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Article in *Public Management Review* · March 2020

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To cite this article: Jaclyn S. Piatak & Stephen B. Holt (2020) Disentangling altruism and public service motivation: who exhibits organizational citizenship behaviour?, *Public Management Review*, 22:7, 949-973, DOI: [10.1080/14719037.2020.1740302](https://doi.org/10.1080/14719037.2020.1740302)

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## Disentangling altruism and public service motivation: who exhibits organizational citizenship behaviour?

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### ABSTRACT

Public service motivation (PSM) is a core concept in public administration, but has gained less traction in other disciplines. To address this, we need to differentiate PSM from related concepts, such as altruism. We examine the separate and joint influence of PSM and altruism on organizational citizenship behaviour (OCB) using a nationally representative dataset, where the two constructs are measured on a survey preceding the measurement of OCB. Separately, both altruism and PSM drive OCB. However, when examining the joint influence of PSM and altruism, we find only PSM significantly predicts OCB, which may be due to the organizational context.

**KEYWORDS** Public Service Motivation; Altruism; Organizational Citizenship Behaviour

Organizations across sectors want to know what drives their employees; therefore, scholars across disciplines devote a great deal of attention to motivation. Indeed, employee motivation is consistently one of the big questions facing public management (Behn 1995). As a result, Perry and Wise (1990) coined the term public service motivation (PSM) to capture the other-regarding motivation grounded in public institutions (Perry and Hondeghem 2008). PSM has captivated public management scholars and research on PSM has grown substantially (for reviews, see: Perry and Vandenberg 2015; Ritz, Brewer, and Neumann 2016; Vandenberg, Brewer, and Ritz 2014). However, PSM has yet to gain significant traction in other disciplines. With the wide-array of concepts across fields, is PSM a useful concept for broader management?

PSM originated in public administration and may be a meaningful concept for other disciplines, but a key critique is the lack of differentiation from similar concepts, such as altruism and prosocial motivation. For concepts to be useful, they must be differentiated from like concepts (Gerring 1999). Bozeman and Su (2015) assert, 'If PSM research aims to make a *distinctive* contribution to social knowledge, then sharper boundaries are required' (702). Others agree that in order to transport PSM theory to other fields and disciplines, scholars need to establish the boundaries of PSM (e.g. Perry and Vandenberg 2015; Ritz, Brewer, and Neumann 2016; Vandenberg, Brewer, and Ritz 2014) and differentiate PSM from related concepts in other disciplines (Boyd et al. 2018; Breugh, Ritz, and Alfes 2018; Nowell et al. 2016). To

demonstrate PSM is a concept useful to other disciplines, we as a field need to be clear about what PSM is and what it is not. To do so, we seek to clarify the boundary between PSM and altruism.

In pursuit of construct validation (see: Adcock and Collier 2001), we seek to disentangle the concepts of PSM and altruism by examining their separate and joint influence on organizational citizenship behaviour (OCB), a common prosocial workplace behaviour studied both in public and general management. Employees that exhibit OCB go above and beyond their required job description to help others in the workplace. Since both altruism and PSM have been examined in relation to OCB, it is a prime outcome variable to validate PSM measures and differentiate the concept from altruism.

In the following sections, we discuss the conflation of many terms related to PSM, such as altruism, a concept that while understood by most also varies greatly by discipline. Next, we discuss our conceptualization of altruism, in contrast to egoism in line with social psychology, and PSM as a motivation to serve others grounded in public institutions. We then review studies of altruism and PSM in relation to OCB to illustrate that OCB is a common behavioural outcome that is ideal to use to disentangle the two motivational concepts. Next, is a discussion of our methods, where measures of altruism and PSM are on a pre-election survey and measures of OCB are on a post-election survey, and of our results, disentangling the two concepts by discussing their independent and joint influence on OCB. We close with the key findings and implications to advance PSM theory in pursuit of conceptual clarity and construct validation.

### **In search of conceptual clarity**

The term prosocial is not defined in many dictionaries, including Merriam-Webster, since it is a term created by social scientists to describe other-oriented behaviours. Prosocial behaviours are generally defined as ‘the broad range of actions intended to benefit one or more people other than oneself – behaviours such as helping, comforting, sharing, and cooperating’ (Batson and Powell 2012, 463). While researchers largely agree prosocial behaviours are driven by other-regarding motives, concepts aimed at describing and explaining those motives vary by discipline.

Across fields of study, scholars examine what drives individuals to exhibit prosocial behaviours. Social biology focuses on reciprocal altruism, whereas evolutionary psychology examines how individual self-sacrifice benefits the group (Koehler and Rainey 2008). Meanwhile, rational choice economists argue individuals behave out of self-interest. Economists tend to view altruism in varying levels of purity, where individuals are often altruistic to obtain the benefit of the ‘warm glow’ (Andreoni 1990). Other fields acknowledge contributions to the greater good of society, such as developmental psychologists’ generativity (Erikson 1959), social psychologists’ altruism versus egoism (Batson 2014), sociologists’ civility (Etzioni 2010), and political scientists’ shared humanity (Monroe 2002) and moral sense (Wilson 1993). In the fields of management and organizational behaviour, scholars focus on prosocial motivation (Grant 2008) and organizational citizenship behaviour (Organ 1988) within the context of an organization. Relatedly, sense of community responsibility in community psychology focuses on community collaboratives (Nowell et al. 2016; Nowell and Boyd 2014). In public administration, public service motivation (PSM) was conceptualized to examine motives grounded in public institutions (Perry and Hondeghem 2008). To advance

PSM theory, we agree that we need to establish the conceptual boundaries of PSM (e.g. Perry and Vandenberg 2015; Ritz, Brewer, and Neumann 2016; Vandenberg, Brewer, and Ritz 2014) and can do so by differentiating PSM from related concepts (e.g. Boyd et al. 2018; Breugh, Ritz, and Alfes 2018; Nowell et al. 2016).

### **Differentiating PSM and altruism**

We distinguish the effects of PSM, first defined as ‘an individual’s predisposition to respond to motives grounded primarily or uniquely in public institutions and organizations’ (Perry and Wise 1990, 368), from altruism, ‘a motivational state with the ultimate goal of increasing another’s welfare’ (Batson 2011, 6). Since both PSM and altruism have been examined in relation to OCB, we examine the separate and joint influence of the two constructions on OCB to see where the concepts overlap and diverge. We first begin by identifying the conceptual overlap and distinctions.

Among public management scholars, some debate remains about the definition and scope of PSM, particularly as it relates to similar measures of prosocial motivation from other fields (Bozeman and Su 2015). Some scholars have approached PSM as interchangeable with more general concepts of altruism (Rainey and Steinbauer 1999). Others have suggested that PSM represents prosocial motivations ‘grounded primarily in public institutions’ (Perry and Hondeghem 2008). Generally, these scholars conceptualize PSM as a motivational base distinct from altruism, arguing that PSM contains multiple dimensions and the altruistic dimension motivates actions to aid more specific subgroups of people (Perry and Vandenberg 2015). For instance, rather than being motivated by aiding all others, as in many definitions of altruism, someone with high levels of PSM would target efforts to aid the members of a specific public (e.g. residents of a municipality or citizens of a particular nation-state) or institution (e.g. a public organization that serves a municipality). While altruism focuses on *why* an individual is motivated to help others (out of concern for oneself or others), PSM focuses on *where* the call to serve is directed – to public institutions and organizations. Implicitly, while altruism and PSM may overlap and motivate many prosocial behaviours, the relative importance of the two bases of motivation may vary across contexts.

### **Altruism**

Since altruism is a concept that cuts across disciplinary bounds and is discussed in different terms depending on the discipline, we conceptualize and measure altruism in line with social psychology, where altruism is defined in contrast to egoism. This conception originated in the 1800s with French philosopher, Auguste Comte (1851/1875) who suggested people help others out of concern for self (egoism) or concern for others (altruism). Comte was the first to propose that people may act for reasons other than their own self-interest. Since altruism has been defined in contrast to egoism from the start, measures of altruism can be thought of as a continuum from altruistic to egotistic (e.g. Haski-Leventhal 2009; Krebs and Van-Hesteren 1994; Monroe 1998). People are neither entirely altruistic nor entirely egotistic. As such, we measure ‘altruism in terms of a dimension of altruistic versus antagonistic tendency, which involves both a willingness to help or provide benefits to others and an unwillingness to harm or impose costs on others’ (Ashton and Lee 2007, 156). This scale cuts across personality types but is part of the latest personality trait assessment in social

psychology: the HEXACO, named after each of the dimensions: Honesty-Humility, Emotionality, eXtraversion, Agreeableness, Conscientiousness, and Openness to Experience (Ashton and Lee 2001, Ashton and Lee 2007; Lee and Ashton 2004).

The concept of altruism is complex and as such captured in the HEXACO – both within the personality domains and as a scale that cuts across personality traits. Reciprocal altruism, the basis for cooperation, is helping others at one's expense and kin altruism is helping a family member's survival at the cost to one's own chances of survival (Ashton et al. 1998). Both reciprocal and kin altruism are incorporated into the HEXACO personality inventory. The Honesty-Humility domain encompasses reciprocal altruism in terms of fairness and the Agreeableness domain encompasses reciprocal altruism in terms of tolerance, while Emotionality encompasses kin altruism (Ashton and Lee 2007). In addition, the HEXACO includes an interstitial altruism scale for one's willingness to help others. Other scholars have also noted a distinction between personality traits, such as Agreeableness or Emotionality, and context contingent traits that activate in response to an external referent, such as altruism or antagonism (Costa and McRae, 1994; McAdams and Pals 2006). We view altruism as a context contingent trait, consistent with the cross-cutting nature of the interstitial altruism versus antagonism scale, that leads some people to act out of concern for others without self-benefit.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, the interstitial altruism scale has been linked each of the three personality domains that encompass reciprocal and kin altruism – Honesty-Humility, Emotionality, and Agreeableness (Ashton, Lee, and de Vries 2014; Ashton and Lee 2007). Interestingly, van Witteloostuijn, Esteve, and Boyne (2016) find affective PSM, measured by the self-sacrifice and compassion dimensions of PSM, to also correspond to Honesty-Humility, Emotionality, and Agreeableness. This highlights the need to differentiate the two complex motivational constructs.

## **PSM**

Central to the call to differentiate PSM from similar concepts, like altruism (Bozeman and Su 2015), is the use of altruism in many definitions of PSM. For a few examples, PSM has been defined as 'a general altruistic motivation to serve the interests of a community of people, a state, a nation, or humankind' (Rainey and Steinbauer 1999, 23), 'altruistic intentions that motivate individuals to service the public interest' (Bright 2008, 151), and 'an individual's predisposition to enact altruistic or prosocial behaviours regardless of setting' (Pandey, Wright, and Moynihan 2008, 91). In their edited volume on *Motivation in Public Management*, Perry and Hondeghem (2008) define PSM as 'individual motives that are largely, but not exclusively, altruistic and are grounded in public institutions' (6). In a more recent review essay, Perry, Hondeghem, and Wise (2010) describe that 'PSM is a particular form of altruism or prosocial motivation that is animated by specific dispositions and values arising from public institutions and missions' (452). When using a different concept, like altruism, in the definition of PSM, the boundaries of the two concepts are inherently blurred.

A key aspect of PSM is the incorporation of multiple motives into a single concept. We define PSM as drive to serve others grounded in public institutions. PSM acknowledges the role of self-interest, values, and emotions in this call to public service. Perry (1996) developed a measure of six dimensions of PSM – commitment to the public interest, civic duty, social justice, attraction to policymaking, compassion, and self-

sacrifice – to capture the range of motives in the call to serve. As an overall concept, PSM captures a fuller range of human motivation that compels one to pursue public service than any individual dimension of PSM.

Altruism and PSM may overlap, as PSM includes dimensions of compassion and self-sacrifice, that may relate to the desire to help others out of concern for others rather than one's own benefit. For example, some define PSM as general altruism (e.g. Rainey and Steinbauer 1999; Bright 2008; Pandey, Wright, and Moynihan 2008) and others suggest dimensions, like self-sacrifice, are related to altruism (Perry 1996). However, context may influence whether altruism or PSM drives one to enact certain behaviours. For example, across levels of government and examining public service broadly, Piatak (2015) found only local government and non-profit sector employees to be more likely to volunteer compared to those in the for-profit sector. Perhaps the context of a position, such as the job sector, influences employee motivation and behaviour at work.

Altruism is a general motivation to help others that depends on the basis of one's motive – self versus others. Meanwhile, despite definitions of PSM varying over the years, a key component is *publicness*. Perry has consistently incorporated the public-orientation of PSM into defining the term (e.g. Perry and Wise 1990; Perry 1996; Perry and Hondeghem 2008; Perry, Hondeghem, and Wise 2010). Although some scholars have defined PSM more broadly and even 'regardless of setting' (Pandey, Wright, and Moynihan 2008, 91), we argue context may be critical in differentiating PSM from altruism. As such, we examine how altruism and PSM perform within the organizational context to determine the overlap and distinctions in measuring OCB.

## OCB Hypotheses

One prosocial behaviour within the workplace that has gained attention from general management and public management scholars alike is organizational citizenship behaviour (OCB). Organizational citizenship is a management concept that may be defined as 'individual behaviour that is discretionary, not directly or explicitly recognized by the formal reward system, and that in the aggregate promotes the effective functioning of the organization' (Organ 1988, 4). To assess the construct validity of PSM, we first examine the independent influence of altruism and PSM on OCB and then the joint effects.

Much like PSM, research on OCB has skyrocketed in recent decades. A review article found over 2,100 articles have been published on the topic, a majority of which were published since 2010 (Podsakoff et al. 2014), making OCB one of the most widely examined topics in the organizational sciences (Klotz et al. 2018). While OCB draws upon social psychology's conceptions of altruism and prosocial behaviours, it differs in that it takes place in the organizational context, providing structure, context, and continuity (Organ, Podsakoff, and MacKenzie 2006), and may be directed not only towards individuals, but also to overall organizational effectiveness (Williams and Anderson 1991; Podsakoff et al. 2009). Organ (1988) conceptualized five dimensions of OCB – altruism, courtesy, conscientiousness, civic virtue, and sportsmanship – in his seminal work, *Organizational Citizenship Behaviour: The Good Soldier Syndrome*. In measuring OCB, Smith, Organ, and Near (1983) differentiate between altruistic OCB, directed at specific persons, and general compliance OCB, or general conscientiousness. We focus on altruistic OCB in disentangling the concepts of altruism and

PSM since altruism has been examined primarily towards an individual (Lemmon and Wayne 2015).

Unlike most discussions of altruism that focus on actions taken to benefit oneself or others, OCB is a result of multiple, overlapping motives (Organ, Podsakoff, and MacKenzie, 2006). As such, scholars have examined the influence of various motivations on OCB, primarily prosocial values, organizational concern, and impression management. In examining these three motives, Rioux and Penner (2001) found prosocial motives were most strongly associated with the altruism dimension of OCB. When looking at personality traits, studies find agreeable employees have higher levels of OCB (Ilies et al. 2009; Organ and Lingl 1995). Others find that while prosocial motives correspond to higher levels of OCB, the positive influence of prosocial motives may be reduced (Takeuchi, Bolino, and Lin 2015) or amplified (Grant and Mayer 2009) by other motives. Using a profile approach, recent work suggests that all three motives – prosocial values, organizational concern, and impression management – predict all five OCB profiles – prosocial citizens, contributors, disengaged, specialists, and moderates – based on the five dimensions – virtue, conscientiousness, sportsmanship, courtesy, and altruism (Klotz et al. 2018). However, prosocial citizens, those with high levels of OCB across all five dimensions of OCB, are driven by prosocial values and organizational concern (Klotz et al. 2018). Since prosocial values and motives correspond to greater OCB, we expect altruism to correspond to higher levels of OCB. Altruism, the motivation to help others out of concern for others, may compel employees to go above and beyond at work. The helping behaviour of altruistic individuals would theoretically extend to the workplace context. As such, we hypothesize:

*H1: Altruism will have a positive relationship with OCB.*

Similar to the role prosocial values play in predicting OCB in organizational studies, public management studies have found employees with higher levels of PSM tend to exhibit higher levels of OCB (Abdelmotaleb and Saha 2019; Bottomley et al. 2016; Boyd et al. 2018; Gould-Williams, Mostafa, and Bottomley 2015; Kim 2006; Koumenta 2015; Ritz et al. 2014; Shim and Faerman 2017). PSM has a direct positive influence on extra-role behaviours, helping others on the job (Van Loon, Vandenabeele, and Leisink 2017). In addition, higher levels of PSM have also been found to correspond to higher levels of change-oriented OCB (Campbell and Im 2016), interpersonal citizenship behaviour (Pandey, Wright, and Moynihan 2008), and taking charge behaviour (Homberg, Vogel, and Weiherl 2019). Scholars have examined how organizational factors influence this relationship, like leadership and co-worker support (Bottomley et al. 2016; Pandey, Wright, and Moynihan 2008), as well as the mediating role OCB plays between PSM and organizational benefits, like turnover intention (Campbell and Im 2016). However, research to-date has consistently found a positive and direct influence of PSM on OCB (Harari et al. 2017). People driven to serve the public will likely take on additional work roles to satisfy their call to serve. Therefore, we hypothesize:

*H2: PSM will have a positive relationship with OCB.*



Although the relationship between PSM and OCB has been established in the public management literature and the relationship between prosocial values/motives and OCB has been established in organizational studies, data limitations have prevented scholars from disentangling PSM from altruism in motivating OCB. Public management studies have found employees with higher levels of PSM tend to exhibit higher levels of OCB (Abdelmoteleb and Saha 2019; Bottomley et al. 2016; Boyd et al. 2018; Campbell and Im 2016; Gould-Williams, Mostafa, and Bottomley 2015; Kim 2006; Koumenta 2015; Pandey, Wright, and Moynihan 2008; Ritz et al. 2014; Shim and Faerman 2017; Van Loon, Vandenabeele, and Leisink 2017), but how does PSM compare to other motives? In addition to prosocial values/motives, OCB may be a result of selfish motives to enhance one's reputation, boredom with in-role tasks, and even compensation for negative actions in an employee's personal life (Bolino, Turnley, and Niehoff 2004). Motives for OCB are likely mixed. OCB depends on an individual's job attitudes, motives, and personality traits as well as organizational factors (Penner, Midili, and Kegelmeyer 1997). Since PSM captures a mixture of rational, normative, and affective motives, PSM captures a broader range of motivations to help others. People with a drive to help others may be altruistic both within and outside of the workplace. However, PSM, the desire to serve others grounded in public institutions and organizations, is particularly applicable within the organizational context.

Motivations may be driven by one's personality, one's disposition, and/or the situation (e.g. Ajzen 2005). The organizational context of OCB may moderate the relationship between the two other-oriented motivations and enacting extra-role behaviour at work. From a dispositional approach, an individual may be altruistic or PSM-driven, but the extent to which may depend on the circumstances. From a situational approach, OCB takes place within the organizational context that is often a core component of definitions of PSM, whereas definitions of altruism focus on whether an action is taken out of concern for oneself or others. Therefore, we hypothesize:

*H3: PSM will be more strongly related to OCB compared to altruism.*

## **Methods**

We test the proposition that PSM and altruism are distinct concepts (or at least have some distinct components) in explaining OCB using an original survey module in the 2016 Cooperative Congressional Election Study (CCES), a national survey conducted by a consortium of universities that is administered by YouGov. The common content was asked of 64,400 U.S. adults using a matched random sample methodology to select a representative sample. Details on YouGov's sampling methodology and the CCES may be found in the codebook on dataverse (Ansolabehere and Schaffner 2017). This allows us to examine the motivations and behaviours of a more general group of respondents than public employees.

For our purposes, a subsample of 1,000 respondents were asked about their motivations on the pre-test survey instrument prior to the 2016 Presidential Election and asked about their behaviours on the post-test survey. The design of the CCES allowed us to ask the same respondents about their motivations and behaviours at two points in time to address issues of simultaneity, a primary causality concern in PSM research (Perry and Vandenabeele 2015; Ritz, Brewer, and Neumann 2016; Vandenabeele,

Brewer, and Ritz 2014), and common source bias, which has been receiving a great deal of attention in public administration (e.g. Meier and O'Toole 2012; Favero and Bullock 2014). The analytic sample contains 761 respondents with complete data on all related variables.

### ***Dependent variable***

The dependent variable, OCB, is measured on the second wave of the survey, following the 2016 election. OCB measures are used in psychology and management, where peers and supervisors often rate the person of interest. However, a meta-analysis (see: Carpenter et al. 2014) shows that self-reported measures converge with supervisor reports, lending credence to using self-reported measures for OCB. While OCB has been measured in several ways, a meta-analysis supports more global measures compared to dimensional approaches (Dalal 2005) and research supports focusing on a single dimension since they are interrelated and have common correlates (LePine, Erez, and Johnson 2002). Since our focus is on disentangling altruism and PSM, we focus on altruistic OCB, behaviour directed towards individuals. Smith, Organ, and Near (1983) differentiated between measures of altruistic OCB, directed towards individuals, and general compliance OCB, directed towards the organization. We use these altruistic OCB measures (See Appendix), much like the work of Kim 2005, 2006) and similar to measures of organizational citizenship behaviour towards individuals (OCBI) used in recent public management work (Boyd et al. 2018). In a grid format, respondents were asked: 'At work, how often do you do each of the following?' and given the five point Likert-scale: 'Never, Rarely, Every Once in a While, Sometimes, Almost Always.' The survey items for altruistic OCB are listed in Table A1 of the Appendix. We measure OCB as a standardized index of these items ( $\alpha = 0.85$ ).

### ***Independent variables***

The independent variables, altruism and PSM, are measured on the first wave of the survey, prior to the 2016 election. Both of these motivation concepts are measured using a global measure and a grid question format. Respondents were asked to 'Describe to what extent you agree with the following statements:' with a five-point Likert-scale ranging from 'Strongly Disagree' to 'Strongly Agree.'

PSM is measured using the five-item global measure, which has been widely used and validated (Perry 1996; Wright, Christensen, and Pandey 2013; see Appendix Table A1). We focus on the global measure in the interest of parsimony and coherence (Gerring 1999), but also due to space available on the CCES. We agree with Wright, Christensen, and Pandey (2013) about the benefits of the commonly used global measure and Vandenabeele, Ritz, and Neumann (2018) that 'advancing PSM research is better served by just having one overall concept (and overall) measure of PSM' (264). Therefore, we measure PSM as a standardized index of this commonly used instrument (Cronbach's  $\alpha = 0.78$ ).

Altruism is measured using the four-item scale developed by Lee and Ashton (2006) from the 100-item revised HEXACO personality inventory (HEXACO-PI-R), available at hexaco.org (see Appendix Table A1). Since both affective PSM and altruism have been linked to the personality traits of Honesty-Humility, Emotionality, and Agreeableness (Ashton, Lee, and de Vries 2014; Ashton and Lee 2007; van Witteloostuijn, Esteve, and Boyne 2016), this altruism scale has convergent validity with PSM and is becoming

a common measure of altruism (e.g. Bergh and Akrami 2016; Zettler and Hilbig 2010; Zettler, Hilbig, and Haubrich 2011). We also measure the interstitial global measure of altruism as a standardized index of this four-item scale ( $\alpha = 0.54$ ).<sup>1</sup>

Table 1 summarizes the descriptive characteristics of our sample, both overall and separately by above and below average OCB respondents. After accounting for missing data, our analytic sample of individuals who responded to the OCB items is slightly less reflective of national characteristics. The analytic sample is slightly whiter, more female, and more educated than the national population. Notably, the analytic sample has a lower mean PSM (mean of  $-0.02$  and a standard deviation of  $0.55$ ) and is slightly less altruistic (mean of  $-0.01$  and standard deviation of  $0.65$ ) than the full sample (mean of  $0$  and standard deviation of  $1$  for both PSM and altruism). Comparing respondents who report above and below average OCB, higher OCB respondents tend, on average, to have higher PSM and be more altruistic. Similarly, while high and low OCB respondents do not vary on demographics, high OCB people appear to be, on average, higher educated and earn more income.

**Table 1.** Summary of sample.

	All	High OCB	Low OCB
OCB	0.00 (1.00)	0.66*** (0.42)	-0.97 (0.82)
Help absent workers	0.25	0.40***	0.05
Volunteer for tasks	0.21	0.34***	0.03
Orient new people	0.27	0.45***	0.01
Help with heavy workloads	0.29	0.47***	0.02
Assist supervisor	0.22	0.34***	0.03
Make innovative suggestions	0.19	0.30***	0.03
PSM	-0.02 (0.55)	0.10*** (0.53)	-0.19 (0.55)
Altruism	-0.01 (0.65)	0.10*** (0.59)	-0.19 (0.70)
White	0.78	0.78	0.78
Black	0.08	0.08	0.10
Latinx	0.07	0.08	0.06
Asian	0.02	0.02	0.03
Native	0.01	0.01	0.01
Multiple or other race	0.04	0.04	0.03
Female	0.59	0.58	0.59
Full-time employed	0.42	0.49***	0.33
Part-time employed	0.11	0.10	0.11
Retired	0.21	0.20	0.21
Student	0.04	0.03*	0.06
Unemployed	0.08	0.07*	0.11
HH income \$20 K or less	0.10	0.09	0.12
HH income \$100 K or more	0.17	0.20**	0.14
HS or less	0.26	0.21***	0.33
College or more	0.39	0.44***	0.31
Democrat	0.37	0.35	0.39
Republican	0.25	0.26	0.23
Observations	761	453	308

Note: Standard deviations in parentheses. High OCB = OCB > 0; Low OCB = OCB < 0. The statistical significance of mean differences between high-OCB and low-OCB respondents is tested using t-tests. \*p <.10 \*\*p <.05 \*\*\*p <.01.

### Empirical strategy

We use the data described previously to model the relationship between PSM, altruism, and OCB while accounting for potential confounding observable characteristics of respondents. Specifically, we treat the latent factor that drives OCB of workers in state  $s$  as the linear function:

$$OCB_{is} = \beta PSM_i + \delta Altruism_i + \gamma X_i + \theta_s + \varepsilon_{is} \quad (1)$$

where  $PSM$  and  $Altruism$  measure latent PSM (or the residuals of PSM) and altruism using the survey measures previously described;  $X$  represents a vector of controls for race, age, gender, education level, employment status, religiosity, political beliefs, and income; and  $\theta$  represents a state fixed-effect (FE) to account for time-invariant state-specific unobserved factors (e.g. cultural, economic health) that might impact OCB. The intuition in equation (1) is that, after adjusting for socioeconomic and demographic differences across individuals,  $\beta$  and  $\delta$  will test the relative relationship of PSM and altruism with individual's OCB. More specifically, we will be comparing the average OCB of two individuals with different levels of PSM but similar levels of altruism. If institutional context and organizational fit reflect a boundary that separates PSM and more general measures of altruism, we anticipate that PSM will have a stronger relationship with OCB as it will include both prosocial and mission-specific motivations for other-oriented organizational behaviours. Given the importance of accounting for unobserved variation in context across states through fixed-effects, we estimate equation (1) using OLS with robust standard errors clustered at the state-level.

### Results

We begin by estimating our model to analyse the relationship between PSM and OCB and altruism and OCB separately to provide a sense of the relative importance of each in explaining OCB.

In [Table 2](#), columns 1 through 4 estimate the relationships of altruism and OCB and PSM and OCB, with and without controls. Note that both altruism and PSM have a positive, significant relationship with OCB and the relationship is robust to controlling for a rich set of observable characteristics.<sup>2</sup> After accounting for the relative differences in altruism and PSM observed in the analytic sample, the difference between PSM and altruism in the magnitude of their relationship with OCB is small. The results suggest that, adjusting for observable characteristics, a one standard deviation increase in altruism corresponds with an increase in OCB of 0.21 standard deviations. For PSM, an increase of one standard deviation yields an increase in OCB of 0.23 standard deviations.

In columns 5 and 6, we provide more direct comparisons of PSM and altruism in explaining differences in individuals' reported OCB. As the results in column 6 suggest, after accounting for differences in altruism, PSM remains a significant predictor of OCB. Meanwhile, after accounting for PSM, the estimated relationship between altruism and OCB becomes smaller and imprecise. The results in column 6 are consistent with the proposition that while both altruism and PSM might explain other-regarding behaviours, the mission- and institution-specific aspects of PSM lead measures of PSM to be more significant predictors of OCB than measures of altruism. Theoretically, PSM providing a better fit of organization-specific other-regarding behaviours may

**Table 2.** Relationship between PSM, altruism, and OCB.

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Altruism	0.37*** (0.06)	0.33*** (0.07)	(Omitted)		0.12 (0.11)	0.17 (0.11)
PSM	(Omitted)		0.50*** (0.07)	0.41*** (0.08)	0.39*** (0.12)	0.27*** (0.12)
Female		0.10 (0.09)		0.15* (0.08)		0.12 (0.09)
College or more		0.29 (0.33)		0.25 (0.31)		0.26 (0.32)
HH income \$100 K or more		0.03 (0.13)		0.02 (0.13)		0.02 (0.13)
All controls and state FE	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes
Adjusted R-squared	0.05	0.17	0.07	0.17	0.07	0.17
Observations	761	761	761	761	761	761

Note: Standard errors (in parentheses) are clustered at the state level; \*p <.10 \*\*p <.05 \*\*\*p <.01. FE = fixed effect.

help provide a concrete distinction between the concept of PSM and the concept of altruism. That is, the mission- or institution-specific motivation included in PSM, even in the absence of altruism or other-regarding motives or values, might lead someone to go beyond their duties in filling organizational needs.

## Discussion

The results presented here, using a national survey with measures of both PSM and altruism taken prior to measures of OCB, show that both altruism and PSM significantly predict individuals' engagement in OCB individually. However, altruism has no effect on OCB after controlling for PSM. While there is substantial overlap between global measures of PSM and altruism, PSM captures aspects of motivation beyond altruism that significantly predict engagement in OCB. Since OCB occurs within an organizational context in which workers' efforts contribute to a specific organizational purpose and often with a broader institutional role, our results suggest that a key theoretical and conceptual difference between PSM and altruism may be that PSM captures not only other-regarding motivation, but also the motivation to contribute to a particular mission or in a particular institutional context.

Confirming conceptualizations of OCB, we find that being a good organizational citizen is motivated by both altruism and PSM when examined separately, but jointly only PSM is a significant predictor of OCB. In line with research on PSM and OCB (Abdelmoteleb and Saha 2019; Bottomley et al. 2016; Boyd et al. 2018; Campbell and Im 2016; Gould-Williams, Mostafa, and Bottomley 2015; Kim 2006; Koumenta 2015; Pandey, Wright, and Moynihan 2008; Ritz et al. 2014; Shim and Faerman 2017; Van Loon, Vandenabeele, and Leisink 2017) and altruism and OCB (Rioux and Penner 2001), we find that both altruism and PSM influence OCB individually, but altruism is not significant after including PSM. This comports with Organ's (1988) original conception of OCB as Organ, Podsakoff, and MacKenzie (2006, p. 7) state: 'OCB, like most human behaviours, is caused by multiple and overlapping motives.' However, managers should have a great deal of interest in what drives employees to engage in OCB as it can drive performance and enhance organizational effectiveness (for reviews, see: Organ, Podsakoff, and MacKenzie 2005; Podsakoff et al. 2014).

In addition, the organizational or institutional context may be responsible for making PSM more relevant for OCB than altruism. While altruism refers to the motivation to help others out of concern for others regardless of setting, many definitions of PSM specify within public institutions or organizations (e.g. Perry and Wise 1990; Perry 1996; Perry and Hondeghem 2008; Perry, Hondeghem, and Wise 2010). Perhaps this organization, mission, or institution-specific aspect of PSM drives the finding that PSM is more strongly correlated with OCB than altruism. While we find evidence for the significance of the organizational or institutional context, future research should examine the extent to which PSM corresponds to job sector and/or the type of service. For example, are PSM-driven employees more motivated to OCB if the work is in the government or non-profit sector compared to the for-profit sector? Or are PSM-driven employees more motivated by the type of work being performed rather than the specific job sector? Future research should examine the role of *publicness* in PSM.

We build upon emerging work to differentiate PSM from related constructs, like sense of community responsibility (Boyd et al. 2018; Nowell et al. 2016) and self-determination theory (Breugh, Ritz, and Alfes 2018). In the setting of a non-profit health care organization, Boyd et al. (2018) find sense of community responsibility (SOC-R) to be a greater predictor of OCB than PSM, but PSM remained a significant predictor of OCB. This is in line with our work as we find PSM significantly influences OCB, where altruism is no longer significant after controlling for PSM. PSM may capture some of the more rational or self-interested reasons to exhibit OCB in addition to altruism or SOC-R. Perhaps PSM could be a useful construct and measure for other disciplines, such as the organizational sciences, to use in assessing OCB motives rather than or in addition to Rioux and Penner's (2001) commonly used 30-item scale. Future research should include a variety of inter-related motivations for OCB to determine the primary drivers.

PSM and OCB have both been linked to organizational performance (e.g. Kim 2005), but the dark sides have recently begun to gain attention. For example, OCB has daily positive and negative effects (Koopman, Lanaj, and Scitt, 2016), PSM may increase burnout, lower job satisfaction, and increase going to work even when sick (Jensen, Anderson, and Holton 2019), and high work devotion can influence personal relationships (Oelberger 2019). However, Klotz et al. (2018) found those with the highest and lowest levels of OCB experienced the lowest levels of fatigue. Additional work is needed to understand how other-regarding motives and behaviours influence not only the workplace through OCB and positive outcomes for the organization, but also for individual employees as it influences well-being, productivity, and burnout. Perhaps understanding the motives behind OCB can help advance our understanding of when devotion to work or helping others begins to come at a cost to the individual.

The current study is limited in at least two respects. First, we rely on condensed, global measures of both PSM and altruism. While these provide reliable measures of the latent factors of interest, they preclude our ability to investigate sub-dimensions of PSM as they relate to altruism. Future research should consider a similar approach using the full set of PSM items proposed by Perry (1996) and the full set of altruism items from the HEXACO-100 (Lee and Ashton 2006). We are unable to fully capture how these two complex motivational constructs relate with the global measures we use and the measures we use may explain some of the results, but we hope this may inspire a multi-dimensional or sub-dimensional analysis in future research. We find PSM to

be a broader construct than altruism, where future work could examine which sub-dimensions of PSM overlap with and are distinct from altruism. Future work could also examine other conceptualizations of altruism, such as reciprocal altruism (Aston et al., 1998), and other-oriented motives, including Grant's (2008) prosocial motivation.

Second, we rely on self-reported, altruistic OCB. Future research should examine context specific and directly observed measures of OCB or different types of OCB to further examine the link between PSM and OCB, such as change-oriented OCB (e.g. Campbell and Im 2016; Vigoda-Gadot and Beerli 2011). Scholars may also want to examine how motivations may vary depending on the OCB beneficiary. For example, Lemmon and Wayne (2015) found altruistic concern to correspond to OCB directed to the organization, but not to OCB directed towards supervisors. Future work should examine how predispositions to be driven by altruism, PSM, and other prosocial motives influence different types of OCB.

## Conclusion

To export the concept of PSM across disciplinary bounds, PSM needs to be differentiated from related constructs. We answer the call to advance the conceptual bounds of PSM (e.g. Perry and Vandenberg 2015; Ritz, Brewer, and Neumann 2016; Vandenberg, Brewer, and Ritz 2014) and to differentiate PSM from related concepts in other disciplines (Boyd et al. 2018; Breaugh, Ritz, and Alfes 2018; Nowell et al. 2016), particularly altruism (Bozeman and Su 2015). We find that PSM drives OCB. While PSM and altruism both play a significant role when examined individually, altruism has no effect when controlling for PSM.

Findings have implications for advancing our understanding of PSM in relation to both OCB, a management concept, and altruism, a 'regarding others' concept that cuts across disciplinary bounds that we measure in line with social psychology. The implications of our study are threefold. First, OCB is driven by PSM rather than altruism. When examining altruism and PSM side by side, only PSM remains a significant predictor of OCB. Organizational science, management, and psychology studies examining OCB may want to include the five-item global PSM measure as an alternative measure of OCB motives. Second, we disentangle the concepts of PSM and altruism. PSM is a more holistic measure of motives for engaging in OCB and exhibiting extra-role behaviours in the workplace. Lastly, our findings have practical implications for managers and human resource managers in developing an understanding of employee motivation in order to promote OCB in the workplace. Together, we hope our study advances the conceptual clarity of PSM as it relates to OCB and altruism so that other disciplines can make use of this concept.

## Notes

1. While the altruism alpha is low, Cronbach's alpha can be sensitive to the number of items used to measure a latent factor and provides an incomplete measure of reliability (see Cortina 1993 for a discussion). As a robustness check, we implemented a variety of measurement models using different assumptions about the latent factors examined here: treating each latent factor as an independent factor accounting for correlated measurement error in particular items (Figures A1 and A2) and treating PSM and altruism as two correlated factors (Figure A3). Appendix Table A3 presents the goodness-of-fit measures for each measurement model and

demonstrates that a more comprehensive investigation of our measures confirms that the altruism scale employed here is a sufficiently reliable measure of the latent factor. While our primary analysis, presented here, uses standardized indices derived from each factor's principal components, using indices of PSM and altruism derived from the measurement models in [Figures A1 through A3](#) yield similar results.

2. See appendix [Table A2](#) for the full set of coefficients of all controls included in the model.

## Disclosure Statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author(s).

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## Appendices

**Table A1.** Survey items.

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**OCB**

Help others who have been absent.  
Volunteer for things that are not required.  
Orient new people even though it is not required.  
Help others who have heavy work loads.  
Assist supervisor with his or her work.  
Make innovative suggestions to improve department.

**Altruism**

I have sympathy for people who are less fortunate than I am.  
I try to give generously to those in need.  
It wouldn't bother me to harm someone I didn't like. (Reversed)  
People see me as a hard-hearted person. (Reversed)

**PSM**

Meaningful public service is very important to me.  
I am often reminded by daily events about how dependent we are on one another.  
Making a difference in society means more to me than personal achievements.  
I am prepared to make sacrifices for the good of society.  
I am not afraid to go to bat for the rights of others even if it means I will be ridiculed.

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Table A2. All coefficients of full model.

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
PSM	0.39*** (0.12)	0.33*** (0.12)	0.33*** (0.12)	0.27** (0.12)				
Residuals					0.39*** (0.12)	0.33*** (0.12)	0.33*** (0.12)	0.27** (0.12)
Altruism	0.12 (0.11)	0.15 (0.10)	0.12 (0.10)	0.17 (0.11)	0.37*** (0.06)	0.36*** (0.06)	0.33*** (0.06)	0.34*** (0.07)
White	(Omitted)							
Black		-0.18 (0.12)	-0.22 (0.15)	-0.22 (0.15)		-0.18 (0.12)	-0.22 (0.15)	-0.22 (0.15)
Latinx		0.11 (0.13)	0.13 (0.14)	0.11 (0.15)		0.11 (0.13)	0.13 (0.14)	0.11 (0.15)
Asian		-0.42** (0.21)	-0.11 (0.22)	0.04 (0.18)		-0.42** (0.21)	-0.11 (0.22)	0.04 (0.18)
Native		0.31 (0.32)	0.11 (0.25)	0.34 (0.35)		0.31 (0.32)	0.11 (0.25)	0.34 (0.35)
Multiple or other race		0.45*** (0.15)	0.49*** (0.14)	0.46*** (0.16)		0.45*** (0.15)	0.49*** (0.14)	0.46*** (0.16)
Male	(Omitted)							
Female		0.14* (0.07)	0.14* (0.08)	0.12 (0.09)		0.14* (0.07)	0.14* (0.08)	0.12 (0.09)
Heterosexual	(Omitted)							
Transgendered		-0.31 (0.20)	-0.18 (0.23)	-0.16 (0.24)		-0.31 (0.20)	-0.18 (0.23)	-0.16 (0.24)
LGBQ		-0.18 (0.13)	-0.07 (0.12)	-0.09 (0.13)		-0.18 (0.13)	-0.07 (0.12)	-0.09 (0.13)
Stockholder		0.10 (0.07)	0.07 (0.07)	0.02 (0.07)		0.10 (0.07)	0.07 (0.07)	0.02 (0.07)
Home owner		0.00 (0.09)	-0.04 (0.09)	-0.00 (0.09)		0.00 (0.09)	-0.04 (0.09)	-0.00 (0.09)
HH income <\$20 K	(Omitted)							
HH income \$20 K-\$40 K		0.03 (0.14)	0.01 (0.13)	-0.02 (0.14)		0.03 (0.14)	0.01 (0.13)	-0.02 (0.14)
HH income \$40 K-\$60 K		0.17 (0.11)	0.12 (0.11)	0.12 (0.12)		0.17 (0.11)	0.12 (0.11)	0.12 (0.12)

(Continued)

Table A2. (Continued).

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
HH income \$60 K-\$80 K		0.24* (0.14)	0.24* (0.14)	0.25 (0.16)		0.24* (0.14)	0.24* (0.14)	0.25 (0.16)
HH income \$80 K-\$100 K		0.24 (0.15)	0.22 (0.15)	0.16 (0.16)		0.24 (0.15)	0.22 (0.15)	0.16 (0.16)
HH income \$100 K or more		0.08 (0.12)	0.06 (0.12)	0.02 (0.13)		0.08 (0.12)	0.06 (0.12)	0.02 (0.13)
< HS diploma	(Omitted)							
HS diploma		0.06 (0.30)	0.04 (0.32)	0.04 (0.34)		0.06 (0.30)	0.04 (0.32)	0.04 (0.34)
Some college		0.24 (0.28)	0.19 (0.31)	0.21 (0.28)		0.24 (0.28)	0.19 (0.31)	0.21 (0.32)
College or more		0.31 (0.28)	0.24 (0.31)	0.26 (0.32)		0.31 (0.28)	0.24 (0.31)	0.26 (0.32)
Non-union member	(Omitted)							
Union member		-0.00 (0.10)	0.03 (0.12)	0.10 (0.12)		-0.00 (0.10)	0.03 (0.12)	0.10 (0.12)
Former union member		0.02 (0.10)	0.04 (0.11)	0.03 (0.12)		0.02 (0.10)	0.04 (0.11)	0.03 (0.12)
Full-time employed	(Omitted)							
Part-time employed		-0.19* (0.10)	-0.15 (0.10)	-0.13 (0.11)		-0.19* (0.10)	-0.15 (0.11)	-0.13 (0.11)
Retired		-0.43*** (0.10)	-0.46*** (0.10)	-0.44*** (0.10)		-0.43*** (0.10)	-0.46*** (0.10)	-0.44*** (0.11)
Disabled		-0.34** (0.14)	-0.33** (0.14)	-0.29** (0.14)		-0.34** (0.14)	-0.33** (0.14)	-0.29** (0.14)
Homemaker		-0.94*** (0.11)	-0.92*** (0.11)	-0.83*** (0.11)		-0.94*** (0.11)	-0.92*** (0.11)	-0.83*** (0.12)
Student		-0.48** (0.24)	-0.50** (0.20)	-0.44** (0.24)		-0.48** (0.24)	-0.50** (0.20)	-0.44** (0.21)
Unemployed		-0.40** (0.15)	-0.37** (0.15)	-0.35** (0.15)		-0.40** (0.15)	-0.37** (0.15)	-0.35** (0.15)
Number of children		0.01 (0.02)	0.01 (0.02)	0.01 (0.02)		0.01 (0.02)	0.01 (0.02)	0.01 (0.02)
Single	(Omitted)							

(Continued)



Table A2. (Continued).

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
Married		0.10 (0.11)	0.07 (0.11)	0.09 (0.12)		0.10 (0.11)	0.07 (0.11)	0.09 (0.12)
Formerly married		-0.02 (0.15)	-0.02 (0.14)	-0.00 (0.14)		-0.02 (0.15)	-0.02 (0.14)	-0.00 (0.14)
Follows news often			0.21*** (0.07)	0.21*** (0.07)			0.21*** (0.07)	0.21*** (0.07)
Moderate	(Omitted)							
Very liberal			0.06 (0.15)	0.03 (0.15)			0.06 (0.15)	0.03 (0.15)
Liberal			0.01 (0.09)	0.03 (0.10)			0.01 (0.09)	0.03 (0.10)
Conservative			0.06 (0.10)	0.06 (0.11)			0.06 (0.10)	0.06 (0.11)
Very conservative			-0.22 (0.18)	-0.24 (0.19)			-0.22 (0.18)	-0.24 (0.19)
No ideology			0.16 (0.13)	0.15 (0.13)			0.16 (0.13)	0.15 (0.13)
Independent Democrat	(Omitted)							
Republican			-0.01 (0.09)	-0.01 (0.09)			-0.01 (0.09)	-0.01 (0.09)
Registered voter			0.02 (0.10)	0.00 (0.10)			0.02 (0.10)	0.00 (0.10)
Non-military Active duty	(Omitted)							
Veteran			0.10 (0.15)	0.10 (0.16)			0.10 (0.15)	0.10 (0.16)
Christian Catholic	(Omitted)							
Mormon			-0.54** (0.27)	-0.39 (0.45)			-0.54** (0.27)	-0.39 (0.45)
			-0.17 (0.13)	-0.20 (0.13)			-0.17 (0.13)	-0.20 (0.13)
			-0.10 (0.11)	-0.09 (0.12)			-0.10 (0.11)	-0.09 (0.12)
			-0.28 (0.25)	-0.32 (0.32)			-0.28 (0.25)	-0.32 (0.32)

(Continued)



Table A2. (Continued).

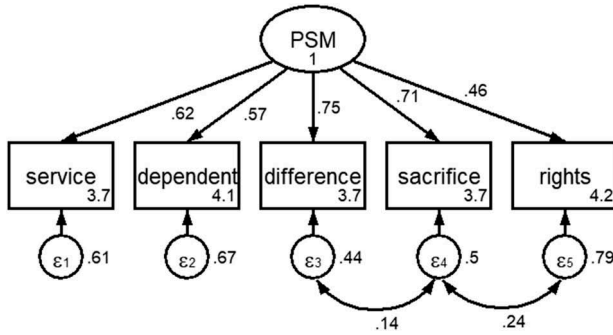
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
Jewish			-0.24 (0.16)	-0.24 (0.18)			-0.24 (0.16)	-0.24 (0.18)
Muslim			-0.01 (0.37)	0.02 (0.44)			-0.01 (0.37)	0.02 (0.44)
Eastern religion			-0.89*** (0.29)	-0.79** (0.33)			-0.89*** (0.29)	-0.79** (0.33)
Non-religious			-0.21* (0.11)	-0.21* (0.11)			-0.21* (0.11)	-0.21* (0.11)
Other religion			-0.27 (0.19)	-0.28 (0.20)			-0.27 (0.19)	-0.28 (0.20)
Never church								
Church more than once per week		(Omitted)						
Church once per week			-0.02 (0.19)	-0.01 (0.20)			-0.02 (0.19)	-0.01 (0.20)
Church few times per month			0.09 (0.14)	0.08 (0.14)			0.09 (0.14)	0.08 (0.14)
Church few times per year			0.14 (0.14)	0.17 (0.14)			0.14 (0.14)	0.17 (0.14)
Church seldom			0.30*** (0.12)	0.34** (0.13)			0.30*** (0.12)	0.34** (0.13)
Adjusted R-squared	0.07	0.17	0.18	0.17	0.07	0.17	0.18	0.17
Observations	761	761	761	761	761	761	761	761

Note: Standard errors (in parentheses) are clustered at the state level, \*p < .10 \*\*p < .05 \*\*\*p < .01. Residuals refers to the residuals of a regression of altruism on PSM and represents the components of PSM orthogonal to altruism.

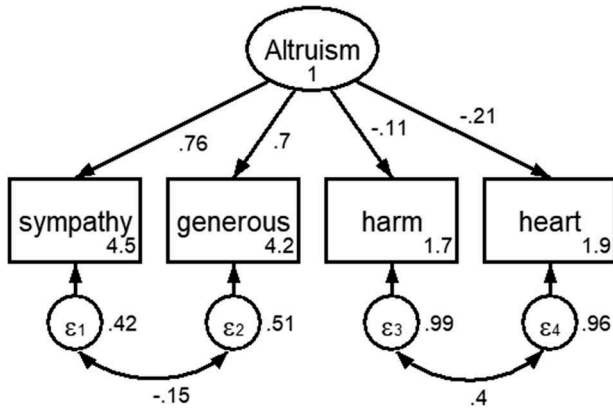
**Table A3.** Goodness-of-fit tests for CFA measurement models.

	PSM	Altruism	Two-factor	OCB
$\chi^2$	0.84	0.27	0.00	0.10
RMSEA	0.00	0.02	0.04	0.03
CFI	1.00	0.99	0.98	1.00
TLI	1.00	0.99	0.97	0.99
SRMR	0.00	0.01	0.03	0.01
CD	0.79	0.81	0.93	0.86

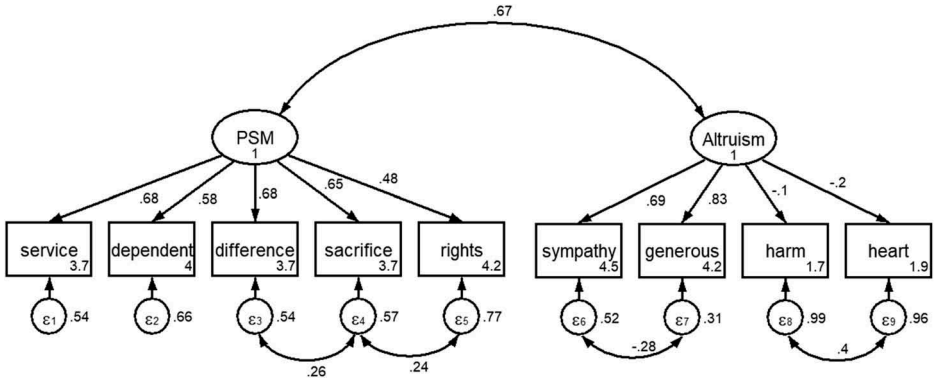
Note: Index scores demonstrate a good fit between the theoretical model and the observed data against the following thresholds: RMSEA  $\leq$  0.06; CFI  $\geq$  0.95; TLI  $\geq$  0.95; SRMR  $\leq$  0.08 (see Hu & Bentler, 1999).



**Figure A1.** Measurement model of PSM.



**Figure A2.** Measurement model of altruism.



**Figure A3.** Two-factor measurement model of PSM and altruism.