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The Impact of Entrepreneurial Leadership and Ethical Climate on Public Service Motivation in Korea and China: Moderating Role of Confucian Values

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Abstract: Public administration has recently seen paradigm shifts to integrate and enhance public value. Regardless of the focus on innovation and organizational performance in government, the public sector must foster public values. Although studies to identify important determinants of public service motivation (PSM) have been conducted, there has been little scholarly inquiry into the influence of leadership, organizational climate, and Confucian values on public management. Employing the theoretical lenses of social learning and social identity theories, this study examines the influences of entrepreneurial leadership, an ethical climate, and Confucian values on PSM. A total of 1215 Korean and 552 Chinese public employees were surveyed to test direct and moderating effects through multivariate regression, showing that entrepreneurial leadership (EL) has positive effects on societally driven PSM in both countries, but its effects on policymaking-oriented PSM depends on the country. An ethical climate is positively associated with policymaking-oriented PSM in Korea, but with societally driven PSM in China. Confucian values positively influence PSM in both countries except for societally driven PSM in Korea. Contrary to our hypotheses, a moderating role of Confucian values does not hold in either country. The article outlines the theoretical and practical implications of this study and directions for future research.

Keywords: Confucian values; entrepreneurial leadership; ethical climate; Korean and Chinese public sector; public service motivation

1. Introduction

Corruption within the public sector is among the greatest challenges facing civil services worldwide [1]. Such corruption causes outrage and diminishes the public's trust in the government. Thus, public-sector ethics has emerged as a vital element to institutionalizing ethical practices and policies in advancing public value [2]. Both logical and moral precepts hold that "a public office is a public trust." As the administrator of the state, the government must lead ethically and morally. By nature, it is expected to be open and transparent; the public has the right to expect the highest integrity from their government, and that it will abide by the generally accepted principles of good governance and public value. Therefore, administrative and managerial efforts to encourage ethical practices are most effective in advancing public value—the public sector's contribution to society [3]—and intrinsic motivation. However, considering the public sector's circumstantial limitations, we suggest organizational solutions to increase intrinsic motivation (e.g., public service motivation [PSM]) and enact fundamental ethical values of good government [4].

In process theory, PSM is influenced by sociocultural context, motivational context, and individual behaviors and characteristics [5]. Several public research management scholars

have investigated PSM as a significant attribute expected of public employees [6]. Although research analyzing the effects of sociocultural factors on PSM is necessary [7], few studies have investigated how sociocultural disposition influences PSM. Thus, this research resolves the limitations of PSM studies by indicating that sociocultural contexts (i.e., entrepreneurial leadership [EL], ethical climate, and Confucian values) can enhance PSM.

The continuous development of public organizations has brought about significant changes to organizational practices, leadership, and ethical perception approaches. The implications of environmental change can influence public employees' disposition. A similarly doubtful perspective exists regarding the relationship between leadership and PSM; public sector leadership has evolved. Today, the relationship between the political and administrative sectors is primarily characterized by behavioral convergence rather than divergence [8]. Despite such developments in public administration, entrepreneurship is considered a strategic management and leadership principle relevant to further development. Public managers are encouraged to display EL behaviors—innovative, proactive, and risk-taking behaviors [9]—and influence others to find and exploit opportunities with scarce resources [10]. This study aims to investigate the attributes of proactive leaders required for public organization innovation [EL] and the ethical climate that boosts positive organizational behaviors, such as PSM. In other words, we seek to discover what work environment variables cultivate employees' PSM from an organizational management perspective.

This study examines the moderating effect of Confucian values to clarify the reality of the Korean and Chinese public sectors. From previous research [11], we assume that Confucian values contribute to organizational and management practices in Korea and China [12]. The appropriateness of choosing this variable is supported by Global Leadership and Organizational Behavior Effectiveness (GLOBE) research classifying Korea and China among Confucian Asian countries. Furthermore, Confucianism includes pragmatic precepts that support the social foundations of East Asian countries, primarily China and Korea. [13]. Thus, we posit that the Korean and Chinese public sectors' cultures or environments were developed under the influence of Confucian values, which are embedded in society as conventional culture, impacting bureaucratic attitudes and behaviors in Asia [13]. Thus, we choose Korea and China as the research subjects through which to identify any differences and similarities in public employees' behaviors between these two countries in terms of the influence of Confucian thought.

Accordingly, we seek to answer the following questions: (a) How are entrepreneurial leadership, an ethical climate, and Confucian value associated with PSM (i.e., policymaking-oriented PSM, societally driven PSM) attitudes? (b) Do Confucian values moderate the relationship between organizational factors (entrepreneurial leadership and an ethical climate) and PSM attitudes? To answer these questions, we first present a literature review using social learning theory (SLT) as the essential theoretical lens for discussing the antecedents of PSM, and then draw on social identity theory (SIT) to explain the moderating role of Confucian values. In line with this, this study confirms the validity of the research model using multivariate regression based rigorously on these theories. Moreover, we suggest ways to increase public employees' PSM in the workplace.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Public Service Motivation

PSM is "an individual's predisposition to respond to motives grounded primarily or uniquely in public institutions and organizations" [14] (p. 368). Pay-for-performance has become ineffective in enhancing performance in the public sector [15]. Scholars have noted a crowding-out effect, whereby pecuniary rewards weaken intrinsic motivation [16]. Therefore, PSM is considered an alternative motivator when the monetary incentive is limited.

Previous studies have demonstrated that various factors influence PSM [17]. Perry [5] suggested three factors as antecedents of PSM: sociohistorical context, motivational context, and individual characteristics. Considering that individual characteristics are unlikely

to change, the motivational context is a significant organizational management domain. Work environment variables, such as leadership, have been analyzed in the motivational context [18]. However, most studies examining leadership effects on PSM have focused on transformational leadership [19], while little is known about the role of EL on PSM. To this point, the EL concept has been developed in general management to cope with a dynamic market with increased uncertainty [20]. However, the public sector, where unexpected issues such as the COVID-19 pandemic occur and citizens' needs are rapidly changing, requires an EL-oriented approach that entails risk-taking and crisis management. Given that recent studies have shown that PSM positively affects creative and innovative behavior [4,21], it is worth exploring whether the opposite is true to confirm whether a proactive leader willing to propel innovation cultivates employees' PSM.

Ethics is also closely associated with PSM. PSM and ethical behavior have common values [22]. The American Society for Public Administration ethics code includes "Advancing the Public Interest" to encourage ethical behavior [23]. In Korean public-sector organizations, the Whistleblower Protection Act ensures ethical management designed to promote the public interest. Research indicates that ethical leadership and ethical climates affect whistleblowing via increased PSM [24], accountability [25], and work engagement [26]. However, recent experimental studies have yielded null results [2]. Thus, this study re-examines whether an ethical climate positively influences employees' PSM.

Another major theme of PSM research is the subdimensions of PSM. Perry and Wise [14] suggested that three dimensions of PSM exist: rational, normative, and affective. Previous studies have expressed several concerns regarding the subdimensions of PSM. First, rational PSM may be debatable in the Asian context. Kim [27] found that rational PSM was not a valid factor for several reasons: (1) rational PSM is not associated with PSM in the Korean context; (2) rational PSM is not fundamentally included in PSM; and (3) items measuring rational PSM are flawed. Additionally, his later study [28] demonstrated that Korean public employees' rational PSM is lower than that of employees from other regional clusters, based on the GLOBE study. Several scholars have raised doubts regarding rational PSM, both statistically and conceptually. They argue that rational PSM is distinct from normative and affective PSM because it motivates participation in policymaking to promote a particular group's interests rather than the public interest [14]. Another critique is that normative and affective PSM are difficult to separate [29]. Although Perry [30] explained that normative PSM is grounded in the pursuit of norms, such as justice, whereas affective PSM is also based on caring for others; it too is related to a commitment to justice, such as concerns as to whether socially marginalized people are discriminated against. Both dimensions are value-based motives, and the empirical items measure two overlapping dimensions [29]. Additionally, affective PSM (the compassion dimension) attitudes were not found to be valid in a Chinese sample [31].

Considering the limitations of the current PSM construct and the Confucian Asian context, Lee et al. [4] classified PSM types into policymaking-oriented PSM and societally driven PSM as comprising distinctive sets of traits and behaviors. They explained that Confucianism emphasizes 立身揚名 (*lìshēn yángmíng*) and 愛民精神 (*àimín jīngshén*), principles which are consistent with the motivation to work for the public sector. The first refers to the motivation for social acknowledgement for contributing to the public interest by influencing policymaking. The latter means caring for citizens based on love for the people. These two mindsets are symbolic virtues of public officials in Confucianism. As this research covers the Korean and Chinese public sectors, we followed Lee et al.'s [4] classification, reflecting the Confucian Asian sociohistorical context. We explored how EL, ethical climate, and Confucian values affect policymaking-oriented and societally driven PSM in the Korean and Chinese public sectors.

2.2. Antecedents of Public Service Motivation through the Lens of Social Learning Theory (SLT)

SLT suggests that people acquire new behaviors by observing others in a social context despite an absence of direct reinforcement, as through rewards and punishment [32]. This

theory differs from existing behavioral theories in its behavioral explanation because it focuses on internal cognitive processes rather than solely emphasizing reinforcement [33].

The organizational environment is essential in explaining employees' behaviors in management studies. The effect of leadership on employees' attitudes and behaviors can be examined using SLT [34]. When employees observe a leader's behavior, they recognize what is perceived to be appropriate and are encouraged by the leader to act in the same way. In the leadership process, employees take leaders as role models in their working life. Thus, leadership and the organizational environment are essential in influencing individual attitudes and behaviors in the organization's social context. The organizational climate tacitly guides employees regarding the core values and actions that are prohibited in their organization through their observations and communication with colleagues [35]. From an organizational management perspective, the factors pre-entering and post-entering organizations should be analyzed when exploring PSM antecedents using SLT.

2.3. Impact of Entrepreneurial Leadership on Public Service Motivation

EL refers to "leadership that creates visionary scenarios that are used to assemble and mobilize a 'supporting cast' of participants who become committed by the vision to the discovery and exploitation of strategic value creation" [36] (p. 242). Moore [37] described EL as a trait of a desirable public organization leader who proactively achieves innovation by deploying resources to create public value. However, he did not use the term "EL." EL, which has generally been understood as being positively associated with innovation [38], includes five dimensions: framing the challenge, absorbing uncertainty, clearing a path, building commitment, and specifying limits [39]. Employees can learn such features from entrepreneurial leaders through the SLT lens. Entrepreneurial leaders in the public sector seek public rather than individual interest by taking risks, employing resources, and arranging stakeholders' actions [13]. Thus, public employees observe the public-value-oriented role of entrepreneurial leaders and become committed to the public interest themselves. Miao et al. [21] empirically found that EL affects employees' behavior (i.e., innovative behavior) via psychological processes such as empowerment. After showing that EL increases employees' affective trust and accountability in the Chinese sector, Kim, Park, and Miao [40] called for cross-cultural assessments, as leadership effects on employees' attitudes may vary across cultural contexts. Focusing on the EL features that influence public value-based attitudes and behaviors, this study examines their effect on cultivating PSM.

Although no studies have examined the role of EL in enhancing PSM, to the best of our knowledge we can assume its positive effects through cues, as demonstrated in previous studies. Per Camilleri [17], one significant antecedent of PSM is that employees be provided with clear goals and instructions; thus, EL is effective in cultivating employees' PSM through path-clearing. Wright [41] revealed that public employees are highly motivated when they are challenged and clearly understood. These conditions are satisfied by EL that consistently supports challenging goals [42]. Exploring the role of organizations in enhancing PSM, Moynihan and Pandey [7] found that reinvention reform strategies that reflect entrepreneurship predict higher PSM in employees. They explained that a sense of purpose, attention to results, and managerial discretion encourage employee commitment to public value. Vandenabeele [43] showed that PSM is promoted by transformational leadership, as the values emphasized by the leader are transmitted to and assimilated by individuals. He explained that EL is among the sub-schools of transformational leadership research. These two leadership styles share a quality that results in "shifts in the beliefs, the needs, and the values of followers" [44] (p. 648); the difference between them is that transformational leadership focuses on organizational change, while EL focuses on influential processes. In this context, we can assume that EL promotes individuals' PSM levels.

H1. *Entrepreneurial leadership is positively associated with PSM (policymaking-oriented and societally driven) values in the Korean and Chinese public sectors.*

2.4. Impact of the Ethical Climate on Public Service Motivation

"Ethical climate" refers to organizational members' perception of their organization's process, policies, and practices regarding ethics; one arises when "members believe that certain forms of ethical reasoning or behavior are expected standards or norms for decision-making within the firm" [45] (p. 177). One role of ethical climate is to shape employees' ethical behavior [46] and decision making [45]. Additionally, it helps employees learn the "right" and "wrong" behaviors by observing circumstances within the organization [47].

An ethical climate's positive effect on PSM is explained by the logic of appropriateness [5]. For example, Perry [5] maintained that public employees are motivated to pursue a morally right path, and this motivation is cultivated in their working environment. As agents of the principal (citizen), public employees internalize normative beliefs and appropriate behavior in pursuing the public interest. Organizational norms and professional ethics help construct employees' motivation by guiding them in discerning right from wrong [48]. Public administration studies aligned to this argument have stated that cultivating an appropriate climate is the role of public sector management in enhancing PSM [49]. Vandenabeele (2008) also claimed that the organization-level logic of appropriateness constructs employees' PSM as an identity. Similarly, Shim and Park [50] posited that the logic of appropriateness affects PSM and empirically confirmed that ethical climate influenced Korean public employees. Lee, Oh, and Park [4] empirically demonstrated that an ethics-driven culture similar to an ethical environment is positively associated with PSM among Korean public employees. They explained that an organizational culture that highlights ethical value contributes to increasing public employees' PSM, helping them learn what is right and wrong in the process of doing their work. Incorporating previous research findings and the argument that organizational climate forms employees' values [51], we hypothesize that an ethical environment positively influences cultivating employees' public value- and norm-based motivation in pursuit of the public interest.

H2. *Ethical climate is positively associated with PSM (policymaking-oriented and societally driven) values in the Korean and Chinese public sectors.*

2.5. Impact of Confucian Values on Public Service Motivation

Consistent with Perry's [5] argument that the sociocultural context affects PSM throughout one's life, Van der Wal [52] analyzed empirical PSM studies from non-Western countries published between 2000 and 2014, suggesting that PSM research in an Asian context should consider societal disposition effects as motivators. In the GLOBE study, Korean and Chinese national cultures were characterized as Confucian Asian societies [39]. Given that Confucian values have continuously affected human values and norms [50], it is reasonable to presume that they partly determine people's attitudes. Furthermore, some Confucian managerial ideals are closely related to the main values guiding public employees' actions (e.g., ethics, harmony, and righteousness [53]). Confucian values are perceived as having been translated into managerial ideologies, which affects organizational and management practices [12]. According to Zhang, Lin, Nonaka, and Beom [54], Chinese business ethics originated from Confucianism, and therefore differ from Western traditions. This prestige of Confucian values has led some scholars to analyze their dimensions to determine East Asians' attitudes and behaviors [11].

Confucian values include five dimensions: *reciprocity, saving face, humility, group orientation*, and *hierarchy* [55]. In its family-oriented nature, reciprocity is visible in the father's responsibility of taking care of his children, and the latter's responsibility to return the favor upon the former's retirement [56]. This principle implies a relationship of social reciprocity. *Saving face* denotes the maintenance of a person's status and reputation in society [57]. *Humility* implies the fundamental principle uttered in humanism (*jen*): a warm, interpersonal relationship that is founded upon humility and self-effacement. *Hierarchy* is manifested in the Confucian philosophy, as in a hierarchically organized society. According to Confucius, individuals must respect social hierarchy—rules and authorities [54]. *Group*

orientation denotes an individual's inevitable interaction in social relationships, such as with family or coworkers [58].

SLT can explain how Confucian values affect people's motivations and behaviors. Confucian values have been handed down through generations in families, organizations, and society. Sociocultural factors may influence individual cognitive differences [59]. The tendency to care for others learned from Confucianism encourages public-sector employees' societally driven PSM. People perceiving a group orientation rooted in Confucianism are more likely to care about others. They recognize that individuals coexist with others and that their own community's wellbeing is crucial. Based on a love for humanity consistent with 愛民精神 (*àimín jīngshén*) as a virtue of Confucianism [11], employees are more likely to protect justice and norms directed toward the public interest [4]. Thus, PSM, an altruistic and prosocial value, may be strongly associated with Confucian principles. As Choi [60] asserted, Confucianism displays elements of a "good" society that manifests charity, wisdom, and deep respect. As elements of Chinese public employees' PSM, attitudes and ethics can be attributed to Confucian values [61]. Korean public employees hold Confucian values, such as collectivism, while valuing harmonious relationships, which helps drive motives toward the public interest [53]. Employees' desire for a harmonious relationship based on reciprocity and group orientation is best realized by pursuing the public interest, a mission shared within public organizations. Empirical results support the positive influence of Confucian values on PSM. Lee et al. [62] demonstrated that group orientation positively influences societally driven PSM in the Korean and Chinese public sectors. Chen and Hsieh [63] demonstrated that Confucian values are predictors of PSM because of their high capacity to foster person–organization fit. Public employees who accept Confucian values tend to fit well in the public sector. Lee et al. [62] showed that hierarchical culture is positively associated with policymaking-oriented PSM in the Chinese public sector, while the two are negatively related in the Korean public sector. They explained that the perception of hierarchical culture differs across countries; Korean people may perceive hierarchical culture negatively because of excessive control that decreases willingness to participate in policymaking, whereas Chinese people may perceive the more positive aspects of hierarchy, such as efficiency. Their research [4] includes only group orientation and hierarchy as determinants of two types of PSM (policymaking-oriented and societally driven) values and excludes face-saving, reciprocity, and humility; thus, we expect that Confucian values affect PSM differentially. For example, those who put high value on saving face might well wish to achieve a Confucian virtue, 立身揚名 (*lìshēn yángmíng*). Thus, becoming a government official in Confucianism bestows a high-ranking status in society. As a government official, the motivation to ultimately exert influence on society by making important decisions is further stimulated.

Considering related theories and studies, we propose the following hypothesis:

H3. *Confucian values are positively associated with PSM (policymaking-oriented and societally driven) characteristics in the Korean and Chinese public sectors.*

2.6. Moderating Role of Confucian Values on Public Service Motivation

Based on social identity theory (SIT) [64], we hypothesize that sociocultural values reinforce the impact of organizational factors on individual PSM. In SIT, individuals' behaviors are dependent on their social identification. Individuals who are more likely to recognize their identification through their in-group are more willing to comply with their group's values [18]. Given that the main feature of Confucian values is group orientation [65], SIT presumes that public employees highly socialized by Confucian values are more likely to be affected by their organizational environment.

Individuals strongly perceiving group orientation in a sociocultural context are more likely to consider colleagues' perceptions and the organization's situation when taking action; thus, the influence of organizational factors on individual behavior is reinforced. Furthermore, individuals who strongly internalize hierarchy and face-saving are more sensitive to the effects of their superiors in the organization; the higher the value peo-

ple place on their society's hierarchical order or face-saving, the more likely they are to conform to the direction and values their superiors pursue. The Confucian value that highlights unequal but harmonious relationships [66] strengthens the impact of leadership and organizational climate on employees' motivation. Therefore, in this study, Confucian values are assumed to directly affect an individual's PSM and strengthen the influence of organizational factors on individual motivation.

Previous studies support this assumption, although no study supports the moderating role of Confucian values between ethical climate and EL and PSM. Hong et al. [66] showed that rank and seniority rooted in Confucianism moderate the leadership effect on Korean employees' affective organizational commitment. However, the Confucian mindset does not play a moderating role between leadership and attitudes in the case of American employees. They explained that such different results between the two countries might be attributable to Confucian values, which emphasize harmony and loyalty to one's supervisor, arguing that other HR management practices are required depending on the cultural context. Hongyu, Mingjian, Qiang, and Liqun [67] demonstrated that collectivism rooted in Confucianism moderates authoritative leadership effects on OCB in the Chinese sector. Those with highly internalized collectivism are more likely to be influenced by the leadership.

Therefore, we hypothesize that the sociocultural factor, more fundamental than the organizational factor, moderates the impact of organizational factors on employees' motivation.

H4. *Confucian values moderate organizational factors' (entrepreneurial leadership and ethical climate) effects on PSM (policymaking-oriented and societally driven) characteristics in the Korean and Chinese public sectors.*

3. Methods

3.1. Research Framework

We developed a research model to examine the moderating effect of Confucian values to better reflect the reality of the Korean and Chinese public sectors. Entrepreneurial leadership and ethical climate were used as independent variables, and policy-making-oriented PSM and societally driven PSM were set as outcome variables. At the same time, Confucian values were set as moderating variables in the relationship between the independent variables and the outcome variable. Gender, age, educational attainment, and length of service were also included in the analysis as control variables (Figure 1).
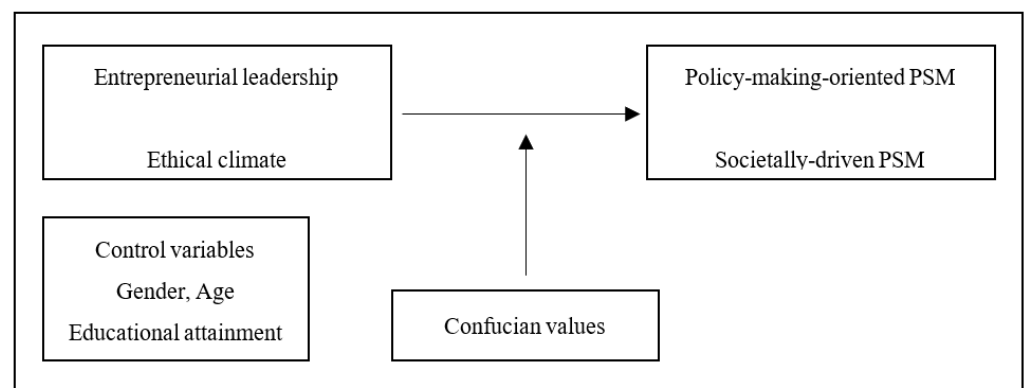

Figure 1. Theoretical model.

3.2. Data and Instrument

This study employs the 2015 Public Sector Entrepreneurship Survey (PSES), which asked Korean and Chinese employees about entrepreneurship in the public sector. The survey was conducted through research cooperation between two Korean universities and one Chinese university through the Global Research Networking program. The PSES was administered from March to May 2015 to 1500 Korean and 617 Chinese public officials.

Response data with missing values were deleted from the obtained data, and only 1215 (Korea) and 552 (China) valid surveys were used for analysis. Sample characteristics are given below (Table 1).

Table 1. Sample characteristics.

Contents	Dimension	Korea (*n* = 1215, Rate %)	China (*n* = 552, Rate %)
Gender	Male	752 (61.8)	235 (42.6)
	Female	448 (36.8)	316 (57.2)
	Missing values	16 (1.3)	1 (0.2)
Age	20–29 y/o	85 (7.0)	290 (52.5)
	30–39 y/o	533 (43.8)	243 (44.0)
	40–49 y/o	423 (34.8)	18 (3.3)
	50–59 y/o	161 (13.2)	1 (0.2)
	60 y/o and above	1 (0.1)	0 (0.0)
	Missing values	13 (1.1)	0 (0.0)
Educational Attainment	High school or less	61 (5.0)	5 (0.9)
	College (2 to 3 years)	92 (7.6)	0 (0.0)
	Bachelor's degree	776 (63.8)	519 (94.0)
	Master's degree	233 (19.2)	27 (4.9)
	Doctorate	38 (3.1)	1 (0.2)
	Missing values	16 (1.3)	0 (0.0)
Length of Service	1 month–3 years	195 (16.0)	238 (43.1)
	3–5 years	157 (12.9)	212 (38.4)
	5–10 years	281 (23.1)	90 (16.3)
	10–15 years	201 (16.5)	11 (2.0)
	More than 15 years	362 (29.8)	1 (0.2)
	Missing values	20 (1.6)	0 (0.0)

3.3. Measures

Entrepreneurial leadership. The measures for EL were derived from Gupta et al. [36] and encompass leadership behaviors, such as framing a challenge, absorbing uncertainty, path clearing, building commitment, and specifying limits. Cronbach's alpha for the scale was 0.97 for Korea and 0.94 for China.

Public service motivation. The PSM construct was derived from Lee et al. [62], who selected 10 items from Perry's [30] 24-item scale. There were three items (e.g., "I have a negative perception of politics") for policymaking-oriented PSM (Korea: Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.81$; China: Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.73$) values and seven (e.g., "I unselfishly contribute to my community" and "I consider public service my civic duty") for societally driven PSM (Korea: Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.79$; China: Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.87$) values.

Confucian values. The items used to measure the four Confucian value dimensions (reciprocity, hierarchy, humility, face-saving) were based on Monkhouse et al. [68]. Four items (e.g., "In our agency, ethical violations are often exposed") evaluated reciprocity (Korea: Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.85$; China: Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.78$), four (e.g., "I am happy if people look up to me") evaluated hierarchy (Korea: Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.78$; China: Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.65$), four (e.g., "I try not to openly talk about my accomplishments") evaluated humility (Korea: Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.73$; China: Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.80$), and four (e.g., "I am concerned with bringing shame to myself") evaluated face-saving (Korea: Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.82$; China: Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.76$).

Ethical climate. Ethical climate was measured using Moon's [69] and Lee's [70] assessments such as "In our agency, ethical violations are often exposed." There were three ethical climate items (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.81$) for Korea and four for China (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.73$).

Control variables. In this study, respondents' gender, age, educational attainment, and length of service were control variables. Gender was classified into men and women; age was grouped into the categories of 20–29, 30–39, 40–49, 50–59, and 60+. Educational

attainment was structured into the categories of high school graduation or less, junior college, four-year university, graduate school (master's degree), and graduate school (doctor's degree); length of service was arranged into periods of 1 month–3 years, 3–5 years, 5–10 years, 10–15 years, and more than 15 years.

To confirm the variable validity, we performed exploratory factor analysis using SPSS version 22. The variable loading values were confirmed to be in the range of 0.65–0.91 and 0.57–0.90 for Korea and China, respectively.

4. Statistical Modeling and Results

4.1. Correlation Analysis

Prior to conducting multivariate regression analysis, the correlation between major variables was checked (Table 2). The results showed a significant correlation between variables. For example, Confucian values showed a positive correlation with EL (Korea: 0.117, $p < 0.001$, China: 0.172, $p < 0.001$) and policymaking-oriented PSM (Korea: 0.249, $p < 0.001$, China: 0.138, $p < 0.001$) characteristics in both Korea and China. EL was negatively correlated with ethical climate (-0.295, $p < 0.001$) and policymaking-oriented PSM (-0.181, $p < 0.001$) values in Korea. Although it is a significant result, the correlation between some variables was found to be weak.

Table 2. Means, standard deviations, and correlations among variables.

Variable	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5
Korea							
1. Entrepreneurial leadership	4.7	1.2	1				
2. Ethical climate	2.9	1.2	−0.295 **	1			
3. Policymaking-oriented PSM	4.3	1.1	−0.181 **	0.174 **	1		
4. Societally driven PSM	4.3	0.9	0.395 **	−0.118 **	−0.131 **	1	
5. Confucian values	4.9	0.7	0.117 **	−0.033	0.249 **	0.050	1
China							
1. Entrepreneurial leadership	3.5	0.8	1				
2. Ethical climate	3.3	0.9	0.407 **	1			
3. Policymaking-oriented PSM	3.2	1.0	0.192 **	0.115 **	1		
4. Societally driven PSM	3.8	0.7	0.343 **	0.262 **	0.342 **	1	
5. Confucian values	4.2	0.5	0.172 **	0.127 **	0.138 **	0.254 **	1

** $p < 0.001$, two-tailed tests of significance.

4.2. Multivariate Regression

Multivariate regression analysis was conducted to verify the moderating effect of Confucian values. Table 3 shows the multivariate regression analysis results for Korea. First, educational attainment had a negative effect on policymaking-oriented PSM ($\beta = -0.13$, $p < 0.01$) values and a positive effect on societally driven PSM ($\beta = 0.08$, $p < 0.01$) values. Second, EL had a negative effect on policymaking-oriented PSM ($\beta = -6.28$, $p < 0.001$) characteristics but a positive effect on societally driven PSM ($\beta = 0.31$, $p < 0.001$) values. Third, an ethical climate had a positive effect only on policymaking-oriented PSM ($\beta = 0.12$, $p < 0.001$) values. Fourth, Confucian values had a positive effect on policymaking-oriented PSM ($\beta = 0.46$, $p < 0.001$) characteristics, but the moderating effect was not statistically significant for policymaking-oriented PSM or societally driven PSM.

The results of the analysis for China are presented in Table 4. First, gender had a negative effect on policymaking-oriented PSM ($\beta = -0.50$, $p < 0.001$) values, while age had a positive effect on societally driven PSM ($\beta = 0.18$, $p < 0.001$) values. Second, EL had a positive effect on policymaking-oriented ($\beta = 1.8$, $p < 0.01$) and societally driven PSM ($\beta = 0.20$, $p < 0.001$) values. Third, ethical climate had a positive effect only on societally driven PSM ($\beta = 0.12$, $p < 0.001$) characteristics. Fourth, Confucian values had a positive effect on policymaking-oriented ($\beta = 0.25$, $p < 0.01$) and societally driven PSM ($\beta = 0.26$, $p < 0.001$) values, but the moderating effect was not statistically significant for either.

Table 3. Hierarchical multivariate regression analysis (Korea).

Korea	Policymaking-Oriented PSM		Societally Driven PSM	
	β	t	β	t
Control variable				
Gender	0.13	1.90	−0.01	−0.12
Age	0.10	1.38	0.23	5.03 ***
Educational attainment	−0.13	−2.77 *	0.08	2.57 *
Length of service	0.02	1.48	−0.00	−0.08
Independent variable				
Entrepreneurial leadership (A)	−0.18	−5.13 ***	0.31	13.53 ***
Ethical climate (B)	0.12	4.28 ***	−0.01	−0.55
Moderate variable				
Confucian values (C)	0.46	9.51 ***	−0.01	−0.28
A × C	−0.04	−1.28	0.03	1.00
B × C	−0.04	−1.14	0.00	0.15
F	22.36 ***		33.00 ***	
Adj. R^2	0.14		0.20	

* $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.001$.

Table 4. Multivariate regression analysis (China).

China	Policymaking-Oriented PSM		Societally Driven PSM	
	β	t	β	t
Control variable				
Gender	−0.50	−5.95 ***	0.04	0.76
Age	0.07	0.89	0.18	3.88 ***
Educational attainment	0.08	0.49	0.05	0.49
Length of service	−0.06	−1.02	0.04	1.36
Independent variable				
Entrepreneurial leadership (A)	0.18	3.34 **	0.20	6.03 ***
Ethical climate (B)	0.08	1.46	0.12	3.70 ***
Moderating variable				
Confucian values (C)	0.25	2.66 **	0.26	4.58 ***
A × C	−0.04	−0.29	−0.04	−0.51
B × C	0.08	0.68	0.11	1.64
F	7.86 ***		15.99 ***	
Adj. R^2	0.10		0.20	

** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$.

5. Conclusions and Implications

5.1. Discussion and Implications

In this study, we attempted to verify whether EL, which allows leaders to create visionary scenarios, expedite organizational goals and strategies aimed at enhancing performance in the workplace, and influence the ethical climate, is effective in promoting PSM by enhancing Confucian values in both Korean and Chinese contexts. First, we evaluated whether EL is positively and significantly associated with PSM (policymaking-oriented and societally driven) attitudes in the Korean and Chinese public sectors. The main findings for both countries suggest that supervisors' and leaders' more innovative and risk-taking behaviors may demonstrate how to actualize and internalize societally driven PSM values, providing a higher quality of social services to the public. That is to say, entrepreneurial leaders are more willing to consider public service their civic duty, unselfishly contribute to their communities, and serve citizens with no expectation of monetary compensation. Within the Asian cultural context, where heretical and clan cultures are relatively dominant, and drawing on the competing value framework [71], the result suggests that it is essential to transform the organizational culture into a more developmental, rational, and creative culture, bolstering the relationship between entrepreneurial leadership and PSM. Moreover, from a structural perspective, to increase employees' PSM, it is necessary to decentralize

and deformalize the organizational structures that could secure more entrepreneurial behaviors per se. Korean and Chinese personnel systems are based on rank-in-person and closed career systems. Public officials are ranked into class structures based on specific qualifications; more flexible, open, and competitive civil service systems must be guaranteed to increase EL and societally driven PSM values.

Second, we explored whether ethical climate is positively and significantly associated with PSM (policymaking-oriented and societally driven) attitudes in the Korean and Chinese public sectors. The results show that the impact of ethical climate on policymaking-oriented PSM attitudes is statistically significant in the Korean public sector, whereas the impact on societally driven PSM values is statistically significant in the Chinese public sector. The results imply that we must further clarify the organizational, institutional, and social context in both countries through an in-depth study to confirm these different findings and investigate their cause. In Korea, we can speculate that moral standards are more required in policy and political decision-making processes. In China, public officials are more willing to engage in voluntary behaviors and community-based activities when the moral hazard problems or corruption and accountability issues are no longer in effect.

The results also suggest that an organizational culture that weighs ethical values contributes to increasing public employees' PSM attitudes. Incorporating Hofstede's [65] perspective, Korea and China share specific cultural characteristics and domains. Both collectivism and long-term orientation are strong and influential within the public organizations of these countries. Hence, the findings suggest that an ethical climate is more suitable for viably boosting PSM within collectivist and long-term-oriented cultures. "The sense of belonging is fundamental, and group goals are generally thought to be more important than the individual's personal goals," and where "society and organization would embrace the virtues oriented toward future rewards and would include characteristics such as respect for tradition and obligation within limits, thrift, perseverance, toward slow results, willingness to subordinate oneself for a purpose, and concern with virtue" [72] (p. 74–75). From a neo-institutionalist perspective, public organizations must develop and institutionalize possible mechanisms and systems to enhance public officials' ethics, practicing good faith, kindness, fairness, confidentiality, integrity, and political neutrality. For example, "Korea's Public Ethics and Transparency Initiative (PETI) System, a cloud-based portal that standardizes government work related to civil service ethics and electronically manages overall tasks related to civil service ethics such as property registration, disclosure and review, and employment screening of retired civil servants. PETI is used by about 230,000 civil servants subject to property registration and about 600 persons in charge of civil service ethics work at 1,600 organizations, including the National Assembly, the Constitutional Court, administrative agencies, and public service organizations" [73] (p. 24). Future studies should explore more idiosyncratic cultural and institutional factors that might intervene in the relationship between ethical contexts and motivational dimensions.

Third, this study explores whether Confucian values are positively and significantly associated with PSM (policymaking-oriented and societally driven) values in the Korean and Chinese public sectors. The main findings demonstrate that the GLOBE framework may be sufficiently valid and applicable to this study and indicate that Confucian values are highly prominent in both countries. Specifically, policymaking-oriented PSM attitudes in both countries are affected by Confucian values that commonly emphasize group orientation, collectivism, reciprocity, face-saving behaviors, humility, and hierarchy. The results suggest that the more pervasive and internalized Confucian values and cultures are within certain public sector organizations in both countries, the more motivated public officials are to participate in public-policymaking processes. That is to say, Confucian values matter in increasing the PSM attitudes of high-ranking officials who usually join the political and policymaking processes, requiring more hierarchy, reciprocity, and humility. As illustrated in the previous section, PSM values' main subcomponents embrace altruism, generosity, collective action, and social contribution. Hence, these policymaking-oriented motivational traits may be congruent within the Confucian context.

Our results have critical theoretical and practical implications. First, their essential theoretical contribution is the SLT, which relates EL, ethical climate, and Confucian values to PSM. By exploring the comparative significance of dissimilar dimensions of antecedents to PSM (e.g., individual: gender, age, educational attainment, length of service; organization: EL, ethical climate; external organization: Confucian values) characteristics, this study presents greater detail than previous research regarding how PSM value construction is shaped by leadership, organizational climate, and the attributes of individual employees.

Second, to the best of our knowledge, this study is the first to analyze the mechanisms linking ethical climates to PSM. Notably, SLT is important in explicating the role of an ethical climate. Despite having higher PSM levels than private employees [14], as evidenced by their choice to work in the public sector, public employees are self-interested actors and rationally maximize utility with divergent interests and conflicting goals. For employees aligned with public values, organizations may stimulate trust among employees and conduct less monitoring and reporting over time.

The negative relationship between EL and policymaking-oriented PSM values, resulting from Korean public employees' perceptions, should be discussed. These results are similar to Giauque et al.'s [74] argument: when public employees recognize personal damage based on their perspective of a vision for the future and confidence in success, they feel a sense of loss that ultimately leads to demotivation when they encounter formal rules, regulations, and procedures, as a bureaucratic structure cannot fulfill individual needs or aspirations. Thus, we can infer that EL serves as a crowding-out factor or job-demand variable to decrease public officials' aspirations to participate in decision-making processes in the Korean public sector.

Third, this study confirms that while Confucian values had a positive effect on policymaking-oriented and societally driven PSM values, the moderating effect was not statistically significant for either. From this finding, we can infer that there might be 'crowding-out' effects rather than 'crowding-in' effects since entrepreneurial and ethical factors would not be so much congruent to Confucian values to be enough to dramatically increase PSM. Additionally, this result implies that Confucian values in essence might generate more independent effects rather than produce interactive or additive ones, which accordingly might not show any significant relationship with PSM.

5.2. Limitations of the Study

Despite this study's strengths, its limitations should be considered in the design of future studies on this topic. First, further studies on the interaction effects of individual values, leadership, and organizational climate might usefully compare the public and private sectors. Second, more diverse methodological tools and the adoption of current theoretical approaches would support future investigations of the effects of Confucian values on outcomes in the Confucian Asian context. Such studies could be developed, replicated, and applied across multiple organizations, sectors, and cultural contexts. Furthermore, future studies should investigate the multiple variables of Confucian values as mediators of the relationship between EL and PSM. Third, this study was conducted based on cross-sectional surveys in Korea and China. Therefore, in future studies, it is necessary to find the best solutions to minimize the negative effects of common method bias (CMB). For example, it is necessary to utilize repeated cross-sectional datasets or to employ panel data analysis to prevent the distortion of reality as much as possible as well as to provide valid and reliable results. In addition, the data used in this study were obtained in 2015. A new survey needs to be conducted to consider environmental changes, and more meaningful policy implications can be derived through a comparative analysis of the latest data and the 2015 survey data. Finally, this research focuses only on ethical climates at the organizational level; future research should analyze the impact of individual-level ethical motives such as fraud, coercive power, influence dealing, self-interest, and deceit [75].

5.3. Conclusions

This study makes original contributions, differentiating it from previous research on the following points. First, as the main findings of this study imply, public employees with high PSM levels can be nurtured, managed, and developed by enhancing certain organizational factors, including entrepreneurial leadership and an ethical climate. Hence, public agencies may need to devise and internalize more effective and acceptable leadership and ethical education and training programs and diffuse Confucian values, such as benevolence, sympathy, and humility, in the workplace. Enquiries regarding PSM should be harmonized with the civil servant training system applied to all Korean and Chinese public employees. Our results indicate that public sectors should be expertly designed organizational environments in which public employees actively exhibit an individual public-interest disposition. Furthermore, entrepreneurial leadership and Confucian values and their capacity to build an ethical climate need to serve as a deliberated precondition for developing employees' PSM attitudes. Generally, public leaders and managers are required to adopt conventional leadership styles such as transformational and transactional leadership [18]. However, to conquer complex organizational obstacles [76] and to elicit public employees' positive behaviors, they need to perform in an innovative, proactive, and risk-taking fashion [9]. To develop leaders' entrepreneurship roles, leadership training should be provided to all levels of public employees.

Second, this study confirms the role of Confucian values in the Asian public-sector context. The findings provide a way of developing an optimized and customized organizational culture in this region and identify the need to pursue a mixture of traditional and state-of-the-art values, systems, and paradigms, even under the rubric of the Fourth Industrial Revolution. Thus, drawing upon the diagnostic indicators and results, HR reformers and experts must constantly diagnose the organizational climate, culture, and values. They must drive and pursue public management and civil service reform through more evidence-driven and effective measures. For example, in the Korean public-sector context, a rank-in-person system, a merit system, and a closed-career civil-service system are outdated personnel management paradigms that might include the main Confucian values per se. Reformers are radically reconstructing these systems and incorporating brand new values such as e-HRM and e-HRD platforms, merit-pay or performance-driven systems, multi-faceted evaluation measures, diversity, and work–life-balance policies into traditional and Confucian workplace settings. The caveats from this finding can also be derived from Hofstede's cultural viewpoint on long-term vs. short-term orientation comparisons. Hofstede Insight indicates that both countries have high scores in the long-term orientation division (Korea: 100; China: 87; https://www.hofstede-insights.com/ (accessed on 1 October 2022)). This means that the societal and organizational cultures of both countries are likely to adapt traditions to the modern context.

Third, HR managers and practitioners should develop and devise intrinsic incentive systems to manage and sustain public employees' PSM attitudes to boost the person–organization (P–O) fit, explaining ethical conditions at an organizational level and PSM attitudes on an individual basis. For example, if the ethical climate is high and the average PSM attitude is low, a crowding-out effect is created as the P–O fit is low. However, if both ethical conditions and PSM are high, a crowding-in effect increases the P–O fit. Considering that self-determination theory emphasizes autonomy, competence, and relatedness as intrinsic motivational tools that cause self-determined behaviors [77], employee-focused and competency-driven management systems (e.g., performance evaluation, promotion, job rotation, HRD) should be secured in the public sector.

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