

**THE EFFECTS OF FACE-SAVING AND COLLECTIVISM ON PUBLIC
ORGANIZATION MEMBERS' ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT:
FOCUSING ON THE MEDIATING EFFECT OF PERSON-ORGANIZATION FIT**

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ABSTRACT

This study empirically analyzed the relationship between face saving, group orientation, person-organization fit, and organizational commitment of members of public organizations in South Korea. The results of various statistical analyses undertaken in the present study allow to make the following conclusions: 1) face saving and group orientation have a positive influence on person-organization fit; 2) face saving has a positive influence on continuance and normative commitment and a negative influence on affective commitment; 3) group orientation has a positive influence on affective commitment and a negative influence on normative commitment; 4) person-organization fit has a positive influence on affective, continuance, and normative commitment; 5) person-organization fit plays the mediating role between the two studied Confucian values and organizational commitment. With a diverse view of public management, more sophisticated methodological initiatives to overcome several limitations of the present study are proposed

Introduction

Since long ago, Korea has been strongly influenced by the Confucian value and is representative country, where puts emphasis on saving face and has strong collectivism. This culture is easily found in organizations and a big characteristic to make individuals and organizations react. Unfortunately, face-saving and collectivist culture of organization and society has been regarded as an evil, which is very old-fashioned and must disappear, since it seems to hinder creativity that is absolutely necessary for organizational members, today. However, the thought of Korean and Chinese people about Confucianism is obviously changing. The positive change in perception of Confucianism is linked to the economic development of Korean and Chinese society and the improvement of pride in Korean and Chinese culture. In reality, what effect did face-saving and collectivist culture of Korea and

China have on individuals and organizations?

It is impossible to exclude the Confucian value and history from a discussion on emotions, values and tendencies of Korean and Chinese people. In this study, therefore, it is supposed that the success or failure of organizations depends on the understanding and analysis of this and strategical management. This applies especially to members of public organizations that react to changes much slower than private enterprises and have long Confucian tradition. Behavior and attitude of public organization members are very important, since how to manage them is directly connected to the benefit of the nation and the quality of life. From the perspective of paradigm of personnel administration, which is recently more upgraded as a human capital, capabilities and cultural tendencies of public organization members are key capitals to influence public service.

Based on the backgrounds mentioned above, this study considered the influence relationship among face-saving, collectivism, person-organization fit and organizational commitment. In order to improve public values and trust of the nation, public organization members should feel a strong sense of responsibility with attachment to public domains. Therefore, path analysis was conducted to see the socialization process of organizations through individual face-saving and collectivist culture and the effects of these factors, as a way of managing human resources strategically for enhancing organizational commitment in public domains. On the basis of the analysis results, this study suggested significant implications for research on public organizations and human resources management and made a political proposal that is based on the specificity of Korean Confucian value.

Theoretical Background & Hypotheses

Face Saving & Group Orientation

Confucian value is a useful tool for explaining the individual, organizational, and social culture of Korea (Cho & Yoon, 2001; Kim et al., 1990). In particular, for many countries in Asia, Confucian values have provided a basic framework of the organizational management, such as seniority, bureaucracy, and rituals of etiquette and ceremony (Lockett, 1988; Xing, 1995). Face saving and group orientation are treated with a serious attention in South Korea where people prioritize interpersonal relationships.

While face saving as conceived of in the West mainly represents the intrinsic characteristics of individuals, such as personal competence, in the East, face saving mainly represents the extrinsic characteristics of community members, such as personal shame (Ho, 1976; Kim & Nam, 1998). In this respect, for Koreans, face-saving behavior is a grandiose presentment of social esteem and social confidence (Choi & Lee, 2002). As a representative of Korean Confucian values, we looked at this perception of face saving as an important variable influencing behaviors and attitudes of members within an organization.

Group orientation refers to the tendency to privilege group interests over those of an individual (Wagner, 1995). Group orientation values lead to a success of groups and organizations and people who endorse these values are proud of their accomplishments contributing to the group (Triandis et al., 1988). Given that behavioral patterns of members within an organization vary depending on the tendency towards either individualism or collectivism of a given culture (Moorman, & Blakely, 1995; Morris, 1994; Ramamoorthy & Carroll, 1998), group orientation is a very important concept in our research.

Person-organization Fit

In organizational behavior and psychology, the concept of personal congruence or fit is a critical component affecting the psychological attitudes of organizational members (Nadler & Tushman, 1980). Person-organization fit can be understood as the degree of correspondence with the values, goals, and characteristics of an organization and those of an organizational member (Lauver & Kristof, 2001). To achieve a positive performance of organizational members, enhancing the levels of person-organization fit is a very challenging task for the human resource managers (Kristof, 1996). It can lead to a problem of leaving or staying (Chatman, 1989), so this notion is conceptualized as an important research variable in the present research as well.

Organizational Commitment

For a long time, organizational commitment has been used as a useful parameter to predict a positive attitude and dedication towards an organization (Angle & Perry, 1981). From the perspective of social capital, Kanter (1968) saw organizational commitment as a willingness to pour dedicated efforts of members to the social system of an organization. Meyer and Allen (1991) categorized this concept into three different types: *affective commitment*, which is an emotional attachment to the organization; *continuance commitment*, which is a negative emotional state about a deviation from an organization, and *normative commitment*, which refers to the obligation to stay in an organization as an organizational member. According to this conceptual split, we would also like to reflect on the various types of organizational commitment in the Korean public organizations.

Review of related Literature

Researches conducted by Kristof et al. (2005) and Lauver & Kristof (2001) revealed that if individuals were in harmony or shared similar characteristics with an organization, they showed high engagement in the organization. Also, a research by Verquer et al. (2003)

showed that compatibility between individuals and an organization was closely related to positive organizational attitudes such as organizational commitment and job satisfaction.

According to Suh (2008), a person who is too proud tends not to cause a problem in the relationship between an individual and an organization, and Kim & Yang (2013) said that the more a person is sensitive about their pride, the more positively he behaves to meet others' expectations.

According to Hofstede (1991) and Triandis (1995), since members who are highly oriented toward collectivism are willing to accept the goal and values of their organization, they show more devotion to and engagement in their organization. In a research by Parkes et al. (2001), it turned out that in Asian countries, members of an organization which is strongly oriented toward collectivistic culture showed high engagement and remained long in their organization.

Person-organization fit serves as a parameter in the relationship between variables such as leadership, values, culture and individual characteristics, and variable such as positive attitude, performance, etc, of individuals within an organization (Huang et al., 2005; Chi & Pan, 2012; Song & Chathoth, 2011; Ruiz-Palomino et al., 2013). According to researches by Bright (2008), Wright & Pandey (2008), Kim (2012), person-organization fit turned out to have a significant mediating effect on the relationship between variables bringing about positive organization behavior in the members of a public organization. Especially, a research conducted by Seong et al. (2012) revealed that person-organization fit had a mediating effect on the relationship between Korean workers' work status and organizational commitment.

This study has set up hypotheses as follows based on the previous studies mentioned above.

Hypothesis 1: Face saving will have a positive impact on person-organization fit.

Hypothesis 2: Face saving will have a positive impact on organizational commitment.

Hypothesis 3: Group orientation will have a positive impact on person-organization fit.

Hypothesis 4: Group orientation will have a positive impact on organizational commitment.

Hypothesis 5: Person-organization fit will have a positive impact on organizational commitment.

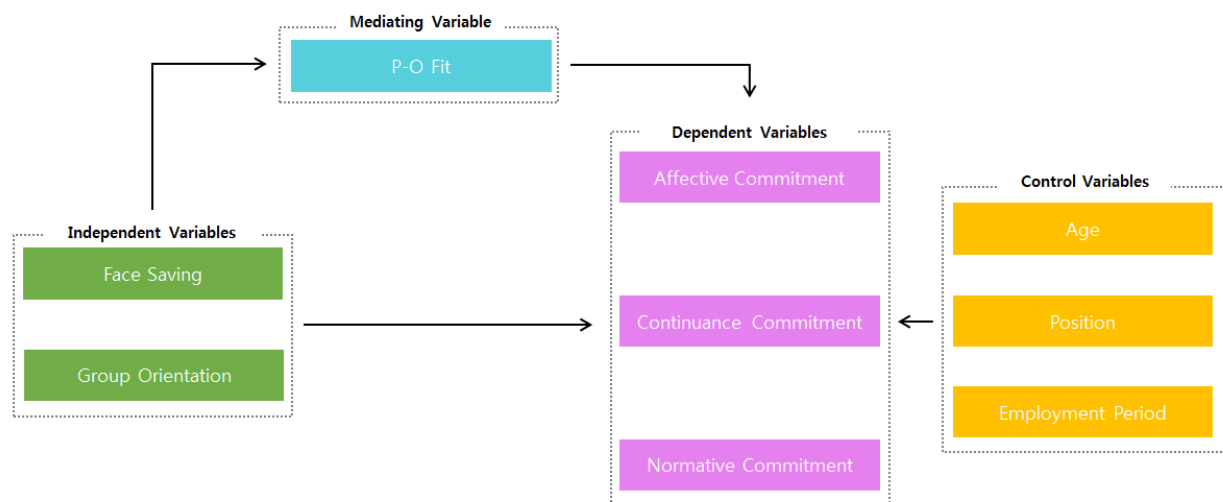
Hypothesis 6: Person-organization fit will mediate the relationship between two Confucian values and organizational commitment.

Research Design

Research Model

From the discussed theoretical background and the hypotheses, the research model for this study was structured as shown in Figure 1. The face saving and group orientation, which are important and typical values of Koreans, were set up as an independent variables; person-organization fit, i.e. the extent to which an individual fits the public organization in Korea, was set up as mediate variable; and, finally affective commitment, continuance commitment, and normative commitment that represent a psychological attachment of members to the organization were set up as the dependent variables. Given that age, position, and employment period can interact with the key variables in this study, the control variables were constructed.

< Figure 1 > Research Model



Sample Characteristics

For the authentic empirical analysis, this study used the Public Sector Entrepreneurship Survey datasets collected between March and October 2015 by Sungkyunkwan University, Yonsei University, and Zhejiang University. To select a specific number of individuals from each representative various sub-population based on the Korean public sector, quota sampling was employed. As shown in Table 1, detailed information about the sample characteristics, the distribution of organizational members is condignly seen as reflecting the reality of the public sector in Korea.

< Table 1 > Sample Characteristics

Contents	Dimension	Frequency	Percent
Gender	Male	752	61.8
	Female	448	36.8
	Missing	16	1.3
Age	20's	85	7.0
	30's	533	43.8
	40's	423	34.8
	50's	161	13.2
	60's	1	0.1
	Missing	13	1.1
Highest Educational Attainment	High School or less	61	5.0
	College(2~3 Years)	92	7.6
	Bachelor's Degree	776	63.8
	Master's Degree	233	19.2
	Doctorate	38	3.1
	Missing	16	1.3
Type of Workplace	Government Agency	517	42.5
	Executive Agency	218	17.9
	Public Agency	418	34.4
	Quasi-Public Agency	37	3.0
	Other Public Agency	25	2.1
	Missing	1	0.1
Employment Period	1 Month~3 Years	195	16.0
	3~5 Years	157	12.9

Position	5~10 Years	281	23.1
	10~15 Years	201	16.5
	More than 15 Years	362	29.8
	Missing	20	1.6
	Grade 9 (Staff)	191	15.7
	Grade 8 (Assistant Manager)	244	20.1
	Grade 7 (Manager)	270	22.2
	Grade 6 (Deputy Manager)	274	1.8
	Grade 5 (Department Head/Manager)	148	22.5
	Grade 4 (Director)	43	12.2
Total	Above Grade 3 (General Manager)	24	3.5
	Missing	22	2.0
Total		1,216	100.0

Measurements of Variables

The questionnaire used in the present study was composed of individual questions that the respondents answered using a 7-point Likert scale. Two independent variables were used to examine individual cultural values of public organization members. Face saving and group orientation represent the Confucian cultural values of Koreans. The following questions were developed and operationalized from the indexes of Monkhouse et al. (2013).

Face Saving

- a. I am concerned with bringing shame to myself.*
- b. I am concerned with bringing shame to others.*
- c. I pay a lot of attention to how others see me.*
- d. I feel ashamed if I lose my face.*

Group Orientation

- a. *I usually make decisions without listening to others. (Reverse)*
- b. *If there is a conflict between my interest and my family's interest, I will put priority on mine. (Reverse)*

Mediate variable was used to examine the suitability of individual and agency of public organization members. Person-organization fit relates to whether a person's directions and characteristics are similar to the goals, values, and overall atmosphere of the organization. The following questions were developed and operationalized from the indexes of Lauver & Kristof (2001).

Person-organization Fit

- a. *My values match those of the current employees in this agency.*
- b. *I am very comfortable within the culture of my agency.*
- c. *I feel a strong sense of "belongingness" to my agency.*
- d. *What this agency stands for is important to me.*

Three dependent variables were used to examine the dedication and affection of public organization members for their agency. Today, Organizational Commitment is a very important concept in Korea; it encapsulates the psychological state of feeling responsible for the organization. The following questions were developed and operationalized from the indexes of Meyer & Allen (1991).

Affective Commitment

- a. *I do not feel 'emotionally attached' to this agency. (Reverse)*
- b. *I do not feel a strong sense of belonging to my agency. (Reverse)*

Continuance Commitment

- a. *It would be very hard for me to leave my agency right now, even if I wanted to.*
- b. *I am not afraid of what might happen if I quit my job without having another one lined up. (Reverse)*
- c. *Too much in my life would be disrupted if I decided I wanted to leave my agency now. (Reverse)*

Normative Commitment

- a. Jumping from agency to agency does not seem at all unethical to me. (Reverse)*
- b. If I got another offer for a better job elsewhere I would not feel it was right to leave my agency.*
- c. One of the major reasons why I do not leave this agency is that I feel a sense of moral obligation to remain.*

Results & Findings

Exploratory Factor Analysis & Reliability Analysis

To ensure the validity and reliability of the variables in the present study, exploratory factor analysis and reliability analysis were conducted. In the exploratory factor analysis, a Principal Components Analysis was carried for the extraction of meaningful factors underlying the dataset. A varimax rotation was used as a method of factor rotation. The results suggest that factor loadings of all 18 items were above 0.6 (within the range from .654 to .875). Cronbach's alpha score was used for reliability analysis. Cronbach's alpha values of all studied constructs were above 0.5 (within the range from .588 to .912). Thus, validity and reliability of the variables were substantiated by the analyses.

Confirmatory Factor Analysis

Based on the results of the exploratory factor analysis, we further conducted a confirmatory factor analysis. Corresponding results demonstrate that all factor loadings, including those of independent, mediate, and dependent variables, were reasonably verified. In addition, GFI, CFI, NFI IFI, TLI, and RMSEA were used for confirming the model fit. Table 2 shows the model fit results of the confirmatory factor analysis for our key variables. Thus, construct validity was reasonably confirmed.

< Table 2 > Overall Fit of the Confirmatory Factor Analysis Model

Contents	GFI	CFI	NFI	IFI	TLI	RMSEA
Suggested Cut-off Values	>.900	>.900	>.900	>.900	>.900	<.080
A Measurement Model	.926	.927	.916	.927	.907	.070

Correlation Analysis

Before the actual empirical analysis, in order to identify how the variables are related to each other, we computed Pearson correlations of the variables (see Table 3). All variables used in the present study were found to have a significant correlation with each other.

< Table 3 > Descriptive Statistics and Correlations for Variables

Variables	Mean	S.D.	1	2	3	4	5	6
Face Saving (1)	5.17	0.91418	1					
Group Orientation (2)	4.77	1.03387	.093**	1				
Person-organization Fit (3)	4.62	1.02426	.210**	.186**	1			
Affective Commitment (4)	4.75	1.31401	.103**	.326**	.567**	1		
Continuance Commitment (5)	4.77	1.11221	.262**	.131**	.369**	.343**	1	
Normative Commitment (6)	3.31	1.23139	-.068*	-.122**	.290**	.064*	.098**	1

Structural Equation Model Analysis

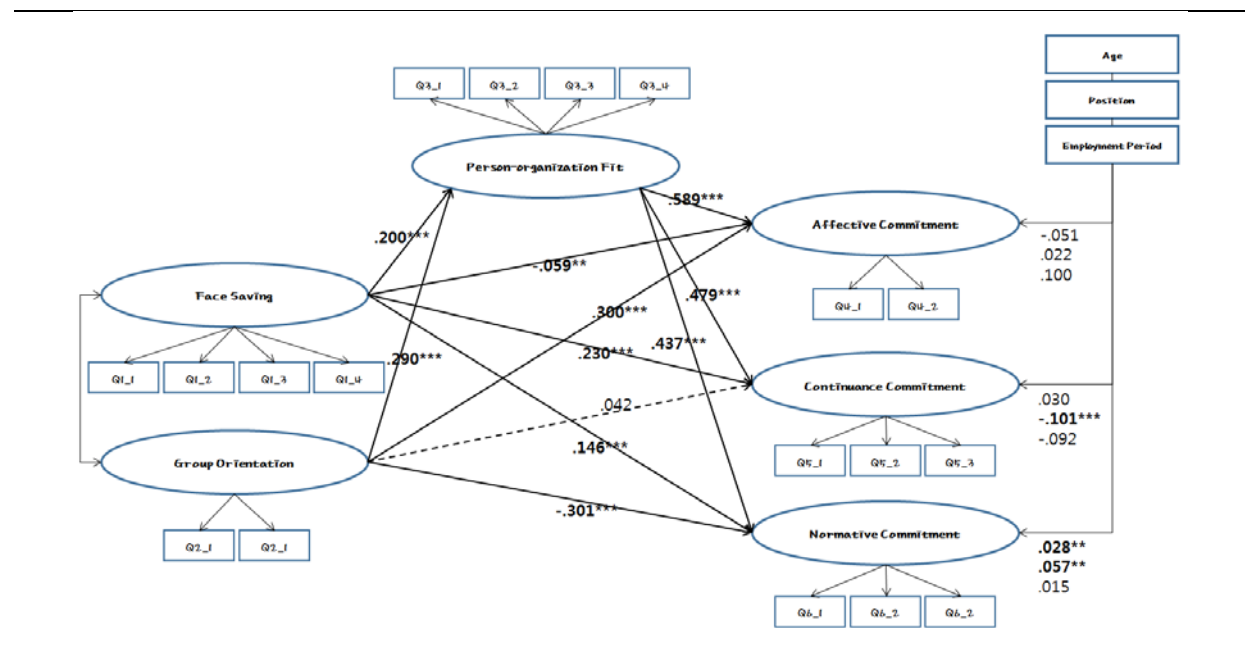
Finally, a structural equation model analysis was conducted to verify the research hypotheses. GFI, CFI, NFI IFI, TLI, and RMSEA were used for confirming the model fit. Table 4 shows the model fit results of the structural equation model analysis. According to these results, all indexes of the measurement model satisfied our suggested cut-off values.

< Table 4 > Overall Fit of the Structural Equation Model Analysis

Contents	GFI	CFI	NFI	IFI	TLI	RMSEA
Suggested Cut-off Values	>.900	>.900	>.900	>.900	>.900	<.080
A Measurement Model	.924	.926	.914	.927	.905	.065

Figure 2 shows the results of the structural equation model analysis. According to the analysis results, face saving was positively associated with person-organization fit ($\beta = .200^{***}$), continuance commitment ($\beta = .230^{***}$), and normative commitment ($\beta = .146^{***}$). On the other hand, face saving was negatively associated with affective commitment ($\beta = .059^{**}$). Group orientation, another independent variable, was positively associated with person-organization fit ($\beta = .290^{***}$) and affective commitment ($\beta = .300^{***}$). At the same time, group orientation was not associated with continuance commitment and was negatively associated with normative commitment ($\beta = -.301^{***}$). Also, person-organization fit was positively associated with affective commitment ($\beta = .589^{***}$), continuance commitment ($\beta = .479^{***}$), and normative commitment ($\beta = .437^{***}$).

< Figure 2 > Structural Equation Model Analysis



In order to identify direct, indirect, and total effects of latent variables presented in our structural equation model, we performed path analysis. As shown in Table 5, face saving

and group orientation had indirect effects on affective commitment (.159 & .276), continuance commitment (.112 & .195), and normative commitment (.095 & .165). These effects indicate that person-organization fit is a significant mediator in connecting the two Confucian values and organizational commitment.

< Table 5 > Results of Path Analysis

Contents		Person- organization Fit	Affective Commitment	Continuance Commitment	Normative Commitment
Face Saving	Total Effect	.185	.080	.380	-.063
	Direct Effect	.185	-.079	.268	-.158
	Indirect Effect	-	.159	.112	.095
Group Orientation	Total Effect	.322	.760	.253	-.226
	Direct Effect	.322	.484	.059	-.391
	Indirect Effect	-	.276	.195	.165
Person- organization Fit	Total Effect	-	.856	.604	.511
	Direct Effect	-	.856	.604	.511
	Indirect Effect	-	-	-	-

Sobel's Test

In order to confirm the mediating role of person-organization fit between two Confucian values and three types of organizational commitment, we performed Sobel's test. As shown in Table 6, all indirect path coefficients were statistically significant. These significance indicates that person-organization fit plays a mediating role between Confucian values and affective, continuance, and normative commitment.

< Table 6 > Results of Sobel's Test

Path			Test Statistic	p-value
Face Saving	→ Person-organization Fit	→ Affective Commitment	5.80176454	0.000
Face Saving	→ Person-organization Fit	→ Continuance Commitment	5.46961266	0.000
Face Saving	→ Person-organization Fit	→ Normative Commitment	5.36393574	0.000
Group Orientation	→ Person-organization Fit	→ Affective Commitment	6.24594695	0.000
Group Orientation	→ Person-organization Fit	→ Continuance Commitment	5.83698597	0.000
Group Orientation	→ Person-organization Fit	→ Normative Commitment	5.70906424	0.000

Conclusion

This study empirically analyzed the relationship between Confucian values, person-organization fit, and organizational commitment. Public organizations in South Korea have been under the strong influence of Confucian culture for a long time. In the context of the fast-paced globalization of today, however, the Confucian values have started to be negatively perceived in the society, since many people have started to regard the Confucian values as key obstacles to economic and social development of the country. For these people, face saving and group orientation are perceived as more inflexible and old-fashioned. In this regard, our research provides a very significant implication. Through the mediation of person-organization fit seriously considered in South Korea, verifying positive or negative effects of two Confucian values on organizational effectiveness provides an opportunity to once again revisit the Confucian values at the time of the day. By verifying our applicable specific hypotheses, the present study has yielded the following results and.

First, we found that both the face saving and the group orientation have a positive influence on person-organization fit in the Korean public organizations. This kind of result can be interpreted as indicating that, the stronger is Confucian value orientation of members of a public organization, the better they adapt to the public organization and achieve harmony with the organization positively. Many public organizations of Korea are still deeply rooted in Confucian value and culture, and it seems valid to consider the person-organization fit of Korean public organizations from the perspective of conformity to Confucian faith, value, and culture between individuals and an organization.

Second, our results suggest that face saving has a positive influence on continuance and normative commitment and a negative influence on affective commitment in the Korean public organizations. This kind of result can be understood as indicating that, the stronger is face awareness of members of a public organization, the more difficult it would be for them to leave the organization and to give up responsibility and moral obligation to the

organization. However, this kind of attitude that shows a strong obsession with recognition of others was verified to act or can act negatively to the kind of sensuous and emotional attachment to an organization which voluntarily devotes one's efforts and loyalty to the public organization.

Third, our findings demonstrate that group orientation has a positive influence on affective commitment, and a negative influence on normative commitment; at the same time, group orientation has no influence on continuance commitment in the Korean public organizations. This kind of result can be regarded as indicating that, the stronger is an individual's collectivist tendency, the more likely it would be for the individuals to show a more positive response in the relationship with members of an organization and to unite an individual's existence strongly with the organization. However, these individuals who place more emphasis on a group rather than on individuals can be regarded to act negatively to an obligatory or responsible attitude toward an organization. It is because the individuals who pay more attention to collectivist value in Korea's public organizations place more emphasis on view of other organization members and communal activities and relationships than on their responsibility or obligation to the organization itself.

Fourth, it was found that person-organization fit has a positive influence on affective, continuance, and normative commitment in the Korean public organizations. This kind of result can be understood as indicating that, the higher is an individual's achievement in making harmony with a public organization and the more successful is the organization in sharing similar value, objective, and vision with its members, the more likely it would be for its members to feel a stronger sense of unity with the organization and to devote themselves willingly to the organization. This is a very interesting discovery in that the members with high adaptability with a public organization form a strong attachment to the organization whether it is emotional, calculated, or obligatory.

Fifth and last, our results show that person-organization fit plays the mediating role between two studied Confucian values and organizational commitment in the Korean public organizations. This kind of result can be regarded as indicating that members of a public organization who have strong face awareness and collectivist value form a strong attachment to the organization through a positive attitude recognizing mutual values of an individual and an organization are being satisfied. This means that, in the process where special value of an individual is connected to devotion to a public organization and related efforts, how many similarities there are in-between the individual and the organization and what kind of complementary and congruent relationship they would have to each other is very important.

Although our study yielded meaningful results on and provided valuable implications for the Korean public organizations, a number of issues need to be explored further. Although our empirical analysis reflected three types of public organizations, the differences among them have not been analyzed. In order to explore the differences between these types of organizations, a more sophisticated analysis should be conducted. Another limitation of the

present study is that the interrelationships among perceived variables were investigated using self-report data, which might have led to the emergence of a mono-method bias and a positive response bias. In further research, qualitative studies should be carried out to reduce the potential methodological shortcomings of the present study.

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