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## PUBLIC SERVICE MOTIVATION IN KAZAKHSTAN: CROSS-CULTURAL VALIDATION OF KIM'S SCALE AND EVIDENCE FROM PUBLIC AND QUASIPUBLIC SECTORS

**Abstract**

Public service motivation has become a central construct in explaining prosocial behavior and organizational commitment among public employees, yet empirical evidence from central asia remains scarce. Using survey data collected in spring 2025 from 335 employees in the public and quasi-public sectors, the study assesses the reliability and factor structure of Kim's multidimensional PSM scale and examines its association with retention related outcomes. The Russian language version of the instrument demonstrated strong internal consistency ( $\alpha=0,85$ ) and supported a four factor solution. Respondents reported generally high levels of public service motivation, with compassion and self-sacrifice emerging as the most salient dimensions. Government employees and older cohorts scored higher than their quasi public and younger counterparts, indicating sectoral and generational differences in motivational alignment.

Logistic regression revealed that, although overall public service motivation was positively associated with retention intention, only commitment to public interest and self-sacrifice significantly predicted career loyalty. By contrast, attraction to policy making and compassion, while internally reliable, showed limited behavioral salience, likely reflecting Kazakhstan's centralized policy processes and constrained citizen service interaction.

The study adds to cross-cultural research on public service motivation and indicates that normative and altruistic values remain important for sustaining the public workforce in Kazakhstan. The analysis suggests several concrete directions for reform, particularly in recruitment practices, leadership standards, and the alignment of personnel policies with institutional missions.

**Keywords:** Public service motivation; Kazakhstan; Kim's scale; Public sector retention; Organizational commitment.

**INTRODUCTION**

Public Service Motivation (PSM) has become one of the most influential frameworks in public administration research (Perry & Wise, 1990). It explains why individuals choose to work in the public sector and remain committed to serving the public good beyond material incentives. Over three decades, PSM has been linked to job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and retention, and Kim's (2011) 16-item multidimensional scale has emerged as the most widely validated cross-national instrument (Perry & Wise, 1990; Perry & Vandenabeele, 2015; Ritz et al., 2016).

Despite the growing international scope of public service motivation research, empirical studies are still largely clustered in welfare-state democracies and confucian merit based systems, particularly in east asia. These contexts differ markedly from the bureaucratic traditions and hybrid governance systems of the post-soviet region. Kazakhstan is a critical case: it combines ambitious administrative reforms with persistent patronage legacies and relies heavily on the civil service as its largest employer. Despite reforms in professionalization and

digital governance, challenges of low trust, limited mobility, and high turnover persist. Under these conditions, it is unclear whether motivational dimensions such as compassion, self-sacrifice, or commitment to the public interest function as theorized in more studied settings.

Preliminary evidence suggests they may. In earlier work, we surveyed Kazakhstani civil servants using (Yerbatyrov et al., 2025) Perry's (1996) original PSM framework and found motivation linked to job satisfaction and perceptions of reform (Perry & Wise, 1990). While that study confirmed the conceptual relevance of PSM, it relied on Perry's (1996) U.S. derived scale, which has been criticized for cultural specificity and limited cross national validity (Perry & Wise, 1990). It also did not provide systematic psychometric testing of measurement reliability in a Russian language, post-soviet setting.

Beyond linguistic adaptation, cross cultural validation requires establishing functional equivalence of the construct across institutional and cultural contexts. Following recommendations from international PSM scholarship, the present study treats validation as a multi-layered process involving semantic equivalence, structural validity, and preliminary cross group comparability (Perry & Wise, 1990). In post-soviet administrative systems, where formal norms coexist with historically embedded hierarchical practices, such validation is particularly critical because motivational constructs may display nominal reliability while varying in behavioral meaning.

The analysis tests the scale's reliability, factor structure, and its association with retention intention across demographic groups using survey data collected from 335 civil servants and quasi-public employees.

Our analysis is based on a survey of 335 civil servants and quasi-public employees, conducted between March 1 and April 1, 2025, via the government's official E-Otinish platform. The study addresses three questions:

- Does Kim's (2011) multidimensional PSM scale demonstrate acceptable reliability and construct validity in Kazakhstan's Russian language context?
- Are there significant differences in PSM across demographic and sectoral groups, and to what extent does the scale demonstrate preliminary cross group comparability?
- To what extent do PSM dimensions predict the intention to remain in public service?

It was hypothesized that commitment to public interest and self-sacrifice would be stronger predictors of retention than attraction to policy making or compassion.

The findings add to existing research on public service motivation. First, it extends PSM research to a regional context that remains underrepresented in existing scholarship and examines the applicability of the theory under post-soviet hybrid governance conditions. Second, the study offers the first Russian language validation of Kim's (2011) multidimensional PSM scale, using confirmatory factor analysis and reliability testing to assess construct validity in a Russian language setting (Perry & Wise, 1990; Kim et al., 2013). Third, it provides empirical evidence on the relationship between specific motivational dimensions and retention intention, allowing for a more explanatory assessment of workforce sustainability. Finally, the findings offer practical insights for public sector human resource management by identifying which motivational dimensions particularly commitment to public interest and self-sacrifice, are most strongly associated with retention, thereby informing the design of recruitment, leadership, and recognition practices.

The purpose of this study is to adapt and validate Kim's (2011) multidimensional PSM scale in Kazakhstan, examining its psychometric properties in a Russian language context (Perry & Wise, 1990; Kim et al., 2013). Specifically, the study aims to assess the reliability, factor structure, and predictive power of the instrument in explaining motivational differences and retention intentions among public and quasi-public sector employees.

The scientific significance of this study lies in extending the theoretical and methodological understanding of PSM within post-Soviet governance systems, which remain substantially underrepresented in comparative public administration scholarship. Although PSM theory has been extensively validated in western welfare states and Confucian meritocratic systems, limited empirical evidence exists regarding its applicability in hybrid administrative environments characterized by centralized policymaking, transitional institutional structures, and evolving public sector norms.

First, the study advances cross-cultural measurement research by providing the first systematic Russian language validation of Kim's (2011) multidimensional PSM scale in Kazakhstan. Through confirmatory factor analysis, reliability testing, and preliminary assessment of cross-group comparability, the research strengthens methodological knowledge concerning the cross-linguistic and institutional robustness of internationally developed motivational instruments.

Second, the study contributes to theoretical refinement of PSM by examining the differential behavioral salience of its multidimensional components. By demonstrating that commitment to public interest and self-sacrifice exhibit stronger predictive relevance for retention intentions than attraction to policymaking and compassion, the findings challenge assumptions about the universal behavioral impact of PSM constructs and highlight the contextual conditionality of motivational effects.

Third, the research expands comparative public administration literature by empirically situating Kazakhstan within global debates on civil service motivation. The findings facilitate differentiation between universal normative

foundations of public service motivation and context specific institutional constraints that shape their practical expression in hybrid governance systems.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Public service motivation research rests on two partially competing theoretical logics. The first treats PSM as a relatively universal prosocial disposition rooted in normative commitment to the public good. The second views PSM as institutionally conditioned, arguing that administrative traditions, political trust, and opportunity structures shape how motivational dispositions translate into attitudes and behavior. This tension is particularly salient in post-soviet administrative systems, where formal civil service norms coexist with historically embedded hierarchical and patronage practices.

This study is grounded in an institutional contingent interpretation of public service motivation. While acknowledging the normative core of PSM as a prosocial disposition, we follow recent comparative scholarship arguing that the strength and behavioral expression of PSM are conditioned by administrative opportunity structures, levels of bureaucratic discretion, and state society relations. This perspective is particularly relevant for hybrid governance systems, where formal meritocratic reforms coexist with path dependent bureaucratic practices.

Since Perry and Wise's (1990) seminal article, PSM has become one of the most cited yet debated concepts in public administration. Universalist scholars argue that PSM predicts job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and retention across countries (Kim, 2011; Perry & Vandenabeele, 2015; Ritz et al., 2016), while contextualists stress that these effects are contingent on institutions and culture (Van der Wal, 2015). Meta-analyses support consistent but modest relationships, typically explaining 10–20% of variance in satisfaction (Tang et al., 2024), but findings diverge across settings: strong in some countries, weak or absent in others (Ding & Wang, 2023). This suggests that motivational ideals may be universal, but their behavioral impact is shaped by administrative traditions and governance environments.

Importantly, the universalist contextualist debate has methodological implications. If PSM operates uniformly across settings, full measurement invariance should be observable across administrative contexts. Conversely, partial or configural invariance would support the institutional contingent view (Kim et al., 2013). Thus, cross cultural validation of Kim's (2011) scale is not merely a technical exercise but a theory testing strategy regarding the scope conditions of PSM.

From an institutional perspective, the key question is not only whether PSM exists, but under what administrative conditions it becomes behaviorally consequential. Prior research suggests that the translation of motivational values into organizational outcomes depends on factors such as bureaucratic discretion, perceived procedural fairness, and opportunities for meaningful public interaction. Where these conditions are constrained, high PSM may coexist with weak observable behavioral effects.

A central issue is measurement. Perry's (1996) original 24-item scale was innovative but U.S. centric. Kim's (2011) 16 item multidimensional scale offered stronger conceptual clarity and has been widely tested, showing greater validity across regions (Kim et al., 2013). Yet cross-national applications often reveal partial invariance and linguistic drift. For example, «compassion» translates as «pity» in chinese with weaker predictive value (Liu, Zhang, & Lv, 2014), while canadian francophone officials scored higher on commitment to public interest than anglophones despite identical institutions (Van der Wal & Mussagulova, 2023). These findings show that PSM requires empirical validation in each new language and governance setting. Taken together, these concerns position cross cultural measurement not as a purely technical exercise but as a theoretically consequential test of construct equivalence across administrative contexts.

Evidence from post-soviet contexts illustrates these challenges. Studies in Russia and Georgia show that PSM dimensions can be measured but lose predictive strength under hierarchical structures and low trust (Kalgin, 2018; Jaekel, 2017). In Ukraine, pre-war data suggest relevance only at municipal levels. In Kazakhstan, earlier research using Perry's (1996) original scale found that recognition and mission mattered more than pay, and that reforms layered over patronage weakened institutional trust (Perry & Wise, 1990; Bokayev et al., 2024; Knox & Orazgaliyev, 2025). Yet Yerbatyrov et al. (2025), working with the same U.S.-derived scale, revealed a paradox: motivational dimensions were measurable, but organizational loyalty was nearly absent. The employee net promoter score was only +6 far below European benchmarks, where commitment to public interest predicts 15–20% of retention variance. These findings suggest that Kim's (2011) multidimensional instrument should be further tested to ensure its applicability in Kazakhstan's governance environment (Kim et al., 2013).

Despite the growing body of cross national PSM research, three important gaps remain. First, systematic russian language validations of Kim's (2011) multidimensional scale in post-soviet administrative systems are extremely limited. Second, existing studies rarely examine whether the multidimensional structure of PSM retains both psychometric stability and behavioral relevance under hybrid governance conditions. Third, evidence from Central Asia remains particularly scarce, leaving open the question of whether internationally developed motivational instruments function equivalently in this institutional context. The present study addresses these

gaps by providing an initial Russian language validation of Kim’s (2011) PSM scale in Kazakhstan and examining its sectoral and behavioral correlates.

This paradox makes Kazakhstan a theoretically informative case for adjudicating between universalist and institutionalist interpretations of PSM. If motivational structures are robust across administrative contexts, Kim’s (2011) multidimensional scale should demonstrate both psychometric stability and behavioral relevance (Kim, 2011). However, if institutional constraints condition motivational effects, one would expect the scale to remain internally coherent while exhibiting uneven predictive power for retention-related outcomes. The central aim of this article is therefore to test the cross-cultural psychometric validity of Kim’s (2011) PSM scale in Kazakhstan and to assess the extent to which its dimensions translate into sectoral retention in a post-Soviet hybrid governance context (Kim, 2011; Kim et al., 2013).

### METHODOLOGY

This study employed a cross-sectional survey design, implemented between March 1 and April 1, 2025. The target population consisted of employees from the public sector and the quasi-public sector. Invitations were distributed through E-Otinish, the state-authorized electronic notification system, which ensured both formal legitimacy and broad accessibility. Data were collected anonymously via Google Forms to ensure respondent confidentiality.

A total of 335 valid questionnaires were obtained. Among the participants, 190 were women and 145 men; 260 respondents were employed in the government sector and 75 in the quasi-public sector.

The age distribution was as follows: under 25 (7,8%), 25-34 (28,7%), 35-44 (32,2%), 45-54 (21,5%), and 55+ (9,8%). Work tenure ranged from less than 1 year (12,5%), 1-3 years (24,8%), 4-7 years (27,6%), to more than 7 years (35,1%). Geographically, respondents were distributed across five regions, as well as central ministries and quasi-public organizations (see table 2). A consolidated table of sample characteristics has been included to provide a clearer overview of the dataset.

Table 1 summarizes the overall sample characteristics.

**Table 1. Sample Characteristics (n = 335)**

Variable	Category	n	%
Gender	female	190	56,7%
	male	145	43,3%
Age group	under 25	26	7,8%
	25-34	96	28,7%
	35-44	108	32,2%
	45-54	72	21,5%
	55+	33	9,8%
Work tenure	< 1 year	42	12,5%
	1-3 years	83	24,8%
	4-7 years	92	27,6%
	> 7 years	118	35,1%

*Note. Based on a national survey of 335 conducted in March–April 2025*

As summarized in table 1, the sample was predominantly female (56,7%) and concentrated in the 25-44 age group, which together accounted for more than 60% of respondents. This distribution reflects the demographic structure of Kazakhstan’s public workforce, where mid-career professionals constitute the majority.

The sample included civil servants from five central government ministries, five regional akimat offices, and employees of five major quasi-public companies (see table 2). The design allowed for representation from both policymaking and implementation levels, as well as from organizations operating under market-oriented but state-controlled conditions.

**Table 2. Participating Institutions in the Study**

Category	Institutions
Central government ministries	- Ministry of industry and construction of the republic of Kazakhstan; - Ministry of culture and information of the republic of Kazakhstan; - Ministry of artificial intelligence and digital development of the republic of Kazakhstan; - Ministry of water resources and irrigation of the republic of Kazakhstan; - Ministry of tourism and sports of the republic of Kazakhstan.
Regional akimat offices	- Akimat office of Zhambyl region; - Akimat office of Ulytau region; - Akimat office of East Kazakhstan region; - Akimat office of North Kazakhstan region; - Akimat office of West Kazakhstan region
Quasi public sector	- JSC «National managing holding Baiterek»; - JSC «National company Kazakhstan temir zholy»; - JSC «National company KAZAKH INVEST»; - JSC «National information technologies»; - LLP «SK-Pharmacy».

*Note. Based on a national survey of 335 conducted in March–April 2025*

As shown in Table 2, the survey included respondents from central ministries, regional akimats, and major quasi public enterprises. This institutional diversity ensured that both policymaking and implementation levels were represented, as well as organizations operating under market oriented but state-controlled conditions.

The instrument was Kim’s (2011) 16-item PSM scale, which has been validated across multiple national contexts. It measures four sub dimensions: attraction to policy making, commitment to public interest, compassion, and self-sacrifice. Items were rated on a five point likert scale ranging from 1 («strongly disagree») to 5 («strongly agree») (Kim, 2011; Kim et al., 2013).

To support cross cultural equivalence, the items were adapted for russian language administration through forward translation and bilingual expert review. Wording was refined based on clarity checks with a small pilot group of public-sector employees to reduce ambiguity while preserving the original construct meaning.

To enhance cross cultural rigor, the adaptation followed a functional rather than purely literal translation logic. After forward translation, items were reviewed by two bilingual experts with experience in public administration research. Particular attention was paid to culturally sensitive terms such as «public interest», «compassion», and «self-sacrifice», which may carry different normative connotations in post-Soviet bureaucratic discourse. Pilot respondents were additionally asked to flag ambiguous wording. This procedure aimed to minimize semantic drift and improve construct equivalence in the russian language context.

Although full back translation and cognitive interviewing were beyond the scope of the present study, the multi stage expert review and pilot feedback procedure followed commonly used practices for first stage cross cultural scale adaptation.

The survey also included demographic and career related variables:

- Gender (male/female)
- Age group (under 25, 25-34, 35-44, 45-54, 55+)
- Sector of employment (government/quasi public)
- Intention to remain in current sector (yes/no/uncertain)

These variables were incorporated in subgroup analysis and regression modeling.

Data were analyzed using python, employing appropriate statistical packages for psychometric validation and multivariate modeling. The analytic strategy included the following steps:

Means, standard deviations, and distribution checks were computed for all survey items.

Cronbach’s  $\alpha$  was calculated for the total scale and individual subscales; values above  $\alpha=0,70$  was considered acceptable. McDonald’s  $\omega$  was also estimated as a robustness check.

Principal axis factoring with oblique rotation was applied, guided by the theoretical four factor structure and scree plot interpretation.

The number of retained factors was further validated through parallel analysis, which supported a four factor solution.

Independent sample t-tests and one way ANOVAs were conducted to examine differences in PSM scores across gender, age groups, and employment sectors.

A binary logistic regression model was estimated to test whether PSM predicted the intention to remain in the public sector. Covariates included demographic and career related variables.

All analyses were conducted at a 95% confidence level ( $\alpha = 0,05$ ). Missing data were minimal (<1%) and handled using listwise deletion.

To strengthen the psychometric validation, a two-step design was applied: exploratory factor analysis followed by confirmatory factor analysis. While exploratory factor analysis was conducted using principal axis factoring with oblique rotation, the four factor model was further tested through confirmatory factor analysis using robust maximum likelihood estimation in the lavaan package. Model fit was evaluated using conventional indices:  $\chi^2/df$  ( $\leq 3$ ), comparative fit index ( $\geq 0,90$ ), tucker lewis index ( $\geq 0,90$ ), root mean square error of approximation ( $\leq 0,08$ ), and standardized root mean square residual ( $\leq 0,08$ ). Competing models (one-factor and three-factor solutions) were also estimated to assess comparative fit.

In cross cultural measurement research, rigorous assessment of measurement invariance typically proceeds through multi-group confirmatory factor analysis, sequentially testing configural, metric, and scalar equivalence. Establishing these levels of invariance allows researchers to determine whether observed group differences reflect substantive variation or measurement artifacts.

In the present study, full MG-CFA was not implemented due to two methodological constraints: the primary focus on initial russian language validation and limited subgroup sizes for some comparisons, which reduce the statistical power and stability of multi group models. Instead, the analysis follows a staged validation logic commonly used in first-stage adaptations:

internal consistency → factor structure → cautious descriptive comparisons.

Accordingly, the present results should be interpreted as evidence of initial structural validity rather than full cross-group measurement equivalence.

Importantly, the absence of formal scalar invariance testing means that subgroup mean differences reported in this study should be interpreted as indicative rather than strictly comparable. Future research with larger and more balanced samples should explicitly test configural, metric, and scalar invariance across sector, gender, age, and language groups to establish full cross-group equivalence in Kazakhstan's administrative context.

## RESULTS

The following results first examine the reliability and factor structure of the scale, then turn to descriptive patterns and group differences, before testing the predictive power of PSM through logistic regression. Overall, the analyses show how motivational dimensions function in Kazakhstan's public sector.

Across all 16 items of the PSM scale, the mean response values were consistently above the neutral midpoint (3,0), suggesting generally high levels of motivation toward public service among the respondents. Item level means ranged from 3,22 to 4,61, with the highest scores observed in items related to commitment to public interest (e.g., «It is important for me to contribute to the common good») and compassion for public values (e.g., «To act ethically is essential for public servants»).

The lowest mean score ( $M=3,22$ ) was recorded for a self-sacrifice item: «I would agree to a good plan to make a better life for the poor, even if it costs me money». This result may reflect a tension between idealistic orientation and material constraints in the Kazakhstani public sector context.

There was no significant skewness or kurtosis, and item level missingness was negligible (<1%). This suggests that participants responded with sufficient cognitive engagement and consistency.

In order to illustrate these patterns, table 3 presents the descriptive statistics for all 16 PSM items, including mean, standard deviation, and observed range. The results show consistently high mean values, with the strongest scores for commitment to public interest and compassion items, while self-sacrifice items scored comparatively lower, reflecting potential material constraints.

**Table 3. Descriptive statistics of PSM Items (n = 335)**

Nº	Item Statement	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
1	I admire people who initiate or are involved in activities to aid my community.	4.53	0.83	1	5
2	It is important to contribute to activities that tackle social problems.	4.53	0.81	1	5
3	Meaningful public service is very important to me.	4.25	0.96	1	5
4	It is important for me to contribute to the common good.	4.49	0.75	1	5
5	I think equal opportunities for citizens are very important.	4.61	0.70	1	5

*Note. Compiled by the authors based on a national survey of 335 conducted in March–April 2025*

As shown in table 3, the results reveal consistently high average scores, with the strongest values for commitment to public interest and compassion items, while self-sacrifice items scored relatively lower. This pattern suggests that normative and ethical orientations are more salient than material self-sacrifice in the Kazakhstani context.

The reliability of the scale was assessed using Cronbach’s alpha. As shown in table 4, all subscales exceeded the conventional threshold ( $\alpha > 0,70$ ). Compassion ( $\alpha = 0,895$ ) and self-sacrifice ( $\alpha = 0,857$ ) in particular demonstrated strong internal consistency.

**Table 4. Cronbach’s alpha reliability coefficients for the subscales of the PSM scale**

Subscale	Number of items	Cronbach’s $\alpha$
Attraction to policy making	2	0.785
Commitment to public interest	2	0.744
Compassion	4	0.895
Self-sacrifice	4	0.857
Full PSM Scale	16	0.885

*Note. Compiled by the authors based on a national survey of 335 conducted in March–April 2025*

These results confirm the robustness of the Russian language adaptation of Kim’s (2011) PSM instrument in the Kazakhstani context, with all values surpassing the accepted threshold for internal reliability (Kim, 2011; Kim et al., 2013).

An exploratory factor analysis was carried out using the principal axis method with four predefined factors, consistent with the theoretical framework proposed by Kim’s (2011). Standardized responses were analyzed with maximum likelihood extraction and oblique rotation, reflecting the expected correlation between dimensions.

The results confirmed a four factor solution accounting for approximately 64% of the total variance. Most items loaded strongly ( $\geq 0,60$  in absolute value) on their theoretically assigned dimensions, with only minor cross loadings between compassion and self-sacrifice items a pattern also reported in multinational studies.

Table 5 presents the factor loadings for each item, with bolded values indicating the primary factor for each statement.

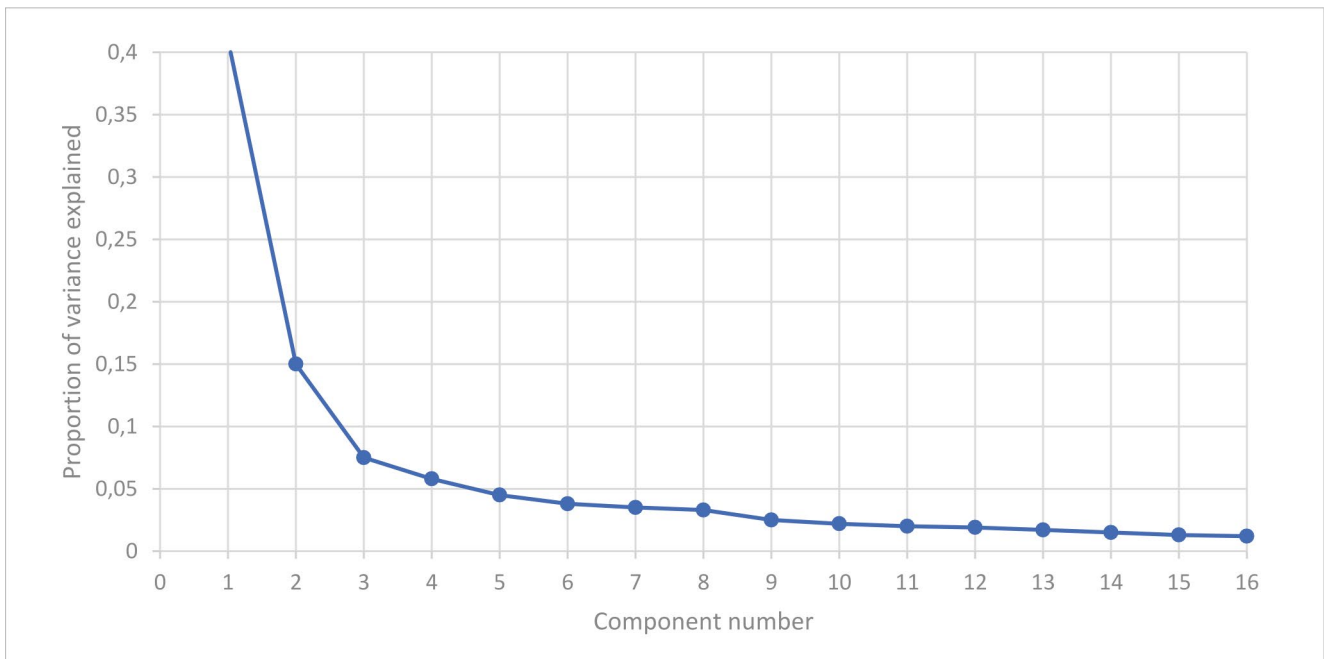
**Table 5. Factor loadings from exploratory factor analysis (n = 335, four factor solution)**

Nº	Item Statement	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3	Factor 4
1	I admire people who initiate or are involved in activities to aid my community.	-0,573	-0,178	0,286	0,230
2	It is important to contribute to activities that tackle social problems.	-0,674	-0,149	0,343	0,229
3	Meaningful public service is very important to me.	-0,579	-0,032	0,333	0,182
4	It is important for me to contribute to the common good.	-0,715	-0,107	0,248	0,166
5	I think equal opportunities for citizens are very important.	-0,678	-0,204	0,189	0,116

*Note. Compiled by the authors based on a national survey of 335 conducted in March–April 2025*

The results confirm a clear four factor solution, with items loading strongly on their expected dimensions. This finding aligns with Kim’s (2011) theoretical framework and validates the multidimensional structure of PSM in Kazakhstan (Kim et al., 2013). Together with these results, figure 1 displays the scree plot of principal components. The visible «elbow» at the fourth component further supports the theoretical four factor solution, providing additional evidence for Kim’s (2011) multidimensional structure in the Kazakhstani context (Kim et al., 2013). In addition, parallel analysis indicated that only the first four observed eigenvalues exceeded those generated from random data, further corroborating the four factor solution (Horn, 1965).

**Figure 1. Scree plot of principal components**



Our analysis confirms that Kim’s (2011) PSM scale retains its multidimensional validity when applied in Kazakhstan, extending previous cross-national evidence (Kim et al., 2013).

To explore variations in PSM scores, we conducted group comparisons across gender, age groups, and employment sectors. Mean PSM scores were computed for each subgroup based on the 16-item scale.

Because full scalar measurement invariance was not established, the subgroup comparisons reported below should be interpreted as descriptive patterns rather than strict mean level tests of motivational differences. The results are therefore indicative of potential variation but do not constitute definitive cross group equivalence claims.

Key patterns observed:

- Gender: differences between male and female respondents were minor and not statistically significant ( $p > 0,05$ ). Both groups reported comparably high PSM levels.
- Age group: scores tended to increase slightly with age. The 35-44 and 45-54 cohorts showed higher average motivation, aligning with prior findings that motivational alignment may strengthen over time.
- Sector: Employees in the governmental sector consistently scored higher on PSM compared to their counterparts in quasi public organizations particularly in the 35+ age group.

These differences are summarized in table 6.

**Table 6. Mean PSM scores by gender, age group, and sector (n=335)**

Gender	Age group	Sector	Mean PSM score
Female	25–34	Government	3,995
Female	25–34	Quasi public	4,081
Female	35–44	Government	4,227
Female	35–44	Quasi public	4,021
Female	45–54	Government	4,219

*Note. Compiled by the authors based on a national survey of 335 conducted in March–April 2025*

To evaluate whether PSM predicts an individual’s intention to remain in the public sector, we first estimated a binary logistic regression model using the total PSM score as the independent variable in table 7.

**Table 7. Logistic regression with total PSM score predicting sectoral retention**

Variable	Coefficient (β)	Std. Error	z-value	p-value
Intercept	-1,95	0,92	-2,12	0,034
PSM total	+0,295	0,217	1,36	0,174

*Note. Compiled by the authors based on a national survey of 335 conducted in March–April 2025*

As shown in table 7, although the coefficient for total PSM is positive indicating that higher motivation may increase the likelihood of staying in the public sector the result was not statistically significant ( $p = 0,174$ ). This implies that PSM alone may not be a sufficient predictor of sectoral retention in the Kazakhstani context.

Several external factors such as salary expectations, leadership quality, or opportunities for career advancement may moderate this relationship and should be considered in future models.

To gain a more granular understanding, we conducted a second logistic regression using the four PSM subscales as independent variables. The results are presented in table 8.

**Table 8. Logistic regression using PSM subscales as predictors of sectoral retention**

Subscale	Coefficient (β)	p-value
Commitment to public interest	+0,476	0,046
Self-sacrifice	+0,323	0,013
Attraction to policy making	—	n.s.
Compassion	—	n.s.

*Note. Compiled by the authors based on a national survey of 335 conducted in March–April 2025*

Only commitment to public interest and self-sacrifice showed statistically predictive power ( $p < 0,05$ ). The analysis shows stronger associations between career retention and normative dimensions of PSM than with policy oriented motivations.

In addition to core PSM constructs, we examined how tenure in the current sector, entry source, and sectoral mobility relate to motivational outcomes and career plans.

Respondents were grouped based on years of service:

- < 1 year
- 1-3 years
- 4-7 years
- 7 years

Analysis showed a slight upward trend in PSM with increasing tenure. Those with more than 7 years of experience scored modestly higher on the commitment to public interest and self-sacrifice dimensions. However, ANOVA tests did not confirm statistically significant differences ( $p > 0,10$ ), suggesting that motivation is relatively stable regardless of tenure length, possibly due to self-selection into public service roles.

Among government sector respondents, career origins were diverse. As shown in table 9, approximately:

- 36% joined directly after university or training;
- 28% transitioned from the private sector;
- 22% previously worked in quasi public organizations;
- 14% indicated continuous employment in public service.

These findings reflect a hybrid career model in Kazakhstan, with frequent sectoral shifts. Interestingly, those entering from the private sector reported a bit lower PSM scores particularly on the compassion and self-sacrifice dimensions than their counterparts from educational or internal routes, consistent with prior findings on motivational socialization.

**Table 9. Entry sources into government sector**

Entry source	Count	Percent
From education	71	35,9%
From private sector	56	28,3%
From quasi public sector	44	22,3%
Always in public service	27	13,5%

*Note. Compiled by the authors based on a national survey of 335 conducted in March–April 2025*

Within the quasi public sector, results revealed limited intent in transitioning into government roles. As seen in Table 10, only 42% of quasi public respondents had prior experience in government, and only 13.2% expressed interest in making a move. Nearly half (50%) were not interested, and 36,8% were undecided (table 11).

Those with previous government experience consistently scored higher on all PSM dimensions, supporting the hypothesis that public sector socialization deepens normative commitment.

The most frequently cited barriers to transition included:

- lower compensation in government roles,
- perceived lack of advancement,
- bureaucratic inefficiency.

**Table 10. Prior government experience among quasi public employees**

Prior government experience	Count	Percent
No	58	58,0%
Yes	42	42,0%

*Note. Compiled by the authors based on a national survey of 335 conducted in March–April 2025*

**Table 11. Willingness to switch to government sector**

Willing to move to government	Count	Percent
No	19	50,0%
Uncertain	14	36,8%
Yes	5	13,2%

*Note. Compiled by the authors based on a national survey of 335 conducted in March–April 2025*

## DISCUSSION

The study examines public service motivation in Kazakhstan using Kim’s (2011) multidimensional scale, with a focus on public and quasi public sector employees (Kim et al., 2013). Our findings confirm both the universal structure of PSM and the unique contextual dynamics that shape its expression in a transitional administrative environment.

From a measurement perspective, the findings provide initial empirical support for the scale’s reliability and multidimensional construct validity of Kim’s (2011) multidimensional PSM construct (Kim et al., 2013). The scale demonstrates strong internal reliability and a stable four factor structure in the Kazakhstani context. At the same time, the uneven predictive salience of specific dimensions and the absence of full invariance testing suggest that functional equivalence should not be assumed a priori in post-soviet administrative environments.

The consistently high scores across all PSM dimensions suggest that public service in Kazakhstan is strongly underpinned by intrinsic motivation. Despite institutional challenges and a reforming administrative landscape, respondents demonstrated significant commitment to public interest, compassion, and self-sacrifice. These results are encouraging for the sustainability of public values in a governance system still balancing formalism and modernization.

The internal consistency of the scale particularly for compassion ( $\alpha = 0,895$ ) and self-sacrifice ( $\alpha = 0,857$ ) mirrors findings from countries with collectivist cultures (e.g., China, South Korea), where communal responsibility

and moral obligation are highly regarded. These results support the relevance of emotional and altruistic motivators in Kazakhstan's civil service.

Taken together, these studies suggest that cross cultural stability of PSM cannot be assumed and must be empirically verified in each new linguistic and institutional setting.

Meaningful variations were observed across sectoral and demographic lines. Government sector employees demonstrated higher PSM than their quasi public counterparts, echoing prior studies suggest closer proximity to state authority amplifies public values. Meanwhile, the quasi public sector, often characterized by corporate incentives and managerialism, may foster motivational ambiguity.

Age-related differences in PSM were also notable. Older respondents consistently reported stronger motivation, particularly on the commitment to public interest and self-sacrifice dimensions. This may reflect either generational value orientation particularly among those socialized during the late soviet or early independence period or cumulative effects of sectoral tenure, including deeper internalization of public values.

Perhaps most noteworthy is the alignment between intention to stay in the sector and higher PSM scores. This pattern supports theoretical models linking motivation to organizational commitment. However, the logistic regression model using total PSM score failed to reach statistical significance ( $p=0,174$ ), suggesting that while motivation correlates with retention intent, it may not independently predict actual decisions. This reinforces the need to examine mediating mechanisms such as job satisfaction, promotion prospects, and leadership support.

Exploratory factor analysis confirmed the four-factor structure proposed by Kim's (2011). The results show that the four core PSM dimensions remained stable and statistically reliable, even within Kazakhstan's hybrid administrative context. This contributes to the global literature affirming PSM as a universally observable, though contextually modulated, construct.

Nonetheless, findings prompt deeper inquiry into how national political culture, institutional trust, and administrative discretion shape motivational salience. Kazakhstan's top-down bureaucratic environment may dampen the behavioral effects of high PSM by limiting opportunities for initiative, ethical discretion, or public interaction mechanisms through which motivation translates into action.

The results show that motivation remains relatively strong in Kazakhstan's public sector, particularly among core civil servants and older employees. For public administrators, this implies that PSM based personnel strategies such as value-based recruitment, ethical leadership, and mission driven performance management could improve both commitment and outcomes.

In contrast, younger employees and those employed in quasi-public institutions tend to report lower or less stable motivation. Addressing structural barriers such as salary disparities, career stagnation, and limited leadership responsiveness is crucial to translating PSM into long term retention and engagement.

Investments in leadership training, organizational justice, and professional development tailored to Kazakhstan's evolving institutional context may help unlock the motivational potential evidenced in this study and align administrative reform with civic purpose.

## CONCLUSION

This study applied Kim's (2011) revised 16-item multidimensional PSM scale to a nationally diverse sample of employees from Kazakhstan's public and quasi-public sectors. The results provide initial evidence of the scale's reliability and multidimensional construct validity in a Russian-language, post-Soviet governance setting, thereby extending comparative PSM research to Central Asia, thereby extending comparative PSM research to Central Asia.

Overall PSM levels were high, especially in the compassion and self-sacrifice dimensions, suggesting a motivational profile anchored in collectivist norms and civic obligation. At the same time, the behavioral salience of PSM was uneven. Commitment to public interest and self-sacrifice emerged as the only statistically significant predictors of retention-related outcomes, whereas attraction to policy making and compassion displayed limited predictive relevance. This pattern is consistent with Kazakhstan's institutional context, where centralized policymaking may constrain rank-and-file policy engagement, and limited citizen-facing discretion may reduce the extent to which compassion translates into measurable career loyalty.

Importantly, while the association between total PSM and intention to remain in the sector was directionally positive, it did not reach statistical significance, highlighting that motivation alone is unlikely to account for retention decisions in Kazakhstan. This finding reinforces the view that PSM outcome linkages are contingent on organizational and institutional mechanisms, including job satisfaction, perceived organizational support, institutional trust, leadership quality, and career structures.

From a practical perspective, the evidence offers an empirical basis for integrating PSM informed principles into public sector HRM. Recruitment, performance appraisal, and leadership development can more explicitly emphasize mission alignment, ethical commitment, and service orientation particularly for younger employees and staff in quasi-public organizations who may experience motivational dissonance under hybrid incentive systems. Strengthening mentoring, ethics training, and recognition practices may be especially effective because the most

retention-relevant dimensions in this study were normative and. In addition, expanding structured channels for internal participation such as consultative bodies, innovation councils, or controlled feedback mechanisms may improve alignment for employees who are motivated by policy engagement but face institutional constraints on involvement.

Several priorities follow from the current design and results. First, longitudinal designs are needed to assess causal ordering and motivational dynamics over time, including how PSM evolves with tenure, sectoral mobility, and reform cycles. Second, future models should explicitly test mediating and moderating mechanisms to explain why high PSM does not consistently translate into retention outcomes. Third, multi-level approaches combining individual survey data with organizational characteristics would clarify which institutional conditions amplify or attenuate the behavioral impact of each PSM subdimension. Finally, cross-national comparisons across post-Soviet and other transitional governance systems could determine whether the weak predictive role of attraction to policy making reflects a broader regional pattern or a Kazakhstan-specific configuration.

In addition, future research should conduct multi group CFA tests of measurement invariance (e.g., across sector, gender, age, and where feasible language/ethnic groups) to more directly establish cross-group equivalence of item functioning in the Kazakhstani context.

Taken together, the study answers all three research questions: it confirms the reliability and validity of Kim's (2011) scale in Kazakhstan (RQ1), documents sectoral and demographic variation in PSM (RQ2), and shows that only commitment to public interest and self-sacrifice significantly predict retention intention (RQ3). The findings support the cross-cultural measurability of PSM while underscoring that the salience of its dimensions is shaped by institutional design and governance context.

Future research may extend the present findings in several important ways. First, expanding the empirical scope to include other Central Asian countries would allow for comparative analysis and deeper understanding of public service motivation in post soviet governance systems. Second, longitudinal research designs could be employed to examine changes in motivational patterns over time and to assess their influence on actual career behavior rather than stated intentions. Finally, future studies should explore the mediating and moderating roles of organizational trust, leadership style, job satisfaction, and institutional legitimacy in the relationship between public service motivation and employee retention.

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## МОТИВАЦИЯ К ГОСУДАРСТВЕННОЙ СЛУЖБЕ В КАЗАХСТАНЕ: МЕЖКУЛЬТУРНАЯ ВАЛИДАЦИЯ ШКАЛЫ КИМА И ДАННЫЕ ИЗ ГОСУДАРСТВЕННОГО И КВАЗИГОСУДАРСТВЕННОГО СЕКТОРОВ

### Аннотация

Мотивация к государственной службе стала ключевым понятием для объяснения просоциального поведения и организационной приверженности среди сотрудников государственного сектора по всему миру. Однако эмпирические данные из Центральной Азии до сих пор оставались ограниченными. Настоящее исследование представляет собой первое применение многомерной шкалы мотиваций к государственной службе, разработанной Кимом, в Казахстане. Оно оценивает внутреннюю надежность, факторную структуру и поведенческую значимость шкалы на выборке из 335 сотрудников государственных и квазигосударственных учреждений.

Данные были собраны в рамках поперечного опроса, проведённого с марта по апрель 2025 года. Результаты свидетельствуют о высокой внутренней согласованности шкалы ( $\alpha=0,885$ ) и подтверждают модифицированную четырёхфакторную структуру, что подтверждает применимость шкалы в казахстанском контексте. Респонденты продемонстрировали стабильно высокий уровень мотивации к государственной службе, особенно по таким измерениям, как сострадание и самопожертвование. Сотрудники государственных учреждений, а также более возрастные участники исследования показали значительно более высокие показатели мотивации по сравнению с их коллегами из квазигосударственного сектора и молодыми участниками.

Несмотря на положительную связь между уровнем мотивации к государственной службе и намерением продолжать работу в государственном секторе, результаты логистической регрессии не достигли статистической значимости ( $p>0,05$ ). Это указывает на то, что на эту взаимосвязь могут влиять дополнительные медирующие или контекстуальные факторы такие как уровень оплаты труда, стиль лидерства или престиж института.

Данное исследование вносит вклад в кросс культурную валидацию теории мотивации к государственной службе и предлагает практические рекомендации для реформы государственного управления в Казахстане и других странах с переходными формами управления. Полученные данные свидетельствуют о сильной нормативно альтруистической мотивации казахстанских государственных служащих и подчёркивают необходимость согласования институциональной политики с внутренними общественными ценностями.

**Ключевые слова:** Мотивация к государственной службе; Казахстан; шкала Кима; удержание в государственном секторе; организационная приверженность

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## ҚАЗАҚСТАНДАҒЫ МЕМЛЕКЕТТІК ҚЫЗМЕТКЕ МОТИВАЦИЯ: КИМ ШКАЛАСЫНЫҢ МӘДЕНИЕТАРАЛЫҚ ВАЛИДАЦИЯСЫ ЖӘНЕ МЕМЛЕКЕТТІК ПЕН КВАЗИМЕМЛЕКЕТТІК СЕКТОРЛАРДАН ДӘЛЕЛДЕР

**Аңдатпа**

Мемлекеттік қызметке мотивация (PSM) қазіргі уақытта мемлекеттік сектор қызметкерлерінің проәлеуметтік мінез құлқы мен ұйымға адалдығын түсіндіретін маңызды ұғымға айналды. Алайда, бұл бағыттағы эмпирикалық зерттеулер Орталық Азияда әлі де жеткіліксіз. Бұл зерттеу Кимнің көпөлшемді мемлекеттік қызмет мотивация шкаласын Қазақстанда алғаш рет қолданған жұмыс болып табылады. Зерттеу шкаланың ішкі сенімділігін, факторлық құрылымын және мінез-құлықтық өзектілігін 335 мемлекеттік және квазимемлекеттік сала қызметкерлерінің арасында бағалауға бағытталған.

Деректер 2025 жылдың наурыз-сәуір айларында өткізілген көлденең сауалнама арқылы жиналды. Нәтижелер шкаланың жоғары ішкі үйлесімділігін ( $\alpha=0,885$ ) және түрлендірілген төрт факторлы құрылымның дұрыстығын көрсетті. Бұл көрсеткіштер аталған шкаланың Қазақстан жағдайында да қолдануға жарамды екенін дәлелдейді. Респонденттер арасында қоғамға қызмет етуге деген мотивация деңгейі жоғары болды, әсіресе жанашырлық пен өзін-өзі құрбан ету өлшемдері бойынша. Мемлекеттік сектор қызметкерлері мен жасы үлкен қатысушылардың мотивациялық көрсеткіштері квазимемлекеттік саладағы және жасырақ әріптестеріне қарағанда едәуір жоғары болды.

Мемлекеттік қызметке мотивация деңгейі мемлекеттік секторда жұмыс істеу ниетімен оң байланыста болғанымен, логистикалық регрессия нәтижелері статистикалық тұрғыдан маңызсыз болып шықты ( $p>0,05$ ). Бұл байланысқа жалақы, көшбасшылық ортасы немесе мекеменің беделі сияқты аралық немесе контекстік факторлар әсер етуі мүмкін екенін көрсетеді.

Бұл зерттеу мемлекеттік қызметке мотивация теориясын мәдениетаралық тұрғыдан растауға үлес қосып, Қазақстан және оған ұқсас өтпелі басқару жүйелері бар елдер үшін мемлекеттік басқару реформасына қатысты нақты ұсыныстар ұсынады. Зерттеу нәтижелері қазақстандық мемлекеттік қызметшілер арасында айқын нормативтік-альтруистік уәждердің бар екенін көрсетіп, институционалдық саясатты ішкі қоғамдық құндылықтармен үйлестіру қажеттігін айқындайды.

**Түйін сөздер:** Мемлекеттік қызметке мотивация; Қазақстан; Ким шкаласы; мемлекеттік секторда қалу; ұйымға адалдық