptive but not theoretical. It does not provide a theoretical explanation as to why this distinction is made (Bozeman & Bretschneider, 1994; Antonsen & Jorgensen, 1997).

The second approach distinguished by Bozeman & Bretschneider (1994) better tackles these issues. The dimensional approach assumes that the differences between public and private are a matter of degree. There are few organizations that are purely public or private, instead most organizations consists of a mix of public and private authority influences (Bozeman &

Bretschneider, 1994). Thus, this approach allows for matters of degree of publicness, allowing for a classification of organizations based on publicness instead of sector.

2.4.1 Public Values

Bozeman & Bretschneider (1994) do not examine the many conceptualizations of ‘publicness’, but simply compare between a core approach based on ownership, and a dimensional approach based on external political authority. In order to further conceptualize ‘publicness’, we can look at the concept of public values. Antonsen & Jorgensen (1997) focus on public sector values, arguing that the task performed is not the most important aspect, but rather the values that organizations feel obligated to while pursuing the tasks. They divided public organizations into two groups that either had ‘high publicness’, or ‘low publicness’. Although they state that it is possible to identify ‘public organization’ as a distinct and distinctive organizations, the authors acknowledge that the discrepancy in degree of publicness between the public organizations blurs the picture and that organizations with ‘low publicness’ explain why it is difficult to make distinctions between the public and private sector (Antonsen & Jorgensen, 1997). Further research on public values by Jorgensen & Bozeman (2007) led to the development of a preliminary inventory of public values, in which they identified seven constellations of public values. They conclude that public values are not governmental, and that private actors also have public value obligations (Jorgensen & Bozeman, 2007). This supports the notion that public values are not the same as public sector values, and that the private sector may also have public values. The consultancy sector lends itself well to research into public values. As consultants work so closely together with public sector organizations, they are likely to adopt public values. Since consultancy firms have varying client pools, it can be expected that the degree of publicness between these organizations differs as well. If the values of an organization matter more than the task (Antonsen & Jorgensen, 2002), it can be theorized that organizations that put more emphasis on working for public sector organizations hold different values than those organizations that do not have that same focus.

2.4.2 Societal Impact Potential

Another concept that further contextualizes why publicness is relevant for PSM in the private sector is that of societal impact potential (SIP). SIP entails the perception of employees that their job provides opportunities to make meaningful contributions to society. Van Loon et al. (2018) conducted a study on the relationship between PSM and performance using longitudinal data to improve the understanding of this relationship. But more importantly, they moderated

the relationship with SIP. Their starting point was that in order for PSM to have an important role for performance, employees would have to be able to actually contribute to society. They combine theory on publicness and PE fit to argue that SIP can be seen as a moderator on the job level. The results showed that SIP moderated the PSM-performance association. For employees who perceived their job as having a low SIP, PSM correlated weakly with performance or did not correlate at all, while there was strong correlation between PSM and perceived performance when SIP was regarded as high (Van Loon et al. 2018).

These findings are very interesting, because they relate publicness to PSM through the concept of SIP. The authors take an institutional approach to publicness, which allows for normative elements, such as public values and perceived SIP, to play a role for PSM. For the consultancy sector, this would imply that if a consultancy firm is focused solely on the public sector, it can be assumed that their employees would perceive that their SIP is higher compared to other regular consultancy firms.

2.5 Theoretical model

The theory on publicness, and the concepts of public values and SIP, help to complete the picture of the thesis. Even though the relationship of PSM with turnover intention and the mediation of this relationship by 'fit' has been thoroughly researched in the public sector, there is still very little research on this relationship in the private sector. When PSM and turnover are studied in the private sector, higher levels of PSM are positively related to turnover intention, and when a type of fit is included in research on PSM in the private sector, there is often a negative fit found.

However, these studies are based on a core approach to organizations. As pointed out by Bozeman & Bretschneider (1994), this approach has its disadvantages, as it does not allow for a good assertion of outliers or provide theoretical explanation. The dimensional approach allows for a scale of publicness, and thus a better approach to outlying organizations. This study will therefore focus on the concepts of public values and SIP to see how they impact the PE fit. As already discussed, the dimensions of PO fit and PJ fit had the strongest relationship when it comes to PSM and turnover intention. Therefore this study will focus on these two dimensions. Since SIP is viewed as a specific type of PJ fit, the focus will be on the relationship between SIP and PJ fit. The expectation is therefore that there is a stronger positive relation between PSM and PJ fit, if the SIP is perceived as high.

Because public values in the literature are researched on the organizational level, the focus will be on the relationship between public values and PO fit. This is substantiated by the idea that

individuals seek out organizations that are similar to their personality. Kristof (1996) also argues for value congruence as the operationalization of PO fit. The expectation is that the relationship between PSM and PO fit is positive when public values are perceived as high.

This thesis argues that the degree of publicness, measured by SIP and public values, determines whether there is a good PE fit in the PSM-turnover intention relationship in private sector consultancy firms. Based on previous literature, this study also argues that PE fit, measured here by PO fit and PJ fit, mediates the relationship between PSM and turnover intention. The hypotheses are as follows:

Hypothesis 1: The relationship between PSM and PO-fit is positively moderated by public values

Hypothesis 2: The relationship between PSM and PJ -fit is positively moderated by societal impact potential (SIP)

Hypothesis 3: The effect of PSM on turnover intention is one of moderated mediation through Public Values and PO-fit respectively

Hypothesis 4: The effect of PSM on turnover intention is one of moderated mediation through societal impact potential (SIP) and PJ-fit respectively

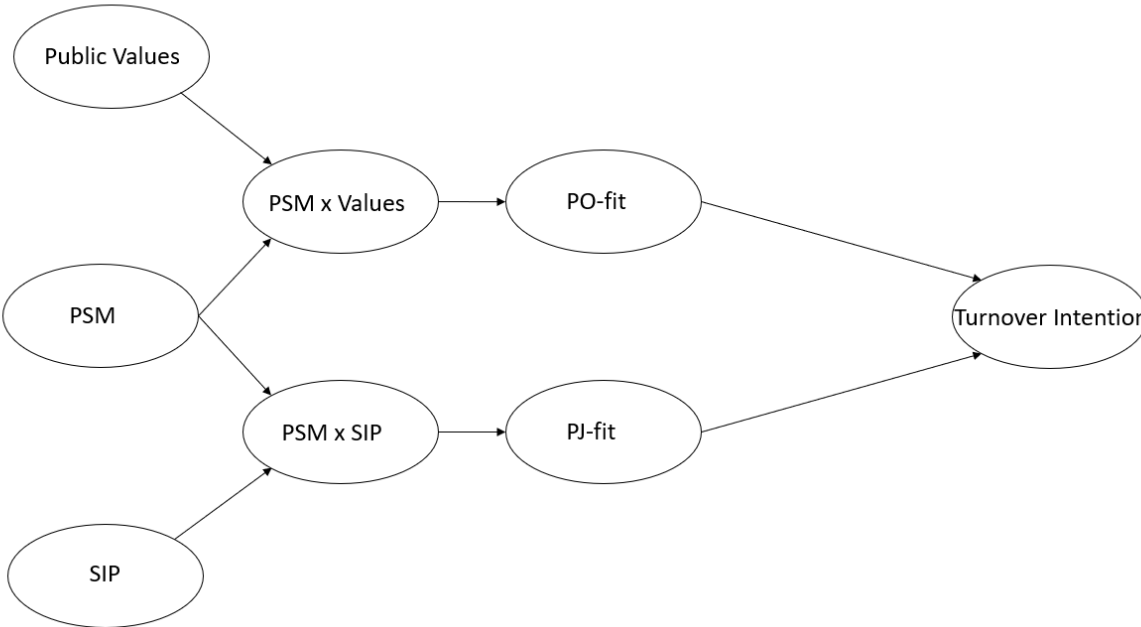


Figure 1. Theoretical model for moderated mediation

3. Methods

3.1 Data & Design

Since measurement tools for the concepts used in the theoretical framework are researched through quantitative studies, this research will also use a quantitative, cross-sectional design. By doing cross-sectional research, the external validity of the study can be improved.

The research was carried out in Belgium and the Netherlands. The decision to put out the survey in both countries was made because of theoretical and practical considerations. Since Belgium and the Netherlands are similar, it is unlikely that the context affects PSM and other outcomes. A practical consideration was that the researcher had connections in the consultancy sector in both countries, making it more feasible to get adequate response to the survey. The choice for these two countries was done

The survey consisted of three parts. In the introduction, the main aim of the survey was explained to the participants, and the respondents were asked to agree with the General Data Protection Regulation. In the European Union, it is obligatory to include this information and have respondents agree with the terms, in order to collect personal data. Next, the respondents were asked to answer questions related to sociodemographic characteristics such as age, gender, education level, work experience within the consultancy sector, and work experience in the public sector. In the third and final part of the survey, respondents were asked to answer to questions pertaining to the study variables, on a scale from 1 to 5. The survey is included in the appendix (Appendix 1).

The survey was spread through personal connections within consultancies. These connections received a link to the survey, as well as a factsheet containing information about the study, the goal of the survey and its content (see Appendix 2). These personal connections then distributed the survey within the organization, in order to gather more response.

Initially, the idea was to collect data from a select few consultancy firms, and divide the respondents into two groups. One of the groups of respondents would be employed at a consultancy firm that had a generic client pool, not focusing exclusively on the public sector. The other group of respondents would be employed at consultancy firms that only did projects for the public sector, or projects with direct societal impact. The reason for choosing to limit data collection to a few consultancy firms was made to improve internal validity of the study, by limiting the effect of organizational differences on the study outcomes.

The initial steps in the data collection process went well, as personal connections within consultancy firms were willing to participate in the study and spread the survey within their organization. The response from within the organization was very low however, with only a few respondents per organization. It became clear that the idea of limiting the amount of organizations participating in the study was not achievable, and the decision was made to expand the data collection to as many organizations as possible. The data collection period was also extended, and lasted over three months from June 2023 until September 2023. Despite this, the response rate remained low. Another limiting factor in the data collection was the high attrition rate of the survey. In total, 112 respondents started the survey. Most respondents came from large or semi-large consultancy firms, but also a few respondents from smaller organizations partook in the survey. In total, consultants from 22 different organizations participated in the survey, but 71 of those respondents came from just five of those organizations. How this may have affected the results is discussed later in the conclusion. Out of 112 respondents, only 85 people started with the third part which includes the study variables. In the end, just 70 people fully completed the survey, meaning the total attrition rate of the survey was 38 percent, and the attrition rate of just the third part of the survey was 20 percent. The respondents that started the latter part of the survey were taken into account for the findings on the constructs for which they did fill in the survey, to increase the sample size for exploratory factor analysis. For the analysis of the full research model, only the respondents who fully completed the survey were taken into account.

Of the 85 respondents that started the study 56.47% of respondents was male, with the remaining 43.53% female. The average age of the respondents was 31.27, and all but one respondent had completed at least their higher vocational education. In order to test for representativeness, a Chi square test was performed for gender, to test whether the sample is representative for the population of consultants. For age, a representativeness test with confidence intervals is performed. If relevant data for the Netherlands and Belgium is absent, data from other countries is used to test for representativeness.

For gender, no data is obtainable from the Netherlands or Belgium. In the UK however, it was reported in 2019 that 47% of consultants were female (consultancy.uk, 08-03-2019). The ratio of male and female respondents in the study is therefore representative for the population, $\chi^2(1, N = 85) = .411, p < 0.05$.

For age, the average age of consultants in large firms in the Netherlands is reported to be around 32 years (Goldenberg & Saris, 08-03-2023). Testing for this study, the average age of 31.27

falls between the 95% CI (29.41 and 33.13 respectively), and is therefore representative for the population.

To test for moderated mediation, the Hayes process macro was used to directly test the theoretical model. For this research, a first stage moderated mediation model from the Hayes process macro was used to include both a moderator and a mediator variable (Hayes, 2015). The Hayes process macro includes several statistical models, to test for moderating and mediating effects. Since Hayes' process macro does not include a model with two moderators and two mediators, the upper and lower portion of the theoretical model were tested individually.

The statistical model used for testing is presented below in figure 1. The statistical model below includes moderation of independent variable X on mediator M by moderator variable W. Here, the interaction variable XW is used to test for significant moderation. Model 7 from Hayes' process macro runs two multiple regression tests at the same time to test for moderated mediation (Hayes, 2015).

First a multiple regression with the mediator as an outcome to test for moderation. In this model, the moderating effect of public values and SIP (W) on the relationship between PSM (X) and the mediating variables PO fit and PJ fit (M) is measured. For simple moderation, the interaction term XW is included by multiplying the variables X and W (Dawson, 2014).

For the second part of the model, a multiple regression with the dependent variable turnover intention (Y) as the outcome to test for moderated mediation is run. The effect of X on Y through M is measured, including the moderating effect of W on the relationship between X and M. The effect of the control variables U on M and Y is also included in the statistical model.

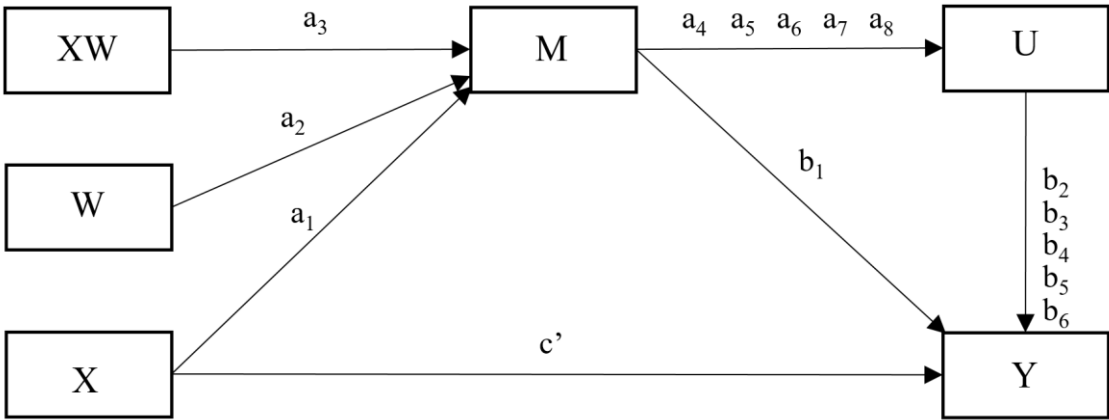


Figure 1. Statistical model for testing moderated mediation

3.2 Operationalizing concepts

To operationalize the concepts of the theoretical model, multi-item measurements from previous studies were used in the survey. An exploratory factor analysis (EFA) was conducted to determine whether the study variables used in the survey were indeed suitable for factor analysis. For this purpose two tests were performed, namely the Kaiser-Meyer Olkin measure of sampling adequacy (KMO) and Bartlett's test of sphericity. In order to conduct EFA, all constructs should have KMO values greater than 0.6 and a Bartlett's test of sphericity significance below 0.05. McDonald's Omega was also tested for reliability, and should score above 0.7. For all constructs mentioned from here on, scores for all three tests were sufficient to conduct EFA (see Appendix 3).

3.2.1 PSM

The most used measurement for PSM has been the four-dimensional model introduced by Perry (1996). In his research he finds four dimensions of PSM to measure the concept significantly; attraction to public policy making, commitment to the public interest, compassion, and self-sacrifice. The main criticism on this measurement scale is that the scale is too long for inclusion in multi-purpose surveys (Coursey & Pandey, 2007), as well as contextual adaptation (Giauque, Ritz, Varone & Anderfuhren-Biget, 2011). In an attempt to make an internationally viable PSM measurement scale, Vandenabeele & Penning de Vries came up with a four-item measurement scale for PSM in an unreleased article. This four-item measurement scale will also be used in this research, with the addition of two dummy variables, the questions 'our society is just a sum of individuals' and 'the cohesion of our society is not what it used to be'. Based on the outcomes of the EFA, these dummy questions indeed did not load on the same factor, and the remaining 4 items that measured PSM loaded and resulted in one factor (see Table 1).

Table 1. Factor loadings for PSM

	Factor 1
I am very motivated to contribute to society	.892
I find it very motivating to contribute to society	.911
Making a difference in society, no matter how small, is very important to me	.768
Defending the public interest is very important to me	.619

3.2.2 PO fit and PJ fit

As has been mentioned in the theoretical framework, PE fit has been divided in four different dimensions by Kristof-Brown et al. (2005), but from previous literature into the mediating relationship of PE fit on the PSM-turnover intention relationship, and other literature on the relationship between PE fit and turnover intention, the two dimensions of PO fit and PJ fit were significantly stronger than the dimensions of PG fit and PS fit. Therefore, this study will operationalize PE fit as only the dimensions of PO fit and PJ fit. Since the measurement of fit is based on employees' response to the survey, PO fit and PJ fit are measured is subjective fit, how well employees judge that they fit. In that case, direct measures of fit are beneficial (Kristof-Brown et al. 2005). Still, studies researching PSM and fit as a mediator use different measurements for fit. Bright (2007; 2008; 2021) has published numerous articles on the mediating effect of fit in a relationship between PSM and outcomes. In his most recent study, he looks at the mediating effect of both PO fit and PJ fit for the relationship between PSM and work stress (Bright, 2021). Since this is a recent study and one of the few that uses both PO fit and PJ fit, this study will use the same items to measure PO fit and PJ fit. Though the items in this study were measured on a 6-point scale, in order to leave the possibility for a neutral answer this study will use a 5-point Likert scale. Based on the outcomes of the EFA, all items that measured PO fit loaded on one factor, and the same goes for PJ fit (see Table 2).

Table 2. Factor loadings for dimensions of fit

	Factor 1
Person-organization fit	
My values and goals are very similar to the values and goals of my organization	.678
I feel a strong sense of belonging to my organization	.779
What this organization stands for is important to me	.833
Person-job fit	
My job fully utilizes my skills and abilities	.676
I enjoy my work more than anything else I do	.648
How satisfied are you with the meaningfulness of your job?	.814

3.2.3 Turnover Intention

Turnover intention in much research has been defined by using just a one item measurement (Steijn, 2008). However, there is a clear difference in the literature between studies using a single-item measurement or a multi-item measurement of turnover intention. Tett & Meyer (1993) found that a multi-item measurement of turnover intention was more reliable in predicting turnover than a single-item measurement. Mobley et al. (1978) use a three-item measurement for turnover intention, which was also validated in later research (Yin-Fah, Foon, Chee-Leong & Osman, 2010), who specifically used this measurement in the private sector. Based on the outcomes of the EFA, all items measuring turnover intention loaded on one factor (see Table 3).

Table 3. Factor loadings for Turnover Intention

	Factor 1
I think a lot about leaving the organization	.843
I am actively searching for an alternative to the organization	.990
As soon as it is possible, I will leave the organization	.866

3.2.4 Public Values & Societal Impact Potential

For the measurement of public values, we used Meynhardt's psychology-based public value approach. They define public value as value creation toward a common good (Meynhardt, Brieger & Hermann, 2020). They measure public value with a four-item measurement. Based on the outcomes of the EFA, the item 'the organization I work for does good work in its core business' was omitted. With this item included, the Public Values measurement scores lower in the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin test, $KMO = .634$, and McDonald's Omega = .726. By omitting this question from the measurement, KMO improves to .659, and McDonald's Omega to = .733 (see Table 4). Furthermore, the factor loading of this question (= 0.475) fell below .500, considerably lower than other items in the survey.

Why the question 'the organization I work for does good work in its core business' does not work as well in this research could have to do with the translation of the question into Dutch. Whereas the other questions in the public values measurement are quite obviously related to the organizations' values and public orientation (see appendix 1), this question could be interpreted differently when translated more literally. The phrasing 'good work' in English has

a deeper meaning, more related to ethics and values, whereas ‘good work’ translated into Dutch just means delivering good quality work. The other items all loaded on one factor (see Table 5). For Societal Impact Potential, Van loon et al. (2018) use a three-item measurement in their study, based on earlier research by Leisink & Steijn (2009). In this study the same three-item measurement for SIP is used. All three items loaded on the same factor (see Table 5).

Table 4. Kaiser-Meyer Olkin, Bartlett’s test of sphericity and McDonald’s omega for Public Values

	KMO	χ^2	df	Sig.	ω
4-item Public Values	.634	75.088	6	.000	.726
3-item Public Values	.659	49.887	3	.000	.733

Table 5. Factor loadings for Public Values and Societal Impact Potential

	Factor 1
Public Values	
The organization I work for behaves decently	.549
The organization I work for contributes to social cohesion in the Netherlands	.732
The organization I work for contributes to the quality of life in the Netherlands	.771
Societal Impact Potential	
I contribute to the development or execution of public policy in my job	.780
I contribute to the public interest through my job	.860
I contribute to achieving a greater degree of solidarity in our society through my job	.681

3.3 Control Variables

Besides age, gender and educational level, other control variables are also included to decrease the possibility of confounding variables, therefore improving internal validity. This control variables will be discussed in turn.

3.3.1 Perceived support

Perceived support is used as a control variable to control for organizational differences in support that may explain turnover intention. To control for perceived support, the dimensions

of perceived organizational support, perceived supervisor support, and perceived coworker support are included in the survey. The dimensions are derived from Hayton, Carnabuci & Eisenberger (2012). For all three constructs, all items loaded on one factor (see Table 6).

Table 6. Factor loadings for dimensions of perceived support

	Factor 1
Perceived Organizational Support	
The organizations is willing to help me when I need a special favor	.686
The organization shows very little concern for me	.733
The organization values my contribution to its well-being	.652
The organization strongly considers my goals and values	.712
Perceived Supervisor Support	
My supervisor really cares about my well-being	.872
My supervisor shows very little concern for me	.842
My supervisor strongly considers my goals and values	.753
My supervisor is willing to help me when I need a special favor	.656
My supervisor takes pride in my accomplishments at work	.583
Perceived Coworker Support	
My coworkers strongly consider my goals and values	.592
My coworkers take pride in my accomplishments at work	.663
My coworkers really care about my well-being	.795
My coworkers value my contribution to their well-being	.785

3.3.2 Work Tension

The variable work tension is also included, to control for the effect of work tension on turnover intention. This control variable is based on the dimension of job induced stress by House & Rizzo (1972). In this research, an updated version by Cook, Hepworth, Wall & Warr (1981) is implemented. For this measurement, two of the items loaded on a different factor than the other items, The items ‘my job tends to directly affect my health’ (see Table 7).

Table 7. Factor loadings for Work Tension

	Factor 1	Factor 2
My job tends to directly affect my health	-.046	.545
I work under a great deal of tension	.470	.351
I have felt fidgety or nervous as a result of my job	.480	.067
If I had a different job, my health would probably improve	-.004	.960
Problems associated with my job have kept me awake at night	.866	-.025
I have felt nervous before attending meetings in the company	.447	.028
I often 'take my job home with me' in the sense that I think about it when doing other things	.829	-.110

3.3.3 Continuance Commitment

Finally, continuance commitment is included as a control variable. Continuance commitment is part of the organizational commitment concept. The 'skeleton version' of the measurement for organizational commitment from Benkhoff (1997), consists of just six items and has been used in previous PSM literature (Vandenabeele, 2009; Vandenabeele & Ban, 2009). Of these six items, three are measuring continuance commitment, which is used in this study as a separate variable to control for. All three items loaded on the same factor (see Table 8).

Table 8. Factor loadings for Continuance Commitment

	Factor 1
It would take very little change in my present circumstances to cause me to leave the organization	.793
Deciding to work for this organization was a definite mistake on my part	.613
There is not too much to be gained by sticking with this organization indefinitely	.634

4. Results

4.1 Descriptive statistics

In total 85 people participated in the survey, with age varying from 23 to 64 with an average age of 31.27 (SD = 8.75). All participants are either male or female, with males and females being fairly equally represented. The educational level of the respondents varied from secondary vocational education to University education, with the overwhelming majority having finished their higher education. The respondents had an average of 4.64 years of working experience as consultants, and most did not have any experience in the public sector (see Table 9).

Table 9. Means, Standard Deviations and frequencies of descriptive variables.

Variable	Means/Frequency
Gender	
Male	48 (56.47%)
Female	37 (43.53%)
Non binary/Other	0 (0%)
Age (years)	31.27 (8.75)
Education level	
No formal education	0
Primary education	0
Secondary education	0
Secondary vocational education	1
Higher vocational education	10
University education	74
Experience as consultant (years)	4.64 (5.92)
Work experience public sector	
No experience	44
Less than 1 year	17
1-3 years	5
3-5 years	8
5+ years	11

Table 10. Means, Standard Deviations and Correlations between study variables

	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
1. Age	87	31.31	8.67	-												
2. Gendr	87	-	-	-.27*	-											
3. PSM	85	4.03	0.73	.05	.28*	-										
4. PO fit	83	3.76	0.81	.22*	.05	.32**	-									
5. PV	82	3.70	0.71	.08	.07	.20	.60**	-								
6. PJ fit	77	3.17	0.75	.34**	-.07	.17	.55**	.36**	-							
7. SIP	76	3.27	0.91	.21	.14	.30**	.47**	.37**	.39**	-						
8. TI	70	2.09	1.05	.01	-.02	-.10	-.58**	-.41**	-.33**	-.21	-					
9. POS	82	3.96	0.69	.13	-.02	.24*	.57**	.44**	.39**	.25*	-.44**	-				
10. PSS	79	3.95	0.72	.00	.21	.18	.23*	-.04	.18	.15	-.12	.52**	-			
11. PCS	76	3.92	0.61	.03	.12	.14	.37**	.31**	.50**	.27*	-.28*	.49**	.35**	-		
12. WT	72	2.95	0.83	.09	.09	-.06	-.24*	-.17	-.08	.04	.57**	-.36**	-.12	-.06	-	
13. CC	70	1.85	0.82	.01	-.03	0.01	-.39**	-.29*	-.25*	-.19	.78**	-.43**	-.20	-.26*	.48**	-

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$

Table 10 shows the means, standard deviations and correlations between the studies variables. PSM did not have a direct effect on turnover intention. Out of the moderators and mediators, only SIP did not correlate significantly with turnover intention. All moderators and mediators also significantly correlated to each other. For all correlations, see Table 10.

4.2 Moderated mediation for PO fit and Public Values

A multiple regression from Hayes' process macro (Hayes, 2015) was run with public values as moderator and PO fit as mediator, to test for hypotheses 1 and 3. The first model has PO fit as outcome variable, and tests for a moderating effect of public values on the relationship between PSM and PO fit. The model significantly predicted PO fit, $F(8, 61) = 8.218$, $p < 0.001$, $R^2 = .519$ (see Table 11).

Table 11. Unstandardized OLS regression coefficients with confidence intervals (SE in parentheses) estimating PO fit and Turnover intention.

	Person-organization fit (M)			Turnover Intention (Y)		
		Coefficients	90% CI		Coefficients	90% CI
PSM (X)	a ₁ →	0.171 (0.111)	-0.014, 0.357	c' →	0.014 (0.101)	-0.154, 0.182
PO fit (M)				b ₁ →	-0.420*** (0.102)	-0.591, -0.250
Public Values (W)	a ₂ →	0.520*** (0.125)	0.312, 0.729			
X x W	a ₃ →	0.128 (0.137)	-0.101, 0.357			
P. Organizational Support (U ₁)	a ₄ →	0.249 (0.169)	-0.033, 0.532	b ₂ →	0.145 (0.148)	-0.103, 0.393
P. Supervisor Support (U ₂)	a ₅ →	0.056 (0.134)	-0.168, 0.279	b ₃ →	0.096 (0.111)	-0.090, 0.282
P. Coworker Support (U ₃)	a ₆ →	0.019 (0.152)	-0.235, 0.273	b ₄ →	-0.131 (0.131)	-0.349, 0.088
Work Tension (U ₄)	a ₇ →	0.020 (0.110)	-0.164, 0.204	b ₅ →	0.338** (0.097)	0.177, 0.499
Continuance Commitment (U ₅)	a ₈ →	-0.180 (0.116)	-0.374, 0.014	b ₆ →	0.738*** (0.103)	0.565, 0.910
Constant	i _M →	0.959** (0.763)	-1.486, 4.033	i _Y →	0.865 (0.703)	-0.308, 2.039
			R ² = 0.519			R ² = 0.752
			F (8, 61) = 8.218, p < 0.001			F (7, 62) = 26.903, p < 0.001

[†]p < .10, *p < .05, **p < .01, ***p < .001. P. = abbreviation for 'Perceived'

The Beta between public values and PO fit is significant ($p < 0.001$). The table should be interpreted through the confidence intervals (CI). With 90% CI, an estimation of the effect at the 5th and 95th percentile of the sample size is made. The table includes the lower limit confidence interval (LLCI) and upper limit confidence interval (ULCI). If this confidence interval includes zero, there is a possibility of no effect between the two variables. If this is the case for the interaction variable XW, then one cannot exclude no relationship between the moderator and the indirect effect as a possibility. Therefore, if zero falls between the LLCI and the ULCI, there is no evidence of a statistically significant moderation of the mediation between X and M. Since the confidence intervals of the interaction term include zero, there is no evidence of moderation between PSM and PO fit ($p = .355$). Hypothesis 1 'The relationship between PSM and PO-fit is positively moderated by public values' is therefore rejected.

The second model tests for moderated mediation on the dependent variable Turnover Intention. The model significantly predicted Turnover Intention $F(7, 62) = 26.903, p < 0.001, R^2 = .752$ (see table 11). In this model, the Beta between PO fit and Turnover Intention is significant ($p < 0.001$). The index for moderated mediation indicates an effect = $-.054$ with an LLCI and ULCI of $-.206$ and $.039$ respectively. Since zero falls between the intervals, there is no evidence of a statistically significant moderated mediation effect as was hypothesized. Hypothesis 3 'The

effect of PSM on turnover intention is one of moderated mediation through public values and PO-fit respectively' is therefore rejected.

Looking at the outcomes in more detail, Hayes' process macro tests moderation between PSM and PO fit by calculating the CI at -1 standard deviation, the mean, and +1 standard deviation of the moderator. In this case, the standard deviation of the moderator is $SD = 0.757$, so the LLCI and ULCI are calculated in the table below. As can be derived from Table 12, there seems to be a stronger effect between PSM and PO fit when respondents score average and high in public values, since the LLCI is closer to zero (LLCI = -0.014 and -0.004), though not significant ($p = .128$ and $.104$ respectively), and with 90%CI.

Table 12. Effect of PSM on PO fit with low, average, and high public values

Difference from Mean	Effect	LLCI	ULCI
-0.757	0.075	-0.160	0.309
0.000	0.171	-0.014	0.357
0.757	0.268	-0.004	0.540

Looking at table 13, the same calculations are made in the second model testing for moderated mediation. Here the same pattern is shown, with the effect of PSM on Turnover Intention through PO fit becoming greater with public values increasing. For the moderated mediation, the LLCI and ULCI for public values at +1SD are both negative, indicating a small effect of moderated mediation on the relationship between PSM and Turnover Intention (effect = -0.113), though not significant.

Table 13. Effect of PSM on TI through PO fit with low, average, and high public values

Difference from Mean	Effect	LLCI	ULCI
-0.757	-0.031	-0.170	0.142
0.000	-0.072	-0.173	0.013
0.757	-0.113	-0.238	-0.023

4.2.2 Moderated mediation for PJ fit and Societal Impact Potential

The same model used to test moderated mediation with public values and PO fit was also used to test for moderated mediation with SIP as moderator and PJ fit as a mediator, to test hypotheses 2 and 4. The first model has PJ fit as outcome variable, and tests for a moderating effect of SIP on the relationship between PSM and PJ fit. The model significantly predicted PJ fit, $F(8, 61) = 4.806$, $p < 0.001$, $R^2 = .387$ (see Table 14). The Beta between SIP and PJ fit is significant (p

<0.05), and the interaction variable XW is also significant ($p < 0.05$). The LLCI and ULCI of XW are both negative, meaning that the effect of PSM on PJ fit is negatively moderated by SIP ($R^2 = .043$). Looking at the moderation in more detail, the discrepancy in effect of SIP on the relationship between PSM and PJ fit is bigger than with PV and PO fit. With SIP low, the effect is 0.221, and when SIP is high, the effect of PSM on PJ fit is -0.303 (see Table 15). From the data it seems SIP has a negative moderating effect on the relation between PSM and PJ fit. Since positive moderation was hypothesized, hypothesis 2 ‘The relationship between PSM and PJ - fit is positively moderated by societal impact potential (SIP)’ is rejected.

The second model tests for moderated mediation on the dependent variable Turnover Intention. The model significantly predicted Turnover Intention $F(7, 62) = 19.957, p < 0.001, R^2 = .693$ (see Table 14). The index for moderated mediation indicates an effect = -.040 with an LLCI and ULCI of -.009 and .114 respectively. Though the LLCI is close to zero, there is no evidence for a moderated mediation effect (see Table 16). Hypothesis 4 ‘The effect of PSM on turnover intention is one of moderated mediation through societal impact potential (SIP) and PJ-fit respectively’ is therefore rejected.

Table 14. Unstandardized OLS regression coefficients with confidence intervals (SE in parentheses) estimating PJ fit and Turnover intention.

	Person-job fit (M)			Turnover Intention (Y)		
		Coefficients	90% CI		Coefficients	90% CI
PSM (X)	a ₁ →	-0.041 (0.134)	-0.265, 0.183	c' →	-0.061 (0.110)	-0.245, 0.123
PJ fit (M)				b ₁ →	-0.145 (0.113)	-0.333, 0.044
Societal Impact Potential (W)	a ₂ →	0.227* (0.097)	0.065, 0.390			
X x W	a ₃ →	-0.277* (0.135)	-0.502, -0.052			
P. Organizational Support (U ₁)	a ₄ →	0.156 (0.165)	-0.120, 0.431	b ₂ →	-0.052 (0.155)	-0.312, 0.207
P. Supervisor Support (U ₂)	a ₅ →	-0.101 (0.131)	-0.319, 0.118	b ₃ →	0.146 (0.124)	-0.060, 0.352
P. Coworker Support (U ₃)	a ₆ →	0.575*** (0.160)	0.307, 0.843	b ₄ →	-0.112 (0.158)	-0.375, 0.152
Work Tension (U ₄)	a ₇ →	-0.030 (0.118)	-0.226, 0.167	b ₅ →	0.336** (0.108)	0.156, 0.515
Continuance Commitment (U ₅)	a ₈ →	-0.046 (0.123)	-0.250, 0.159	b ₆ →	0.810*** (0.113)	0.622, 0.999
Constant	i _M →	0.959 (0.820)	-0.409, 2.328	i _Y →	0.118 (0.753)	-1.140, 1.375
		$R^2 = 0.387$			$R^2 = 0.693$	
		$F(8, 61) = 4.806, p < 0.001$			$F(7, 62) = 19.957, p < 0.001$	

[†] $p < .10$, * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$. P. = abbreviation for ‘Perceived’

Table 15. Effect of PSM on PJ fit with low, average, and high SIP

Difference from Mean	Effect	LLCI	ULCI
-0.946	0.221	-0.015	0.457
0.000	-0.041	-0.265	0.183
0.946	-0.303	-0.671	0.065

Table 16. Effect of PSM on TI through PJ fit with low, average, and high SIP

Difference from Mean	Effect	LLCI	ULCI
-0.946	-0.032	-0.101	0.015
0.000	0.006	-0.030	0.058
0.946	0.044	-0.016	0.151

4.3 Further moderation testing

Since no significant moderated mediation was found in the dataset, further testing was done to test the moderating effect of public values with PSM as independent variable, using linear regression. In the first model, the independent effects of PSM and public values on turnover intention were tested. In the second model, the interaction variable PSM x public values is added. In the third model, the control variables of the study are added. Testing for moderation on the effect of PSM on Turnover Intention, no significant effect was found in model 2 ($p = .152$). In the third model, with the control variables added, the effect of the interaction variable PSM x public values on Turnover Intention is significant ($p = .026$) (see Table 17).

Table 17. Regression analysis Turnover Intention

	Model 1			Model 2			Model 3		
	B	SE	β	B	SE	β	B	SE	β
PSM	-.01	.17	-.01	-1.06	.74	-.71	-1.12	.48	-.75**
PV	-.58	.16	-.41**	-1.74	.81	-1.22**	-1.44	.53	-1.01**
PSM x PV				.29	.20	1.18	.30	.13	1.22**
P. org. support							.09	.16	.06
P. sup. support							.04	.13	.02
P. cow. support							-.25	.15	-.14*
Work Tension							.39	.11	.31**
Continuance Commit.							.74	.11	.56**
N	82			82			70		
F	6.762			2.105			23.901		
R ²	.168			.194			.728		
Adjusted R ²	.143			.157			.692		

[†] $p < .10$, * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$.

The exact effect of the interaction variable is a bit unclear however, as PSM and public values have a negative Beta, while the interaction variable has a positive Beta. To get a better picture of the moderating effect of public values, the moderation is plotted below (see figure 3). In this graph, the effect of PSM on turnover intention is plotted for respondents with low public values, average public values, and high public values.

Plotting the moderation effect shows that interestingly, for respondents who scored low on public values it has a negative moderating effect on the relationship between PSM and turnover intention, while the moderating effect is positive for the respondents scoring high in public values.

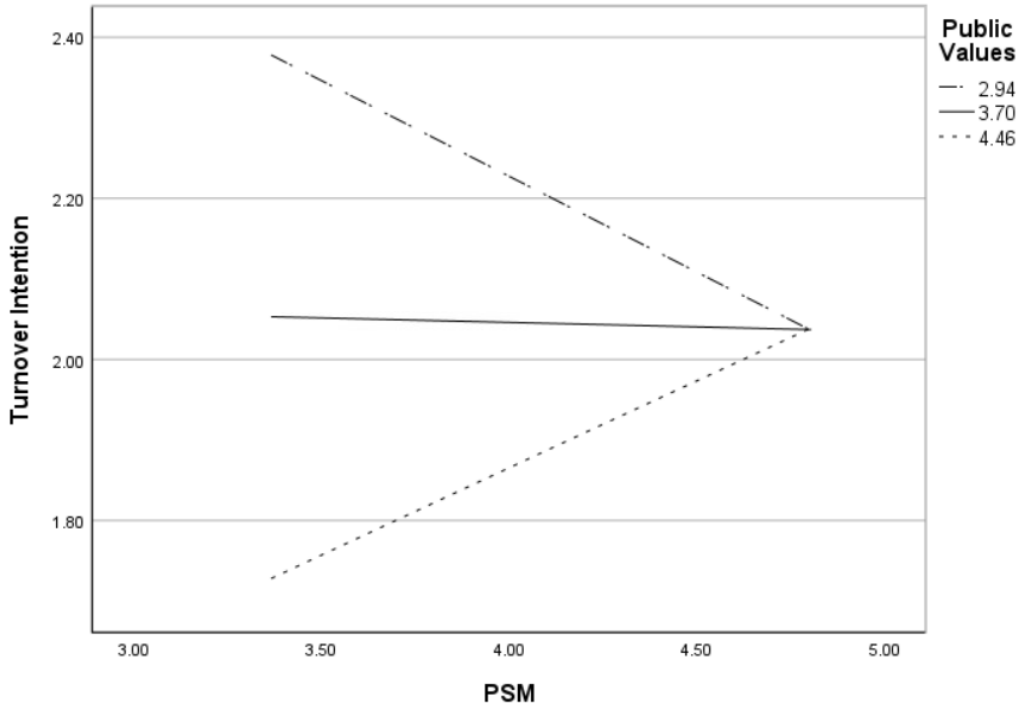


Figure 3. Moderating effect of Public Values

Testing for the moderating effect of SIP on the relationship between PSM and turnover intention, no significant effect of the interaction variable PSM x SIP was found in model 2 ($p = .955$). In the third model, with control variables included, the interaction variable PSM x SIP still was not significant ($p = .274$)(see Table 18). The relationship between PSM and turnover intention is therefore not moderated by SIP.

Table 18. Regression analysis Turnover Intention

	Model 1			Model 2			Model 3		
	B	SE	β	B	SE	β	B	SE	β
PSM	-.03	.19	-.02	-.07	.63	-.05	-.46	.39	-.31
SIP	-.22	.14	-.20	-.27	.88	-.24	-.66	.54	-.58
PSM x SIP				.01	.21	.06	.14	.13	.67
P. org. support							-.08	.16	-.05
P. sup. support							.16	.12	.11
P. cow. support							-.21	.15	-.12
Work Tension							.36	.11	.28**
Continuance Commit.							.80	.12	.60**
N	76			76			70		
F	1.438			0.003			25.987		
R ²	.041			.041			.694		
Adjusted R ²	.013			-.002			.654		

[†] $p < .10$, * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$.

4.4 Further mediation testing

Since Hayes' process macro model 7 tests only the moderated mediation, it does not test the mediating effect of PO fit and PJ fit. Another test was run to check for the mediating effect of PO fit and PJ fit on turnover intention. PO fit and PJ fit were included as mediators simultaneously. The direct effect of PSM on turnover intention is .013. The indirect effect of PJ fit was not significant (= .004) with zero falling between the LLCI and ULCI (-.038 and .039 respectively). The mediating effect of PO fit was significant however (= -.099) with both the LLCI and ULCI below zero (-.231 and -.002 respectively)(see Table 19).

Table 19. Effect of PSM on Turnover Intention, direct and indirect effects

	Effect	LLCI	ULCI
Direct	0.013	-0.157	0.182
Person-Organization fit	-0.099	-0.231	-0.002
Person-Job fit	0.004	-0.038	0.039
Total	-0.095	-0.227	0.001

5. Discussion and Conclusion

5.1 Discussion of study results and hypotheses

The goal of this study was to explore the relationship between PSM and turnover intention in the private sector. The distinction in publicness was introduced to further substantiate the argument that it is not the sector of employment, but rather the publicness of an organization that matters for the PSM-turnover intention relationship. To take publicness into account, public values and societal impact potential SIP were introduced as moderating variables. Many studies have found that the relationship between PSM and turnover intention is not a direct relationship, but rather one mediated through fit (Bright, 2008; Steijn, 2008; Gould-Williams et al. 2015). Therefore, Person-organization fit (PO fit) and Person-job fit (PJ fit) were introduced as mediating variables. This created a theoretical model of twofold moderated mediation, through public values and PO fit, and SIP and PJ fit respectively. The research question posed in this study was as follows: *'To what extent does the indirect effect of Public Service Motivation, mediated by PO fit and PE fit affect the turnover intention of Dutch and Belgian consultancy firm employees, and how is PO fit affected by public values and PJ fit affected by societal impact potential?'*

The first hypothesis was that *'the relationship between PSM and PO-fit is positively moderated by public values'*. The expectation was that employees with high PSM would experience a better PO fit if they rated their organization higher in public values. This moderating effect is based on the theory by Bozeman that all organizations have a degree of publicness (Bozeman, 1987), and that public values are not governmental and may also be present in the private sector (Jørgensen & Bozeman, 2007). The study found no significant effect in the moderating relationship of public values on the relationship between PSM and PO fit, therefore rejecting the hypothesis. The findings did show that there was a trend where PSM and PO fit were more positively related if consultants perceived their organization as having more public values, but the effect was not statistically significant.

The second hypothesis was that *'the relationship between PSM and PJ -fit is positively moderated by societal impact potential (SIP)'*. The theory for this hypothesis is based on the study by Van Loon et al. (2018), who found that SIP moderated the effect between PSM and perceived performance. Similar to the first hypothesis, the expectation was that if employees perceived that they had a higher societal impact in their job, that the relationship between PSM and PJ fit would be more positive, since they would be able to 'exert' their PSM in their job.

The findings showed an opposite effect, however. SIP did moderate the relationship between PSM and PJ fit, but negatively rather than positively.

The third and fourth hypotheses were *'the effect of PSM on turnover intention is one of moderated mediation through public values and PO-fit respectively'* and *'the effect of PSM on turnover intention is one of moderated mediation through societal impact potential (SIP) and PJ-fit respectively'*.

The introduction of PO fit and PJ fit as mediators stems from previous studies on the mediating effect of types of fit on the relationship between PSM and outcomes like turnover intention for example (Bright, 2008; Steijn, 2008; Gould-Williams et al. 2015). In line with the first hypothesis, there was a visible trend that PSM was more negatively related to turnover intention when public values and PO fit were higher, but the effect was not statistically significant. The third hypothesis was therefore rejected. The fourth hypothesis was in line with the second hypothesis, with the contrary effect where PSM and turnover intention were more positively related when SIP and PJ fit were higher. The effect size was also insignificant, and the fourth hypothesis was therefore also rejected.

In conclusion, the present study did not find evidence to support the hypotheses that were theorized. The answer to the research question is therefore that the relationship between PSM and turnover intention is not significantly explained through moderated mediation in Dutch and Belgian consultancy firms.

5.2 Theoretical reflection

However, even though the hypotheses posed were rejected there are still some interesting insights to be taken away from this study. One important takeaway from this study is that the direct effect of PSM on turnover intention was very small and insignificant. Many prior studies regarding PSM and turnover intention in the private sector have theorized and found in their results that the relationship between PSM and turnover intention is positive in the private sector, meaning that employees with high PSM in the private sector are more likely to switch employer (Steijn, 2008). This study has found however, that there is no direct effect of PSM on turnover intention, which further supports the notion made in previous research that not just the sector of employment, but the type of work and organization orientation are decisive for how PSM affects outcomes (Andersen et al. 2011, Kjeldsen & Jacobsen, 2013), like perhaps turnover intention. This is in line with what Perry & Wise (1990) already argued in the early days of PSM, that it is not the locus of employment, but the focus of employment that is more important for PSM.

Despite the fact that no moderated mediation with public values and PO fit was found, there were still some interesting findings regarding the relationship between PSM and turnover intention, and the role of public values and PO fit in this regard. Firstly, even though the effect was not significant, there was a visible trend of moderated mediation with public values and PO fit, leading to lower turnover intention with higher PSM. The effect itself was not significant, perhaps in part due to the small sample size.

On the other hand, this study found that public values did moderate the relationship between PSM and turnover intention. Though this direct moderating effect was not hypothesized, it does provide some evidence that public values has a role to play when it comes to PSM and turnover intention in the private sector. The effect of public values on this relation is interesting. For respondents with low public values, turnover intention had a negative relationship with PSM. For the respondents who had high public values however, PSM had a positive relationship with turnover intention. This would imply that employees who view their organization as scoring high in public values are more likely to have turnover intention if they have high PSM. This is not in line with the hypothesized effect of public values, which was thought to have a positive effect by decreasing turnover intention for employees with high PSM. Interestingly, for all respondents with high PSM turnover intention was very similar (see figure 3), while for respondents with low PSM, those with higher public values had significantly lower turnover intention. Since the sample is so small these findings have to be taken with a grain of salt, and this results was not hypothesized for. In order to make actual conclusions, future research hypothesizing this effect is needed.

Another takeaway is that though the effect was small, it was found that PO fit did mediate the relationship between PSM and turnover intention. This mediating effect of PO fit adds to the case that the effect of PSM on turnover intention is not just dictated by the sector of employment. Furthermore, it helps provide theoretical evidence that employees with high PSM can experience a strong PO fit in the private sector. Previous research on PSM and fit has mainly focused on the public sector (Bright, 2007; Bright, 2008; Gould-Williams, 2015). When taking the private sector into account, the conclusions regarding PSM and fit in the private sector were that employees with high PSM experienced less fit in the private sector (Steijn, 2008). This study helps build the argument that PSM and fit are not necessarily negatively related in the private sector, but rather that there are other factors that are relevant.

Interestingly, this study found that SIP negatively moderated the relationship between PSM and PJ fit. It was theorized that the relationship would be moderated positively, based on the study by Van Loon et al. (2018) on SIP who found that SIP positively moderated the relationship

between PSM and perceived performance. The results of this study showed a contrary effect. In another study by Van Loon, Vandenabeele & Leisink (2015) they did find that PSM was positively related to burnout and negatively to job satisfaction when SIP was high in people-changing organizations. People-changing is defined as requiring intensive contact, and where employees have to socialize, interact and build a relationship with users (Van Loon et al. 2015). For consultants this could be the case, especially if they work on an intensive long-term project. In this study, SIP did not have a moderating effect on the direct relationship between PSM and turnover intention, and there was also no moderated mediation with SIP and PJ fit. The effect of SIP on PSM differs between outcome variables, and the effect that SIP has on the relationship between PSM and turnover intention is still unclear. This could help explain why SIP had a negative effect on PJ fit and turnover intention in this study.

5.3 Practical implications

This study also has some practical implications. Although these practical implications can be useful, since the findings of this study have small or insignificant effects, they should be taken with a grain of salt.

The first implication of this study is that consultancy firms should take PSM levels into account in their recruitment process. In this study PSM is shown to have positive outcomes regarding PO fit and turnover intention in consultancy firms. PSM correlated positively with PO fit and PJ fit, though not significantly with PJ fit. PO fit in its turn was significantly negatively correlated with turnover intention. These findings imply that if private sector consultancy firms or other private sector organizations are concerned with societal impact, they should take employee PSM levels into account in their recruitment process.

A second implication for consultancy firms is to make their public values as an organization visible to their employees. This study has found that employees with high levels of PSM experience a better fit with their employer if they perceive them to have higher public values. Especially for consultancy firms that only do projects for the public sector, it could be the case that employees with high PSM are less likely to leave the organization if public values are perceived as higher.

A final implication for public sector organizations is to select consultancy firms that only work together with public sector organizations. These organizations are more likely to have higher public values, and therefore attract employees with higher PSM levels.

5.4 Limitations and recommendations for future research

This study has a few limitations that should be taken into account. Firstly, the sample of this study is very small. This is due to how difficult it was to gather respondents willing to participate in the survey. Due to this small sample size, the study was underpowered meaning that it did not have the power necessary to detect small effects and that it has an increased risk of Type II errors (false negatives). A lot of the results from the study might have been insignificant in part due to the low sample size. However, the possibility that no effects exist does of course remain. A larger sample size would simply have allowed for more confidence in the results.

Moreover, the results that were significant were measured with a 90% CI, meaning that the results are also not as reliable as with a more usual 95% CI. The findings of this study are promising however, for the theory that PSM in research should not be seen as a phenomenon exclusively for public sector employees, but rather for public sector- oriented employees.

A second limitation is the big variety in organizations taking part in the research. Though the bulk of the respondents is from a select group of organizations, the variety in the organizations could still have impacted the outcomes of the study. Other organizational characteristics could play a role in the outcome of turnover intention and the mediators of PO fit and PJ fit, that are more difficult to control for when the amount of different organizations in the sample is so high. Especially for the moderators of public values and SIP, more reliable results can be expected when limiting the amount of organizations taking part in the survey. The other study variables also could be influenced by organizational characteristics.

A third limitation of this research is that the results are drawn from a convenience sample. In other words, most of the respondents who partook in the study came through personal connections. Though these connections do not have any ties between them, the effect of a certain response bias cannot be ruled out. To justify the survey sample, representativeness tests were performed to ensure that the survey sample is a good reflection of the population. Still, a possible bias in the survey sample cannot be ruled out.

One final limitation when interpreting the results is that using moderated mediation for the relationship between PSM and turnover intention has not been done before in previous studies. As public values and SIP have not been used as moderators in such a model before, there is no real frame of reference to compare the results to. The theoretical argument for including public values and SIP as moderators is therefore a bit generic, and could be substantiated with more research being done.

Even though there are some limitations with this study, mainly to do with the survey sample, the study shows that there are some interesting findings worth exploring. Recommendations for future research have to do mainly with the data collection method. First of all, future research into moderated mediation should use a larger sample size, in order to strengthen the confidence in the results. This can be achieved by having the right connections within big consultancy firms, to get surveys pushed from higher up in the organization. In the current study the small sample size limited the confidence in many outcomes, and in future research this could be prevented. Furthermore, future research regarding PSM in the consultancy sector should try to limit the amount of organizations where data is gathered. This is especially relevant when comparing between consultancy firms based on their publicness. Organizational differences may impact the results, and to account for this better future studies should try to limit the amount of organizations that partake in the study, so the effect of publicness can be isolated better. Future studies also should be deterred to use convenience samples, to decrease the probability of sampling error. Due to the limited timeframe of this study, future researchers can account for these recommendations by having a clear vision for their data collection, and good connections within large consultancy firms. Since this study found that SIP had a negative moderating effect on PJ fit, while public values seemed to have a positive moderating effect on PO fit, future research should focus on the moderating effect of these two concepts.

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Appendix 1: Survey

Dear respondent,

Thank you very much for participating in my survey and helping me complete my master thesis. This survey is part of the master thesis of Aram Verweij. Aram is finishing up his master Strategic Human Resource Management together with his supervisor dr. Wouter Vandenabeele, teacher at Utrecht University and professor at KU Leuven.

For this survey we are interested in the effect of a consultants' motivation on other factors such as the fit with their job and organization, and turnover intention. With your participation we hope to create a better understanding of motivation

The survey consists of a number of questions which you can answer on a scale from 1 to 5, and will take about 10 minutes. Do not think too long about your answers and go with what feels the most accurate. There are no right or wrong answers. All survey responses will be processed anonymously, and only the researchers have access to this data. For any questions you can contact Aram Verweij (a.h.verweij@students.uu.nl).

Thank you in advance for your participation

Aram Verweij

Dr. Wouter Vandenabeele

Legal information and confirmation of participation

Below you will find the legal information (GDPR) of this research and you will confirm your participation. At the bottom of the page you can confirm your participation and move on to the next page.

Goal of the research:

This research is aimed at the motivation of consultants and how it may affect turnover intention.

What the survey looks like:

First there will be a few questions regarding demographic characteristics. Then you will be presented with several statements. You will be asked to answer to what degree you agree with these statements

Privacy and confidentiality:

This research complies with the European and national legislation (GDPR). If you decide to participate in this research, your participation will be anonymized. Information will not be traceable to individuals. The only people with access to the survey results are the researchers. Once the

research is finished, all data gathered in Qualtrics will be deleted.

The right to withdrawal of consent:

Participation is voluntary and if at any moment during the survey you do not want to participate anymore, you can stop filling in the survey without consequences. You can end your participation by closing your browser window. If you want to withdrawal after finishing the survey, you can contact the researchers.

Questions?

For questions, complaints and other remarks you can contact Aram at a.h.verweij@students.uu.nl

Participation

Participants have to be at least 18 years old. If after reading the above information you want to participate in this survey you can click 'I want to participate in this survey'. The survey will then start. If you do not want to participate, you can close your browser window.

I have read the above and want to participate in this survey (1)

The first series of questions are about some demographic characteristics, to make distinctions between target groups. These answers will be processed anonymously and cannot be traced back in any way.

What is your year of birth?

What is your gender?

- Male (1)
 - Female (2)
 - Non-binary / third gender (3)
 - Prefer not to say (4)
-

What is your highest level of education?

- No formal education (1)
 - Primary education (basisschool) (2)
 - Secondary education (middelbare school) (3)
 - Secondary vocational education (MBO) (4)
 - Higher vocational education (HBO) (5)
 - University education (WO) (6)
-

How much work experience do you have as a consultant? Please formulate your answer in years of experience.

Do you have any prior work experience in the public sector and if so, for how many years?

- No (1)
- Yes, less than one year (2)
- Yes, 1-3 years (3)
- Yes, 3-5 years (4)
- Yes, more than five years (5)



What is the name of your current employer?

Q1 The following questions are about your work motivation. Remember there are no right or wrong answers, we are interested in your opinion.

	Strongly disagree (1)	Somewhat disagree (2)	Neither agree nor disagree (3)	Somewhat agree (4)	Strongly agree (5)
At work I try my best to avoid getting into trouble (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
At work I try my best because I get bad evaluations otherwise (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
At work I try my best because I feel guilty if I don't (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
At work I try my best because I feel bad if I don't (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
At work I try my best because I find it important to do so (5)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
At work I try my best because I want to be a good consultant (6)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
At work I try my best because I enjoy my work (7)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
At work I try my best because I like my job (8)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q2 The following questions are about your attitudes toward society. Remember there are no right or wrong answers, we are interested in your opinion.

	Strongly disagree (1)	Somewhat disagree (2)	Neither agree nor disagree (3)	Somewhat agree (4)	Strongly agree (5)
I am very motivated to contribute to society (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I find it very motivating to contribute to society (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Making a difference in society, no matter how small, is very important to me (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Defending the public interest is very important to me (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Our society is just a sum of individuals (5)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The cohesion of our society is not what it used to be (6)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q3 The following question are about how you regard your organization. Remember there are no right or wrong answers, we are interested in your opinion.

	Strongly disagree (1)	Somewhat disagree (2)	Neither agree nor disagree (3)	Somewhat agree (4)	Strongly agree (5)
My values and goals are very similar to the values and goals of my organization (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel a strong sense of belonging to my organization (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
What this organization stands for is important to me (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The organization I work for behaves decently (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The organization I work for does good work in its core business (5)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The organization I work for contributes to social cohesion in the Netherlands (6)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q4 The following question are about how you regard your organization. Remember there are no right or wrong answers, we are interested in your opinion.

	Strongly disagree (1)	Somewhat disagree (2)	Neither agree nor disagree (3)	Somewhat agree (4)	Strongly agree (5)
The organization I work for contributes to the quality of life in the Netherlands (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The organization is willing to help me when I need a special favor (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The organization shows very little concern for me (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The organization values my contribution to its well-being (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The organization strongly considers my goals and values (5)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q5 The following questions are about how you view your job. Remember there are no right or wrong answers, we are interested in your opinion.

	Strongly disagree (1)	Somewhat disagree (2)	Neither agree nor disagree (3)	Somewhat agree (4)	Strongly agree (5)
My job fully utilizes my skills and abilities (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I enjoy my work more than anything else I do (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
How satisfied are you with the meaningfulness of your job? (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My supervisor really cares about my well-being (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My supervisor shows very little concern for me (5)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My supervisor strongly considers my goals and values (6)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My supervisor is willing to help me when I need a special favor (7)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My supervisor takes pride in my accomplishments at work (8)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q6 The following questions are about how you view your job. Remember there are no right or wrong answers, we are interested in your opinion.

	Strongly disagree (1)	Somewhat disagree (2)	Neither agree nor disagree (3)	Somewhat agree (4)	Strongly agree (5)
My coworkers strongly consider my goals and values (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My coworkers take pride in my accomplishments at work (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My coworkers really care about my well-being (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My coworkers value my contribution to their well-being (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I contribute to the development or execution of public policy in my job (5)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I contribute to the public interest through my job (6)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I contribute to achieving a greater degree of solidarity in our society through my job (7)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q7 The following questions are about work stress and workload. Remember there are no right or wrong answers, we are interested in your opinion.

	Strongly disagree (1)	Somewhat disagree (2)	Neither agree nor disagree (3)	Somewhat agree (4)	Strongly agree (5)
My job tends to directly affect my health (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I work under a great deal of tensions (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I have felt fidgety or nervous as a result of my job (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
If I had a different job, my health would probably improve (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Problems associated with my job have kept me awake at night (5)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I have felt nervous before attending meetings in the company (6)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I often 'take my job home with me' in the sense that I think about it when doing other things (7)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q8 The following questions are about your commitment to your current employer. Remember there are no right or wrong answers, we are interested in your opinion.

	Strongly disagree (1)	Somewhat disagree (2)	Neither agree nor disagree (3)	Somewhat agree (4)	Strongly agree (5)
I think a lot about leaving the organization (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am actively searching for an alternative to the organization (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
As soon as it is possible, I will leave the organization (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
It would take very little change in my present circumstances to cause me to leave this organization (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Deciding to work for this organization was a definite mistake on my part (5)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
There is not too much to be gained by sticking with this organization indefinitely (6)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Appendix 2: Factsheet

Beste meneer/mevrouw,

Voordat ik over de inhoud van de vragenlijst vertel zou ik graag kort wat over mezelf vertellen. Mijn naam is Aram Verweij, en ik ben momenteel bezig met mijn eindscriptie voor de master Strategic Human Resource Management (SHRM) aan de Universiteit Utrecht. Samen met mijn begeleider Wouter Vandenabeele doe ik mijn eindscriptie over het effect van motivatie op personeelsverloop in consultancies. Het idee voor het onderwerp is ontstaan vanwege de huidige krapte op de arbeidsmarkt, en het feit dat er in de consultancy sector een hoog personeelsverloop bestaat.

In dit onderzoek gaan we specifiek kijken naar het effect dat publieke service motivatie heeft op personeelsverloop. Publieke service motivatie (PSM) is de motivatie om het publiek belang te behartigen. Dit kan via een publieke organisatie, maar ook in bijvoorbeeld consultancies die maatschappelijk impact hebben door hun projecten. Uit onderzoek blijkt dat werknemers met een hoge mate van PSM tevredener zijn met hun werk, en minder waarschijnlijk zijn om van baan te wisselen. Hiervoor is het wel van belang dat werknemers met PSM ervaren dat ze goed passen bij hun baan (ook wel 'fit' genoemd). Voor het bepalen van een goede fit tussen de consultants en hun werk gebruiken we twee indicatoren: publieke waarden en maatschappelijk impact potentieel.

Publieke waarden houdt in hoe de consultant de waarden van zijn of haar werkgever interpreteert, en of die overeenkomen met de waarden van de werknemer zelf. Het maatschappelijk impact potentieel gaat over de kansen die de consultant ervaart om maatschappelijk impact uit te oefenen en zijn of haar werk. Uit eerder onderzoek is gebleken dat in zowel de publiek als de private sector een combinatie van PSM en een hoge mate van maatschappelijk impact potentieel leiden tot betere performance van werknemers. Vanuit die bevindingen willen we met dit onderzoek kijken of een combinatie van hoge PSM en de aanwezigheid van maatschappelijk impact potentieel en publieke waarden leidt tot een goede fit, en daardoor ook tot lager personeelsverloop.

Voor het onderzoeken van deze verbanden maken we gebruik van een vragenlijst. Met behulp van de vragen uit de vragenlijst kunnen we de mate van PSM van de werknemers bepalen, en onderzoek wat hun perceptie is van de publieke waarden en het maatschappelijk impact potentieel in de organisatie. Met de antwoorden van de vragenlijst gaan we onderzoeken of er een statistisch significant effect is van publieke service motivatie op personeelsverloop, en wat voor effect de elementen publieke waarden en maatschappelijk impact hebben op deze relatie.

Met de resultaten van het onderzoek proberen we inzicht te geven in de impact die factoren als maatschappelijk impact potentieel en publieke waarden hebben op werknemers en de waarschijnlijkheid van personeelsverloop. Met behulp van dit inzicht kunnen we praktische tips geven die kunnen helpen om personeelsverloop te verlagen.

De vragenlijst duurt ongeveer 10 minuten. Het onderzoek is volledig geanonimiseerd en de gegevens worden vertrouwelijk behandeld. Het zou enorm helpen als jullie de vragenlijst

kunnen rondsturen binnen jullie organisatie. De uitkomsten van het onderzoek kunnen na afloop gedeeld worden, zodat de praktische tips direct bij jullie organisatie terecht komen.

Dr. Wouter Vandenabeele



Aram Verweij



Appendix 3: KMO and Bartlett's test, McDonald's omega

Kaiser-Meyer Olkin, Bartlett's test of sphericity and McDonald's omega for all study variables

	KMO	χ^2	df	Sig.	ω
PSM (4-item)	.760	193.18	6	.000	.869
PO fit	.707	82.99	3	.000	.819
Public Values	.634	75.09	3	.000	.726
Perceived organizational support	.781	87.70	6	.000	.791
PJ fit	.680	54.15	3	.000	.744
Perceived supervisor support	.848	173.83	10	.000	.867
Perceived coworker support	.729	101.91	6	.000	.794
Societal impact potential	.700	78.48	3	.000	.820
Work tension	.767	169.11	21	.000	.802
Turnover intention	.714	171.80	3	.000	.928
Continuance commitment	.666	40.17	3	.000	.724