

# Affecting Factors of Public Employees' Organizational Commitment

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## Abstract

**Purpose** – The aim of this chapter is to shed some light on the antecedents of organizational commitment, the mediating role of job engagement and job satisfaction as determinants of organizational commitment within the public sector environment, and the effects that national cultural values may have on these relationships.

**Approach** – This paper presents a review of the works that, from both theoretical and empirical points of view, explore the affecting factors of public employees' organizational commitment in an international setting.

**Findings** – A comprehensive model has been developed, detailing the expectations on the influence that these factors might have on public employees' level of commitment, either as mediators or moderators.

**Research limitations/implications** – The main limitation is the paper's theoretical nature; the subsequent implication is a future empirical research that may prove or disprove these theoretical findings. In addition, there are some other possible mediating factors and antecedents which may be of interest for future researchers.

**Originality/value** – This comprehensive review of the extant literature may provide academics and public managers with a deeper comprehension of how organizational commitment might be achieved, and why some practices may or may not be transferrable from one country to another.

**Keywords** – public employees, organizational commitment, job engagement, job satisfaction, cultural dimensions.

**Paper type** – Literature review



## 1. The Challenge of Managing Public Employees in Hostile Environment

Public administration has traditionally been structured over a bureaucratization of procedures that had to ensure that decisions and actions were consistent, formalized and compatible with pre-defined rules. However, increasing citizenry discontent and the need to improve the quality of public services with reduced budgets, have moved public organization to find new models to achieve efficiency. The most commonly adopted model in Western economies in the later decades is that of New Public Management (NPM) (Hood, 1990). NPM emerged in the USA in the 1980s, from where it was transferred to the UK, Australia, New Zealand, the Netherlands, and Sweden. Several interpretations of NPM have literally spread worldwide since then and continue to do so.

NPM presents a new paradigm that entails the establishment of explicit result standards, a stronger emphasis on result control, increased competitiveness, unit disaggregation, deregulation, orientation towards customer service and the utilization of management techniques from the private sector. NPM is thus characterized by a strong emphasis on output performance measurement and by the introduction of pay-for-performance according to output indicators, fostering values and goals of an economic nature even for HRM practices (Christensen and Laegreid, 2002, 2011; Rhodes *et al.*, 2012; Verhoest, 2011). Nevertheless, NPM is deemed inadequate since it places such a strong emphasis on results, whereas public sector managers, in practice, complement this *hard* orientation with a relationships-based approach (Moore, 1995; Flynn, 2007) that is more suited for a type of organization whose main asset is their human resources. This hybrid model is called “public value model”.

Europe is currently under a critical time in which public budgets are becoming gradually constrictive, especially in those countries where socioeconomically the crisis is hitting the hardest, which makes the issue of human resource management (HRM) in public sector crucial (Nica, 2013). HRM practices in the public sector have been aligned with the traditional model of the public sector, that of bureaucratic Weberian practices and principles of rule-governed rational action. As a result, many countries have tried to streamline public administration aiming at optimizing effectiveness and efficiency (Olejniczak and Salmon, 2014), although a persistence of administrative traditions has been noticed in a number of countries that tend to maintain existing bureaucratic patterns and reduce the impact of pressures to reform (Painter and Peters, 2010). The challenge for public HRM is to help public administration staff to achieve a feeling of engagement, or an energetic and affective connection with their work and organization.

Public managers face the challenge to enhance employee engagement, motivation and satisfaction levels at work. Subsequently, they must find ways for a better usage of human capital, fostering managerial and organizational support and alternative rewarding systems in order to facilitate the development of organizational commitment and achieve higher levels of employee satisfaction. A consequence of mismanaging this challenge is reflected in a research stating that only 58% of USA employees in public sector organizations are fully engaged in their job; only 31% strongly feel that they are valued; 31% are very satisfied with their job/working conditions; 20% strongly believe they are adequately compensated, and 32% strongly believe they have the tools and

training needed to do their jobs effectively (IPMA, 2012). In addition, the perception of the employee on the above mentioned variables of his/her work environment and conditions might affect their levels of job engagement and satisfaction. These perceptions may be in turn affected by the country's cultural values, so it is to be expected that public employees from different cultures will display different levels of job satisfaction and job engagement (Hu, 2014; Matheson and Kwon, 2003). This provides an opportunity for academic research, looking to understand why this happens.

The aim of this research is to study the existing literature exploring the relationships between a public employee's organizational commitment and his/her level of job engagement and satisfaction, its antecedents, and the national cultural factors affecting it, and developing a model that may explain these relationships. Our contribution is offering a comprehensive perspective on the relationship between organizational commitment, its antecedents and its determinants, by clarifying this relationship and its expected effects so that managers and academics may improve public decision making in regards to HRM, thus generating more public value, as well as future academic research projects.

The structure of the paper is as follows. In the next section, a number of previous works have been analyzed to understand how organizational commitment in the public sector might be determined by employee engagement and job satisfaction, and what the latter two have in common. In addition, since the need for improving organizational commitment is a common challenge for many countries with different cultural values, it is interesting to provide a context to discuss if these different cultural values may have an effect on these determinants. The third part of this paper presents a hypothetical model where the expectations of the researchers are presented, and it ends with some final thoughts regarding how to relate public sector employees' commitment and its antecedents.

## **2. Antecedents of organizational commitment in the public sector**

If public sector performance is to be improved, there is a need to identify the factors playing a key role in engaging its employees and providing them with sufficient motivation and satisfaction. In this section, we proceed to introduce our research object, organizational commitment, and its relation to job satisfaction and employee engagement in public sector organizations.

### **2.1 Job commitment and public employee engagement**

Work engagement, job involvement, and organizational commitment are three empirically distinct concepts (Hallberg and Schaufeli, 2006), although there are no universally accepted definitions neither of job engagement nor of organizational commitment (González-Romá *et al.*, 2006; Salanova and Llorens, 2008; Seppala *et al.*, 2009; Saks, 2006; Bakker *et al.*, 2011; Welbourn *et al.*, 2014).

Particularly, organizational commitment refers to an individual's psychological attachment to the organization, as follows (Hallberg and Schaufeli, 2006, p. 602): "organizational commitment differs from engagement in that it refers to a person's

attitude and attachment towards their organization. Engagement is not an attitude; it is the degree to which an individual is attentive and absorbed in the performance of their roles". Organizational commitment may be understood as a strong sense of identification with a particular organization, acceptance of its values and goals, and, most importantly, its readiness to stay and/or take an extra action when it is needed. According to Schneider (1987), commitment is what "makes a person assume or continue a course of action when difficulties or positive alternatives would lead them to give it up".

One of the most popular definitions of organizational commitment was developed by Meyer and Allen (1991). These authors distinguish three components of organizational commitment: affective commitment (positive emotional attachment to the organization), continuance commitment (gains versus losses of working in an organization, also considered as intention to quit), and normative commitment (feelings of obligation).

Most of the studies in the area of organizational commitment shows that employees working in private organizations are more likely to be committed than public sector employees (Goulet and Frank, 2002; Cho and Lee, 2001). Those works that have tried to find if there is a relationship between the performance of a public employee and their organizational commitment, have achieved diverse results. For Seppala *et al.* (2009); Harter *et al.* (2009), Vandenberg (2009) and Turkyilmaz *et al.* (2011), among others, there is a clear and direct relationship, while for Sinclair *et al.*, (2005) there seems to be no definite evidence that supports this hypothesis.

The concept of employee engagement was introduced by Kahn (1990). According to this author (1990, p. 964) employee engagement can be described as the harnessing of organizational members' selves to their work roles". Kahn's idea of engagement focused on the employee being able to express him/herself at work. Much of today's research refers to Kahn's work as the theoretical underpinning of employee engagement. Employee engagement can also be defined as a positive, fulfilling, task-related state of mind characterized by "vigor" (energy, resilience, and a commitment to work hard), "dedication" (involvement, enthusiasm, pride, and challenge), and "absorption" (concentration and well-being during work) (Bakker *et al.*, 2008). Saks *et al.* (2004, p. 601) state that "employee engagement has been defined in many different ways and the definitions and measures often sound like other better known and established constructs like organizational commitment and organizational citizenship behavior". The Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (Schaufeli and Bakker, 2003) is also widely used as a measure of employee engagement.

Some authors claim that age and work experience may influence the level of engagement. For instance, among USA nurses of 45 years and older with at least 10 years of experience - 34% of participants were engaged, 47% content, 12% ambivalent, 4% disengaged (Kuykendall *et al.*, 2014). This conclusion seems to be interesting in the context of an aging European society.

As for job satisfaction, it can be understood as "a pleasurable or positive emotional state resulting from appraisal of one's job or job experiences" (Locke, 1976, p. 1300). Job satisfaction is one's affective response to the job, viewed either in its entirety (global satisfaction) or with regard to particular aspects (facet satisfaction) such as pay and supervision (Smith *et al.*, 1963; Tett and Mayer, 1993; Kinicki *et al.*, 2002).

Considering aspects of job satisfaction, one can notice that there it could be any aspect of the job such as pay, interpersonal relations, and work environment (Coombe and Barriball, 2007). For Turkyilmaz *et al.* (2011), the satisfaction construct may contain five main factors: empowerment, participation, working conditions, reward and recognition, teamwork and training and personal development. They also proved that employee satisfaction is correlated with loyalty, understood as commitment, in the Turkish public sector.

As of today, there is no consensus about their relations and the causal order the organizational commitment influences the work satisfaction or vice versa. In some studies, the organizational commitment appears as a predictor of job satisfaction while in others, the work satisfaction is the predictor of the organizational commitment. Some authors have found empirical evidence for correlation between that job satisfaction and organizational commitment (Cooper, Hakim and Viswesvaran, 2005) such as that of Mathieu and Zajac (1990), who found that the mean correlation between the two constructs was 0.53. Rusu (2013) found that the higher the work satisfaction is, the higher the organizational commitment; whereas Akomolafe and Olatomide (2013) established that job satisfaction significantly predicted organizational commitment. Similarly, according to Addae and Parboteeah (2006), job satisfaction mediated the relationship between organizational commitment and turnover intentions. On the other hand, there is a current that posits that it is the organization's commitment that exerts a positive and significant effect on job satisfaction and employee performance (Caricati *et al.*, 2012; Susanty and Miradipta, 2013).

Salanova and Schaufeli (2009) studied the relationship between job engagement and organizational commitment, and explained why there are only moderate correlations between the two: it is partly because job engagement is centered on workers' attitudes at work, while work satisfaction deals with attitudes towards or about work, which includes an evaluative component (cognitive) which is not present in engagement (Salanova and Schaufeli, 2009). Also, a confirmatory factor analyses undertaken by Huynh *et al.* (2012) showed that organizational connectedness (a variable conceived by the authors), commitment and engagement were separate constructs and that connectedness and engagement each shared unique variance with job satisfaction and intention to continue. Vecina *et al.* (2012) studied engagement in group volunteers and noticed that the relationships between job engagement and satisfaction depended on the time of service. Their model shows that job engagement influences the participant's commitment to the organization, while organizational commitment predicts intention to continue. In this model, engagement influences job satisfaction and an intention to remain an average period of 2 years in the organization.

It can be concluded that despite the myriad of works describing relations between engagement, commitment, and satisfaction, there are still reservations as to the role of job engagement, job satisfaction and organizational commitment.

In addition, literature often discusses the role of two other types of commitment, namely organizational citizenship behavior (OCB), and job involvement. OCB defines the contribution of employees to the organization above and beyond the official demands of the job (Smith *et al.*, 1983). It refers to behavior that is not formally recognized by the organization's reward system. In general it refers to support of the organizational goals and members through voluntary actions that promote the organization and go beyond the official duties. OCB plays an important role in organizational success (Finkelstein and



Penner, 2004). Particularly, since public employees play a role of public servants a higher OCB than in private organizations is to be expected, as evidenced by Sharma *et al.* (2011). This study also showed that job satisfaction increases or decreases in a direct relation to changes in OCB; although Sangmook (2006) could not confirm such relationship in his work, indicating instead a relationship between organizational commitment and OCB.

Job involvement is considered to be a critical job attitude in industrial and organizational psychology, although there is a lack of conceptual clarity (Brown, 1996). According to Lodahl and Kejner (1965), job involvement is the internalization of values about the goodness of work or the importance of work in the worth of the individual. Kanungo (1982) redefined the concept, and concluded that job involvement is the state of mental or psychological identification with a specific job which depends on both the importance of one's needs (intrinsic and extrinsic), and the perception of work as satisfying those needs. Researchers contend that job involvement is largely affected by the employee's personality traits and values, and less by organizational factors (Rabinowitz and Hall, 1977; Riketta and Van Dick, 2009).

There are studies proving that greater job involvement was found to be related to higher work satisfaction and organizational citizenship behavior, which are then manifested in greater commitment and diligence (Podsakoff *et al.*, 2000; Shragay and Tziner, 2011). Job involvement could significantly predict the level of OCB displayed by employees. As they explain it job involvement reflects a positive attitude toward the job, therefore it seems clear why people with high job involvement will display more OCB than those with low job involvement. However, the relationship between job involvement and job satisfaction is not so clear (Buka and Bilgic, 2010). While Buchanan (1975) concludes that managers in public sector are less involved than their private companies' counterparts, Mirvis and Hackett (1983) found that the private sector employees were the less involved subjects.

## **2.2 Effects of job satisfaction and employee engagement on the antecedents of organizational commitment**

As the concept of organizational commitment is relatively new to public management, consequently, there is limited empirical research about its antecedents. In order to better understand the relationship between employee engagement, job satisfaction and organizational commitment, it is necessary to explore the common features that organizational commitment concepts have in common.

Research suggests that there are several antecedents to employee engagement. Among them are effective leadership and co-worker relationships, interesting work tasks and the resources to perform their jobs well, instead of just rewards (May *et al.*, 2004). The main responsibility for creating a working environment that makes people engaged definitely has the management and the reward system and climate it creates.

Saks (2006) noticed that perceived organizational support predicts both job and organization engagement and procedural justice predicts organization engagement. He also concluded that job engagement mediated the relationships between these factors and job satisfaction, organizational commitment and intention to quit (described as

how often an employee frequently thinks of quitting his or her job during the next 12 months). Following his work, these factors have been found as common contributors to job satisfaction and employee engagement.

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### 2.2.1 Reward system and recognition

When employees receive needed resources and/or recognition from their organization, they feel obligated to repay the organization. According to Kahn's (1990) concept of engagement, employees feel obliged to bring themselves more deeply into their role performances as repayment for the resources they receive from their organization. Cameron and Pierce (1997) found out after an extensive qualitative research that generally people enjoyed their job more when they received a reward, enhancing their interest and performance, linking rewards and job satisfaction.

Poling (1990) argues that the best predictor of work satisfaction is the fit between the employee's values and the rewards provided by the organization. This level of satisfaction can be influenced by a number of factors, namely personality; intrinsic and extrinsic values; work conditions; and social influence – the influence of other individuals or groups (colleagues, family, cultural environment, etc.) on the employee's attitudes and behavior (George and Jones, 2002).

There is an intense discussion about what motivates public sector employees and a number of studies support the notion that public employees are motivated less by monetary rewards than their private counterparts (Frey *et al.*, 2013). One of the instruments is recognition by organization and manager. Awards are able to send signals of recognition to the employee. Public sector organizations may issue awards at the individual, group, or organizational level, since they also play an important role in influencing the levels of engagement, satisfaction and commitment. Rhoades *et al.* (2001) conclude that organizational reward has a positive influence on affective commitment by the mediation of perceived organizational support.

Empirical research shows that, in general, the satisfaction levels of private organization employees are significantly higher than those of public employees (Buchanan, 1975; Bourantas and Papalexandris, 1999; Buka and Bilgic 2012, p. 234). This is also supported by the results study of Bordia and Blau (1998), which proved that pay satisfaction increases the overall job satisfaction, but public employees have less room for managing their pay levels. On the other hand, public employees may have a higher degree of intrinsic motivation and a greater interest in altruistic activities and socially desirable outcomes (e.g. Crewson, 1997; Houston, 2005). Or they may not (Borins, 2002). A discussion on this topic can be found in Milne (2007), who offers arguments for both sides, reaching the conclusion that it is quite a controversial relationship, particularly when studying individual commitment, satisfaction and performance.

### 2.2.2 Perceived Organizational Support

A definition of POS was first introduced by Eisenberger *et al.* (1986), according to whom employees feel secured by the organization when the organization values their colleagues and their welfare. Perceived organizational support (POS) can be understood

as a workplace relationship. It is assumed that, when the organization treats the employee well, the employee reciprocates by working hard to improve organizational effectiveness (Brunetto *et al.*, 2013). Perceived support of the organization means for employee that the organization values him/her as an employee and also values his/her welfare. Organizational support has aided in several cases to bring about successful innovations that promoted job satisfaction and employee engagement, such as in Malhan (2006).

There is evidence supporting the claim that both organization and manager support influence job engagement and organizational commitment (Saks 2006; Guerro and Herrbach, 2009; Morrow, 2011; Brunetto *et al.* 2013). Getting recognition and awards from the organization strengthens employees' loyalty to the organization as long as they are consistent with fairness concerns. These instruments are perceived as supporting and not as controlling since ex-ante criteria are not specified.

Perceived organizational support has an impact also on the quality of the supervisor-subordinate relationship (Wayne *et al.*, 1997; Shanock and Eisenberger, 2006; Zhao and Miao, 2014), predicts employee engagement (Rhoades *et al.*, 2001, Saks, 2006), plus organizational commitment, citizenship behavior and employee retention (Eisenberger *et al.* 2002).

### **2.2.3 Managerial Support**

In line with the previous item, there is quite a body of work supporting the claim that, if managers show their support to their employees, these tend to increase their organizational commitment levels (Eisenberger *et al.*, 2002). Furthermore, trust is gained when employees perceive that they are treated fairly by their supervisor (Macey and Schneider, 2008). Managerial coaching or those effective managerial practices that improve employee effectiveness and learning also plays a relevant role in the level of satisfaction and commitment of the employee (Ellinger *et al.*, 2010), even for public sector employees from culturally different countries (Kim *et al.*, 2014).

Likewise, it works the other way around: poor managerial support leads to lower levels of organizational commitment (Rhoades *et al.*, 2001, Shanock and Eisenberger, 2006). This relationship is found in both private and public sector organizations; although some evidence shows public sector employees are less strongly affected by this relationship than employees of profit and non-profit organizations (Emhan, 2012).

### **2.2.4 Perceived justice and fairness of organizational procedure**

Organizational justice refers to the employees' perception of fair treatment by an organization and its agents (distributive justice and procedural justice). Distributive justice has its roots in Adams' (1965) equity theory and it relates to the preoccupations expressed by employees considering the distribution of outcomes and resources.

Procedural justice deals with the criteria used in allocation decisions and there is outstanding evidence of its effect on organizational commitment (Rhoades *et al.*, 2001, Demirel and Yücel, 2013; Gupta and Kumar, 2013). Procedural justice is a universal and low-cost measure to improve performance when output or process control is not feasible. Fairness of organizational procedures may also have an impact



on organizational commitment because procedures define the organization's capacity to treat employees fairly.

Considerable research has also shown that perceptions of fairness are associated with positive organizational commitment (Folger and Konovsky, 1989; Konovsky and Cropanzano, 1991; Kim and Mauborgne, 1993) and job satisfaction (Clark *et al.*, 2009).

Finally, intention to quit has also been a common antecedent when studying job satisfaction, employee engagement and organizational commitment (Saks, 2006; Seppala *et al.*, 2009, Linz and Semykina, 2012), but the fact that we are dealing with public employees, who are on tenure or at least aspire to be, makes this antecedent redundant.

### 2.3 The effect of national cultural values on employee engagement and satisfaction

Finally, the context of business culture and national culture may be taken into account when talking about job engagement and organizational commitment. An organization is established at a specific point in history and hence is shaped by specific cultural contexts or norms and values. In fact, it is well acknowledged that national culture has a significant influence on behavior of employees, as well as on consumer behavior and technology diffusion (Dwyer *et al.* 2005, Tiferet & Herstein 2010; Srite & Karahanna, 2006), as well as on the choice for a particular profession (Malach-Pines & Kaspi-Barcu, 2008). Additionally, individual demographic features, such as age, tenure, education, sex, work experience, and ethnic and geographical background, can also be significant for the organizational culture (Christensen *et al.*, 2007), but not always (Malach-Pines & Kaspi-Barcu, 2008).

Public institutions are characterized by a special culture, called "bureaucratic culture" (e.g. managers trying to evoke change, risk avoidance), different from that of private sector organizations (Schraeder *et al.*, 2005; Christensen *et al.*, 2007). Members of public organizations stand in a dynamic and reciprocal relation to their organizational culture, and usually have similar attitudes and interests (Vandenabeele, 2008). There is also evidence that national culture influences change management in the public sector (Fang, 2013; Rufin *et al.*, 2014), since it was found that there are significant correlations between e-government development and the cultural dimensions as defined by Hofstede (2010).

Therefore, it is expected that these cultural dimensions exert a mediating influence between the actions of the organization and the degree of public employee job satisfaction and engagement. Under this premise, we propose the cultural dimensions of Hofstede (2011) as mediating variables between the rewarding system, organizational and managerial support, and procedural and distributive justice on the one hand and job engagement and public employee job satisfaction on the other. These dimensions are described below.

1. *Power Distance Index (PDI)*: This dimension reflects the degree to which the less powerful members in a given society accept the fact that power would be unequally distributed. In the context of an organization a high rate of this cultural dimension

emerges in rigid hierarchical structures, mainly unidirectional communication systems, in which subordinates have a high dependence on their superiors in scheduling their work, granting certain privileges and views of the upper are not usually questioned and the ideal leadership is the benevolent autocrat. Therefore, it would be expected that aspects such as the feeling of justice and equality, organizational support expected by subordinates or reward system was different in organizations with high and low power distance and therefore have different moderating effects on job satisfaction and engagement.

2. *Individualism (IND)*: This dimension refers to the level at which individuals are integrated into society and to their sense of belonging. Therefore, in organizations with a high degree of individualism the reward systems are based more on individual merits as an example to emulate, the possibility of participating in decision making processes and assuming challenges at work is highly valued, superiors also value positively their workers autonomy capability. Moreover, in collectivist organizations teamwork is perceived as something natural, not being so necessary but a motivational incentive to favor the generation of synergies from the working groups. Thus, rewarding policy and work management can be addressed very differently depending on the individualist or collectivist nature of organizational culture, and the employee job satisfaction and engagement could be affected by these human resource policies.
3. *Masculinity (MAS)*: A high score (“male”) in this dimension indicates that the company will be driven by competition, achievement and success. Social status, hierarchical position within the organizational structure and level of reward are parameters with a direct impact on MAS levels. A low score (“female”) means that the dominant values in society are personal relationships, caring for others and quality of life. It is therefore a cultural dimension with a strong motivational value. It would indicate what usually encourages people to develop themselves in their workplace, with a greater focus on personal success and achievements (male) or on parameters with a more social nature, such as the good working environment, personal job satisfaction, etc. If the organizational culture meets this motivational level, it would be expected that their level of job satisfaction and engagement will be higher.
4. *Uncertainty Avoidance Index (UAI)*: This last cultural dimension measures the degree to which members of an organization feel threatened by ambiguous unknown or unstructured situations. In organizations with high levels of risk aversion, change is seen as something negative, which generates an uncertainty that its members are unable to manage. Stability is therefore a very significant value. By contrast, in organizational cultures with low levels of risk aversion, the change is assumed to be a necessary improvement possibility for evolution. These are cultures which have a greater tendency to innovate. For instance, institutions with a high UAI which create a rewarding structure with a high variable component generate a demotivating uncertainty for its members, and it can affect their job satisfaction and engagement.

In relation with these cultural dimensions, Bouckaert (2007) highlights that even in bureaucratic cultures, cultural differences can have an impact on the processes of organizational change, on the way of carrying out human resources policies, and hence on the degree of worker satisfaction and organization engagement. Moreover, according

to this study, certain combinations of cultural dimensions may have a synergistic effect on workers behavior. Thus, combining the dimensions PDI and UAI, "high-high" and "low-low" clusters are obtained (high power distance and high risk aversion, or low power distance and low risk aversion). In "high-high" cultures employees' satisfaction is linked to the degree of stability of tenure, no change, the presence of rules and regulations that guide their work, so that a fixed rewarding system, with strong organizational support could improve their level of engagement.

On the other hand, in "low-low", cultures workers are likely to change, take risks, make their own decisions and act autonomously, so some human resource policies could be expected to flow in the opposite direction, in order to increase employee satisfaction and engagement. Moreover, according to Ongaro (2008), the combination of other cultural dimensions must be taken into account to understand the mediating effect of these changes in organizational entities. Thus, individualism and masculinity (IND and MAS) can influence the independent variables of the model in the same direction as the cluster PDI-UAI increasing their effect or in the opposite direction counteracting it.

The transition from traditional (bureaucratic management) to NPM influences the degree of satisfaction of public employees in their jobs and in their organizational engagement. In this sense, there are studies that show the influence that the cultural dimensions of Hofstede have about switching to this new form of governance. Bouckaert (2007) concludes that low levels of power distance (PDI) and risk aversion (UAI) and high rates of masculinity (MAS) are necessary but not sufficient requirements to manage a successful cultural change to NPM. The most influential dimension to favor this transit seems to be individualism (IND). So, high rates of this dimension are a necessary condition and perhaps largely sufficient. In the same way, Khalil (2011) by studying 56 countries finds that the readiness for this transition is negatively correlated with the dimensions of risk aversion (UAI) and practices that cause an increase in power distance dimension (PDI), and positively with the cultural components of masculinity (MAS) and individualism (IND).

Another study (Frías *et al.*, 2013) shows the influence of these dimensions in governance, revealing differences between different organizational cultures. Using a sample of 101 municipalities in Colombia, Portugal and Spain, the authors reveal that a proper balance between the cultural dimensions of Hofstede (1984, 2001) favors the orientation of public employee towards a more transparent and citizen-oriented development of their tasks. This transparency is greater in areas of economic responsibility in those cultures with high levels of masculinity (MAS) and risk aversion (UAI).

All in all, it has been seen that numerous studies show the influence of the organizational culture on different managerial parameters, not only in private companies but also in public entities. However, according to Schneider's model of homo-social reproduction (Schneider, 1987), people working for public sector organizations, due to their similar organizational cultures, might not be as affected by Hofstede cultural dimensions, since bureaucratic principles may override any differences between countries. Therefore, it would be interesting to check if these cultural dimensions exert some mediating influence between the organizational rewarding actions, organizational and managerial support and procedural and distributive justice, first as independent

variables and public employee job satisfaction and engagement, and secondly, as dependent variables. Furthermore, it would be also interesting to gauge that influence and study the effect of possible combinations of cultural dimensions, adding or counteracting their mediating influence between the independent and dependent variables.

### 3. Research Questions and Hypothesis

As it was seen before, the phenomenon of evaluating a public employee's level of organizational commitment is complex and a number of steps should be taken in order to comprehend all its possible determinants and factors, even more in an international context. A number of gaps have showed up in regards to the role of job satisfaction and job engagement as determinants, and if this role is affected by cultural values.

In order to summarize the literature review that was carried out in section 2, Table 1 presents the main works related to each mediating relationship and its direction. It should be noted that OCB and job involvement are psychological constructs that are affected not only by organizational factors, but also by the personal features, like personality, values, and beliefs of the individual employee. Considering the strong weight of personal elements in their composition, they have been disregarded as mediators for the model, so as to avoid the effect of personal bias in the final results and concentrate on exploring those parameters of a more organizational nature.

| Antecedent             | Mediator            | Research (Effect)  |
|------------------------|---------------------|--|
| Rewarding system       | Job satisfaction    | Poling, 1990 (+); Shragay and Tziner, 2011 (+); George and Jones 2002 (+); Frey <i>et al.</i> , 2013 (+); Cameron and Price, 1997 (+); Crewson, 1997 (+); Houston, 2005 (+); Borins, 2002 (+/-); Milne, 2007 (+/-)   |
|                        | Employee engagement | Frey <i>et al.</i> , 2013 (+); Milne, 2007 (+/-); Rhoades <i>et al.</i> , 2001 (+)   |
| Organizational support | Job satisfaction    | Malhan, 2006 (+)   |
|                        | Employee engagement | Saks, 2006 (+); Guerro and Herrbach, 2009 (+); Morrow, 2011 (+); Brunetto <i>et al.</i> , 2013 (+); Wayne <i>et al.</i> , 1997 (+); Shanock and Eisenberger, 2006 (+); Zhou and Miao, 2014 (+); Eisenberger <i>et al.</i> , 2002 (+); Malhan, 2006 (+); Rhoades <i>et al.</i> , 2001 (+); Rhoades <i>et al.</i> , 2001 (+) |
| Managerial support     | Job satisfaction    | Ellinger <i>et al.</i> , 2010 (+); Kim <i>et al.</i> , 2014 (+)  |
|                        | Employee engagement | Eisenberger <i>et al.</i> , 2002 (+); Macey and Schneider, 2008 (+); Ellinger <i>et al.</i> , 2010 (+); Kim <i>et al.</i> , 2014 (+); Rhoades <i>et al.</i> , 2001 (+)   |
| Procedural justice     | Job satisfaction    | Clark <i>et al.</i> , 2009 (+)   |
|                        | Employee engagement | Demirel and Yücel, 2013 (+); Gupta and Kumar, 2013 (+); Folger and Konovsky, 1989 (+); Konovsky and Cropanzano, 1991 (+); Kim and Mauborgne, 1993 (+); Rhoades <i>et al.</i> , 2001 (+)  |
| Distributive justice   | Job satisfaction    | Adams, 1965 (+)  |
|                        | Employee engagement | Folger and Konovsky, 1989 (+)  |

**Table 1:**

Summary of the relationships between antecedents and mediators

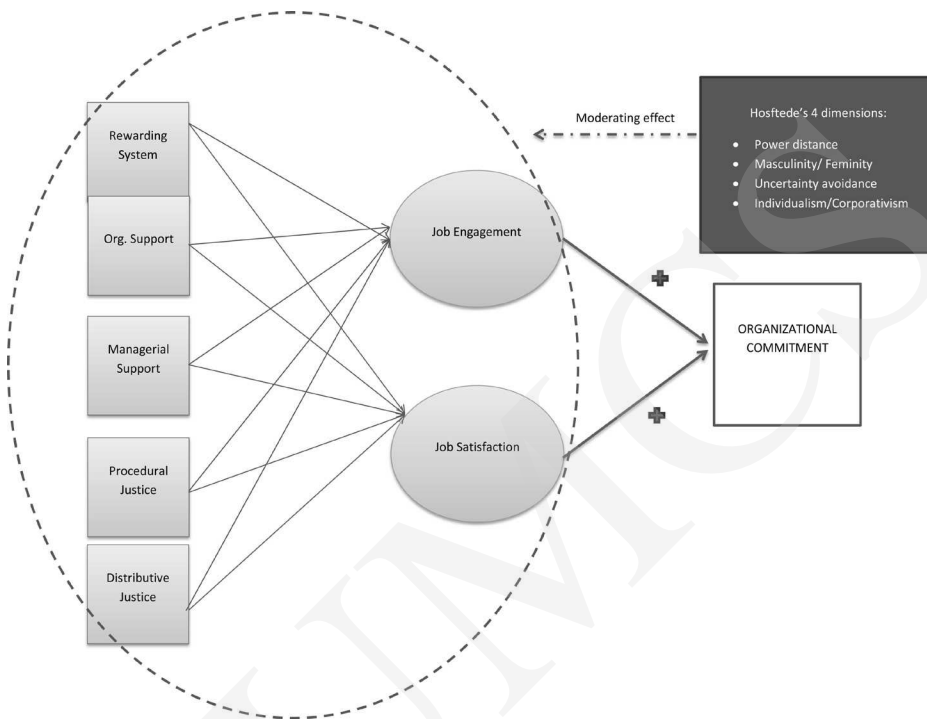
Therefore, the proposed research model must encompass a number of more specific questions that have arisen during the theoretical research. These questions may be formulated as hypotheses, as follows:

- H1A: There is a direct relationship between a public employee's level of engagement with their job and their organizational commitment.
- H1B: There is a direct relationship between a public employee's level of satisfaction with their job and their organizational commitment.
- H2A: Each of the founding factors (organization's rewarding system, perceived organizational support, perceived managerial support, procedural justice, and distributive justice) is related to the employee's level of job engagement.
- H2B: Each of the founding factors (organization's rewarding system, perceived organizational support, perceived managerial support, procedural justice, and distributive justice) is related to the employee's level of job satisfaction.
  - H2A1: There is a positive relationship between the organization's rewarding system and the employee's job engagement.
  - H2B1: There is a positive relationship between the organization's rewarding system and the employee's level of job satisfaction.
  - H2A2: There is a positive relationship between perceived organizational support and the employee's job engagement.
  - H2B2: There is a positive relationship between perceived organizational support and the employee's level of job satisfaction.
  - H2A3: There is a positive relationship between perceived managerial support and the employee's job engagement.
  - H2B3: There is a positive relationship between perceived managerial support and the employee's level of job satisfaction.
  - H2A4: There is a positive relationship between perceived procedural justice and the employee's job engagement.
  - H2B4: There is a positive relationship between perceived procedural justice and the employee's level of job satisfaction.
  - H2A5: There is a positive relationship between perceived distributive justice and the employee's job engagement.
  - H2B5: There is a positive relationship between perceived distributive justice and the employee's level of job satisfaction.
- H3: Public employees from countries with different cultural values will have significantly different perceptions of each of the contributing factors.
  - H3A1: Public employees that work in countries with a higher score in the power distance dimension (PDI) will prefer a fixed rewarding system based on the job rather than individual incentives rewarding system.
  - H3A2: Public employees that work in countries with a higher score in the power distance dimension (PDI) will be more appreciative of the efforts on organizational support.
  - H3A3: Public employees that work in countries with a higher score in the power distance dimension (PDI) will be more appreciative of the efforts on managerial support.



- H3A4: Public employees that work in countries with a higher score in the power distance dimension (PDI) will be more accepting of non-procedural justice policies than those that work in countries with lower score in PDI.
- H3A5: Public employees that work in countries with a higher score in the power distance dimension (PDI) will be more accepting of non-distributive justice policies than those that work in countries with lower score in PDI.
- H3B1: Public employees that work in countries with a higher score in the individualism (IND) dimension will prefer a rewarding system based on their own achievements rather than on teamwork objectives
- H3B2: Public employees that work in countries with a higher score in the individualism (IND) dimension will be more appreciative of the efforts on organizational support.
- H3B3: Public employees that work in countries with a higher score in the individualism (IND) dimension will be more appreciative of the efforts on managerial support.
- H3B4: Public employees that work in countries with a higher score in the individualism (IND) dimension will demand procedural justice policies.
- H3B5: Public employees that work in countries with a higher score in the individualism (IND) dimension will demand distributive justice policies.
- H3C1: Rewarding system factor will have a higher impact on public employee's job satisfaction and engagement in countries with a higher score in the masculinity (MAS) dimension.
- H3C2: Public employees that work in countries with a lower score in the masculinity (MAS) dimension will be more appreciative of the efforts on organizational support.
- H3C3: Public employees that work in countries with a lower score in the masculinity (MAS) dimension will be more appreciative of the efforts on managerial support.
- H3C4: Public employees that work in countries with a higher score in the masculinity (MAS) dimension will demand procedural justice policies.
- H3C5: Public employees that work in countries with a higher score in the masculinity (MAS) dimension will demand distributive justice policies.
- H3D1: Public employees that work in countries with a higher score in the uncertainty avoidance (UAI) dimension will prefer a mostly fixed rewarding system policy.
- H3D2: Public employees that work in countries with a higher score in the uncertainty avoidance (UAI) dimension will be more appreciative of the efforts on organizational support.
- H3D3: Public employees that work in countries with a higher score in the uncertainty avoidance (UAI) dimension will be more appreciative of the efforts on managerial support.
- H3D4: Public employees that work in country with a higher score in the uncertainty avoidance (UAI) dimension will demand procedural justice policies.
- H3D5: Public employees that work in country with a higher score in the uncertainty avoidance (UAI) dimension will demand distributive justice policies.

## Affecting Factors of Public Employees' Organizational Commitment



**Figure 1:**  
Antecedents and affecting factors of the public organizational commitment model

To analyze the prior hypotheses, an empirical survey needs to be carried out. This survey will only produce significant results if its design complies with a number of requirements, as follows:

- *The sample:* comparable samples should be used, made up of local employees at every level and unit, so as to be as representative as possible of the universe of public employees at local levels and to avoid single-respondent bias. To ensure that organizational values may not affect the results, just one local public administration will be targeted in each country, provided they have the same size and scope of work.
- *Cultural differences:* to measure the possible moderating effects of Hofstede's dimensions, the criteria for selecting the countries must be their outstanding position in, at least, one of said dimensions, as per Hofstede's analysis.
- *The instrument:* although the original survey will be written in English, the final questionnaire will be translated into local languages (Kanning and Hill, 2013). It will be distributed personally by the researchers, to ensure the participation and understanding of the employees. Content validation will be gained by the theoretical review here presented, and construct reliability and validation will be ensured by ex-ante measures (order of questions) and ex-post statistical tests such as factor analysis (Kinicki *et al*, 2002; Chang *et al.*, 2010).
- Other *demographic parameters* as control variables: gender, age, position, qualification level, and time working for the public sector. By studying these

variables, results can be more detailed and employee profiles can be given to the policy makers of each surveyed country.

#### 4. Final reflections and research limitations

Over the past two decades, there have been changes happening in public sector organizations that have had a significant impact on their employees and their working conditions, although these changes seem to be insufficiently addressed by academia considering the disparity of results obtained by the empirical research reviewed in this paper. Taking a step back and revising the extant theory and empirical conclusions allows for a more up-to-date, comprehensive overview of the problem at hand. In addition to this contribution, incorporating the concurrent effect of national cultural values may provide academics and public managers with a deeper comprehension of how organizational commitment might be achieved, and why some practices may or may not be transferrable from one country to another.

The extant literature does not offer a straight and clear way to help public managers face the challenge of achieving public value through their human resources, since almost every other resource is scarce. As it was shown, the patterns of contribution of an organization's rewarding system, perceived organizational support, perceived managerial support, procedural justice and distributive justice represent a quite complex network, which may vary from country to country, although the problem is the same within the European environment: the current economic recession that, coupled with the changes in public sector culture, force the public employees to be more efficient and flexible, and to endure the strain of lacking the necessary resources to do their job well. Researchers in the public administration field must concentrate on those factors determining job satisfaction, job engagement and organizational commitment to develop a model that overcomes the limitations of NPM and aims for better performance by providing for engaged public employees.

This paper has a number of limitations, the main one being its theoretical nature. To overcome this limitation of an incomplete research, the next step will be to carry out an empirical research that may prove or disprove the theoretical findings on the antecedents and mediators on public employees' job engagement, aiming to improve the motivation and performance of public employees in these times of scarcity. In addition, many researchers have introduced other possible mediating factors such as OCB, and antecedents as teamwork, which may be of interest for future researchers as a complement to this model.

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