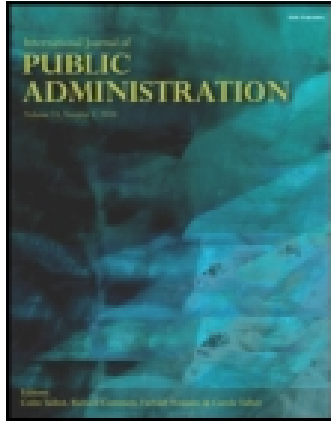


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Comparing Employed and Unemployed Workers' Job Motivations for Sector Choice in East Asia: Does Employment Status Matter?

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Comparing Employed and Unemployed Workers' Job Motivations for Sector Choice in East Asia: Does Employment Status Matter?

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This article seeks to extend the understanding of the varying nature of job motivations on choosing public sector employment by comparing the two different groups of people—the employed and the unemployed—in the context of East Asia. Utilizing a subset of data from the International Social Survey Program on Work Orientation module in 2005, this article examines how eight job motivational aspects correlate with the choice between public and private sector employment. Major findings indicate that there are significant differences in job motivations between people of different employment status. Moreover, public service motivation was not a significant factor of sector choice for the unemployed workers, compared to the employed workers who cited job usefulness to society as a reason to join the public sector employment. Practical implications are presented at the end of the article.

Keywords: job motivations, public service motivation, rewards, sector choice

INTRODUCTION

Scholars argue that public and private organizations differ in such ways as environmental factors, organization-environment transactions, internal structure and processes, employee characteristics, incentive structures, and reporting structures (Blank, 1985; Rainey, Backoff, & Levine, 1976). Previous research mainly focuses on two motivational factors—extrinsic and intrinsic rewards—as potential determinants of career choice between two sectors (Georgellis, Iossa, & Tabvuma, 2011). Scholars generally agree that extrinsic rewards present higher motivating potential for working in the private sector, while intrinsic rewards present higher motivating potential for working in the public sector (Buelens & Van den Broeck, 2007; Lewis & Frank, 2002; Khojasteh, 1993; Rawls & Nelson, 1975; Wright, 2001).

However, whether the extent to which the job motivation factors conceptualized to predict sector choice and organizational behavior in general in western nations is applicable to Asian countries remains debatable. For example, Arthur and

Rousseau's (1996) research shows that employees are willing to shift between sectors. However, research of this nature in the Asian context is almost non-existent. This "practice" by organization scholars to treat various predictors of organizational behavior developed in western nations as universal undermines the development of concepts and theories in other parts of the world. Several scholars share this sentiment. For instance, literature in organization behavior (OB) suggests that East and West are yet to meet (Shenkar, 2004). Despite the recent growing interest on organizations in the East among OB scholars, Shenkar (2004) argues that it still remains more of a testing ground and a sounding board for Western ideas rather than a genuine source of inspiration and innovation in either theory or method. Moreover, despite the many decades of globalization later, most OB scholars still seldom question the universality of the basic frames of reference used in their research (Shenkar, 2004).

This study's main goal is to illuminate our understanding of the motivational correlates of sector choice by comparing the differences between the unemployed and the employed workers in East Asia. This is a particularly timely question considering the ever-growing numbers of the unemployment rate around the world. The next section describes the various backgrounds in the development of public sector and organizations in the Asian context.

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DEVELOPMENT OF THE PUBLIC SECTOR IN ASIA

To better understand the nature of relationship between job motivations and sector choice, it is important to understand the context and the nature of public sector development as well as the recent efforts to reform public sector management throughout the Asia. Research shows that theory and practice of public administration in Asia is considerably behind compared to those in Europe and North America (Haque, 2007). One notable explanation is that the formations of administrative systems in developing countries in Asia have often been based on the imitation western models, with the exception of Japan, although these models had to be adjusted with the indigenous local contexts of these countries (Haque, 1996). Due to the relatively imitative nature of administrative practices, any intellectual tradition that delineates the unique characteristics of public enterprises in Asia is hard to find (Haque, 2007). In addition, concepts, experiences, and theories on job motivations and political institutions in Asia have largely been immersed by those found in various western nations (Haque, 2007). This resemblance of civil service systems between Asian countries and Europe and North America is understandable as they have gone through a similar process of development (Burns & Bowornwathana, 2001). However, this contributes to the lack of behavioral models of organizations unique in the Asian context. This is a problem because, despite the resemblances, there are many variations among Asian countries in terms of their major territorial, demographic, economic, political, and cultural dimensions.

Recently there has been a paradigm shift in administrative theory and practice worldwide in terms of its greater emphasis on businesslike institutions, market competition, customer choice, performance standards, business principles, managerial autonomy, structures, and functions in the public sector. These market-oriented administrative reforms, which began in the 1980s in developed nations like America, Britain, Canada, and New Zealand, are now encapsulated as a new model known as New Public Management or NPM¹ in Asia (Haque, 2007). Consequently, the adoption of various ingredients of the NPM model in developing countries has brought stress on private sector practices into government and managerial efficiencies in the public sector in general, which has reshaped the organizational landscapes in most of Asia (Cheung & Scott, 2003; Manning, 2001).

Previous research posits that most countries in Asia that have embraced the NPM model in various degrees with a view to re-engineering the public sector in order to enhance its efficiency, competition, transparency, customer orientation, and value-for-money (UNDP, 2004). For example, the role of public sector in Asia, which traditionally had focused

on being a leading agent of socioeconomic activities, has now become an enabler or facilitator of service delivery carried out by the private sector (Haque, 2007). However, the NPM model had its skeptics even in the market-friendly Asian countries, due to its challenge to existing bureaucratic authority as well as the perception that the model is less appropriate for the local contexts of these countries (UNDP, 2004). For instance, due to the politicization of the civil service where the administrative system remains vulnerable to vested political interests, re-creation of public sector organizations based on the NPM principles was difficult to proceed in the case of Indonesia. Therefore, it is important for scholars to take into account, although subtle, the differences of state institutions in Asia where the civil service systems are less neutral and more vulnerable to political influence (Burns & Bowornwathana, 2001).

EMPLOYED VS. UNEMPLOYED

Most of the previous research on sector choice use workers in various sectors (i.e., public, private, and nonprofit) or student-based samples (Austin & Cilliers, 2011) for comparing job motivations. This is a problem because, for example, research using university populations and young adults is not reliable as they are expected to go through differing developmental stages and roles different than older adults do, which will affect career decision-making in many different ways over the course of their lifetime (2011). What motivates unemployed workers? Despite the omnipresence of unemployed workers in the job market on a global scale, studies on this particular employment status are rare. Not surprisingly, human resource management professionals in either sector are unprepared to meet the demands of this growing segment of population. This lack of knowledge and understanding is a problem not only for the practice of hiring but also for performance measures.

Scholars are increasingly attempting to broaden the diversity of sampling in sector choice and in organizational research in general. For example, Austin and Cilliers' (2011) study is one of the first in expanding the career choice literature by exploring the career decisions of older, non-student and adult populations using community-based research. Several previous studies have also recognized the importance of using larger community-based research sites (Reed, Lenz, Reardon, & Leierer, 2000) and non-student adult subjects (Austin, Wagner, & Dahl, 2003, 2004; Luzzo, Funk, & Strang, 1996; Sampson, Peterson, Lenz, Reardon, & Saunders, 1996). Against this backdrop, still very little is known about the job motivations among the unemployed workers. Considering the circumstances in which preferences for future employment choice from individuals with paid jobs compared to those searching for jobs without the luxury of present employment to fall back on are drastically different, empirical efforts to examine this phenomenon

¹See Haque (2007) for more details on the major tenets of NPM.

are long overdue. This lack of empirical understanding on unemployed workers' career choices has made public management scholars and human resource management professionals in both public and private sector unable to cope with the growing segment of population in the areas of recruitment, training, and personnel management in general.

In the present empirical analysis, the author analyzes a subset of data from the International Social Survey Program on work orientation conducted in 2005, focusing on four specific countries in East Asia to identify the extrinsic and intrinsic factors that motivate the unemployed workers to choose employment in the public sector.

LITERATURE REVIEW AND HYPOTHESES

Rewards-Based Motivations: An International Context

Scholars recognize the multi-dimensionality of job motivations. For instance, Pinder (1998) posits that work motivation helps explain the work-related behaviors of getting a job, keeping a job, and performing well at one's job. Public management literature makes a distinction between employee motives and work motivations (Lee & Wilkins, 2011). While employee motives are defined as the rewards that attract employees to their jobs, work motivation is defined as the incentive that pushes employees to perform their jobs well within the context of their organizations (Wright, 2007). When selecting a job, individuals seek a career opportunity that best achieves their needs and is most compatible with their values (Lee & Wilkins, 2011). The factors that motivate their job choices are classified largely as extrinsic and intrinsic rewards (Herzberg, Mausner, & Snyderman, 1959; Herzberg et al., 1957; Lawler, 1971). Intrinsic rewards come from within the job and include such elements as recognition, responsibility, autonomy, and personal growth. These intrinsic factors are defined as working for the sake of the work rather than for some detachable outcomes (Ryan & Deci, 2000) and are main sources of choosing to work in the public sector jobs (Rainey, 1982a; Crewson, 1997; Dilulio, 1994; Feeney, 2008; Houston, 2000, 2006; Kim, 2005; Lyons, Duxbury, & Higgins, 2006). In contrast, extrinsic factors are highly related to external sources and involve such job characteristics as pay and job security. These factors together can pull or attract an individual to a particular position because a person seeks to best fit between the organization and himself or herself (Bright, 2008).

Although there is a large body of research comparing the motivations of public and for-profit sectors in western nations, the same cannot be said about the efforts to delineate the differences between the two sectors in Asian context. Moreover, previous research has produced mixed results with respect to how extrinsic factors motivate public and for-profit employees. For example, while numerous studies have found that public employees place less value than

for-profit employees on money as an ultimate goal (Houston, 2000; Jurkiewicz, Massey, & Brown, 1998; Karl & Sutton, 1998; Khojasteh, 1993; Kilpatrick, Cummings, & Jennings, 1964; Porter & Lawler, 1968; Rawls, Ullrich, & Nelson, 1975; Wittmer, 1991), some studies have found no significant differences in the way which public and private sector employees pay attention to (Crewson, 1997; Gabris & Simo, 1995). On the contrary, Crewson (1997) and Wittmer (1991) showed that private sector employees actually care more about job security than public sector employees. These mixed results can be made even more questionable in other parts of the world where the nature of benefits structure is starkly different. For example, benefits in the form of health care packages symbolize the reason why many choose public sector employment in the United States. However, in countries like South Korea, which provides a universal health care coverage to all citizens regardless of where one works for pay, the talk of "benefits" may not only be a non-significant predictor of employment choice, it simply is irrelevant. Although there are subtle differences, expectations are similar in Taiwan where equal access to health care for all citizens is guaranteed with the population coverage reaching 99 percent at the end of 2004 (Fanchiang, 2004) and in Japan where Japanese medical systems covers not only all Japanese citizens free of charge but also for expatriates and even foreigners (Tatara & Okamoto, 2009).

When it comes to intrinsic motivational factors, whether they are viewed as an incentive to attract workers to the public sector organizations has also received mixed findings. For example, while numerous studies cite factors such as performing challenging work and getting recognition at the workplace as an incentive to join the public sector work (Frank & Lewis, 2004; Jurkiewicz, Massey, & Brown, 1998; Khojasteh, 1993), just as many, if not more, studies cite the same incentives as reason to join the private sector organizations (Moore, 2000; Rainey, 2009). Moreover, Tschirhart et al. (2008) argue that those who prefer more challenging and creative work (i.e., entrepreneurial work) are likely to be associated with private employment.

Recognizing the motivational differences and their implications will help management in the public sector organizations in finding a better person-organization fit, therefore improving the recruitment and retention of employees (Bright, 2008; Houston, 2009a). Two main issues are highlighted in this article. First, this article examines the applicability of classical job motivation variables rooted in western nations in Asian context. Second, whether job motivations vary depending on one's employment status is tested between employed and unemployed workers in the region.

Job Security

Previous studies show tendency to bundle various extrinsic factors into one (i.e., pay raise, a promotion, status, and prestige; see, e.g., Westover & Taylor, 2010). However, for

a fuller understanding of the extent to which these factors vary, these elements need to be examined uniquely (see, e.g., Lee & Wilkins, 2011). For instance, Lee and Wilkins' (2011) research on determinants of sector choice between public and nonprofit organizations shows that while opportunity for advancement was a statistically significant predictor of sector choice (for joining the public sector), salary was a non-significant factor.

The term, job security, is defined as the possession of a niche in work, allowing some control over the content of a job, what the worker actually does, and the opportunity he or she has of building a career (ILO, 2001). Previous research classifies job security as an extrinsic factor (Georgellis, Iossa, & Tabvuma, 2010; Lee & Wilkinson, 2011; Westover & Taylor, 2010) and posits that it is likely to be a significant factor for joining the public sector (Georgellis, Iossa, & Tabvuma, 2010; Houston, 2009b; Jurkiewicz, Massey, & Brown, 1998). It also helps that research has shown that public sector workers enjoy significantly longer job tenure (Bender, 1998). Literature is particularly consistent among respondents who are government workers compared to those in nonprofit or in for-profit sector organizations (Blank, 1985). More importantly, according to Houston's (2009b) findings, job security was considered "very important" by 56.3 percent of government employees compared to 30.3 percent for "helping other people" followed by 28.6 percent for "job useful to society," 16.1 percent for "opportunity for advancement," and 15.7 percent for "high income" (Houston, 2009b). Considering the fact that many scholars treat job security as an extrinsic form of reward, it is important to note that people are choosing public sector jobs for extrinsic rewards and not necessarily for intrinsic rewards, which is the commonly held belief in the context of the United States. This is another reason why extrinsic factors must be unbundled and be examined uniquely. The following hypothesis is tested in the study:

H1: Job security is positively associated with the choice of public sector employment.

High Income

While income has been used extensively as a form of intrinsic motivation in public administration research, whether it is a strong predictor of individuals' choice employment between the public and the private sector is not fully conclusive (Lewis & Frank, 2002; Tschirhart et al., 2008; Wright & Christensen, 2007). A contributing factor for the rather conflicting findings is derived from its ability to "crowd out" intrinsic motivation. For instance, although individuals with high levels of intrinsic motivation want to join the public sector in the first place, they may cite income and other extrinsic rewards as the reasoning for switching

to or joining the private sector jobs (Georgellis, Iossa, & Tabvuma, 2010). Consistent with this view, Delfgaauw and Dur (2007, 2008) argue that while income and other extrinsic rewards increase the probability of filling a job vacancy in either sector, they may often reduce the average quality of applicants as employees with lower levels of intrinsic motivation are likely to consider the public sector employment. Similarly, Georgellis et al. (2010) show that individuals who are attracted to income have reduced propensity to accept employment in the public sector.² These findings are noteworthy for further research as different elements of extrinsic motivations seem to act differently. Based on the existing literature, the following hypothesis is tested in the study:

H2: High income is negatively associated with the choice of public sector employment.

Opportunity for Advancement

Research shows that pay is not the only extrinsic motivation that affects individuals' career choices (Judge & Bretz, 1992; Rynes, Gerhart, & Minette, 2004). Increasing numbers of scholars posit that advancement opportunity is one of the most important job attributes leading to a job choice decision (Judge & Bretz, 1992). Recent research by Cummings and Worley (2007) classifies opportunity for advancement as extrinsic form of rewards along with pay, bonuses, and stock options. Lee and Wilkins (2011) posit that public organizations rely heavily on a hierarchical form to monitor the performance of employees and to promote efficiency, which creates a rather clear progression for employees who are motivated by the opportunity to advance to higher levels of the organization. Given the backdrop, it is fitting that public sector employers often use the opportunity for advancement as an incentive to recruit and retain qualified workers (2011).

Similarly, Blank's (1985) findings showed that higher probability of advancement opportunities over the long run exists in the public sector. Opportunity for advancement has been consistently ranked as the most important characteristic of sector choice at least in the context of the United States. For instance, in Reed and Kratchman's (1989) research, students ranked opportunity for growth and self-fulfillment as the top reason, followed by pay, taking responsibility for one's work, and relations with supervisor. In a same fashion, Lathan, Ostrowski, and Pavlock (1987) showed that promotion opportunities were the most important, followed by friendly personnel, high future earnings, training, and continuing professional education programs. In a recent study that examines the motives and explanations for public sector

²Their findings show the "crowding out" effects of income. For instance, results showed that while those in the low level of pay level were significantly affected by income in determining employment sector, those at the highest level of pay level were not significantly impacted by income.

employees' sector switch (Hansen, 2011), findings showed that individuals who value strategic influence in the work are less likely to switch to private sector jobs. In other words, this implies that opportunities for advancement are greater considering the fact that individuals view more opportunities for providing direct input and autonomy in the public sector. Given these findings in the literature, the following hypothesis is tested in the study:

H3: Opportunity for advancement is positively associated with the choice of public sector employment.

Interesting Job

One vital dimension of intrinsic motivations is whether the job itself is interesting. Based on literature that refers to intrinsic motivation as doing something because the task is interesting or enjoyable, this is the heart of the matter when it comes to defining intrinsic motivation (Deci & Ryan, 2000). Although finding an interest in a job may not be a primary drive, it energizes behavior and is vital to human function and therefore facilitates his or her performance in the long run compared to those whose initial attraction to the work is primarily focused on extrinsic rewards (Deci & Ryan, 1985).

Although one's interest in a job is normally considered "job-specific," research shows that choosing an employment sector from which the job derives is of considerable concern. While jobs that are not interesting may be the primary reason for leaving the workplace, the initial stage of choosing a job often relies on the popular belief that is associated with a particular employment sector (i.e., public, for-profit, or non-profit). In fact, one of the most common reasons, other than pay, for leaving an organization is associated with candidates either losing interest in the work or realizing that the job is not what the employee expected to be. While money is considered a short-term motivator, interesting and challenging work is a top motivator in the workplace that is more advantageous to organizations in the long run.

Public management scholars generally agree that public sector workers consider "interesting work" more highly than those in the private sector. For instance, Karl and Sutton's (1998) comparison on job values of workers in the public and private sector organizations, they illustrated that whereas private sector workers ranked "good wages" as highest in importance, public sector workers ranked "interesting work" as highest. Considering that job contents and meaningfulness of the task are important determinants of job satisfaction (Ting, 1997), individuals who value the consequences of "interesting work" are more likely to consider public sector employment. Based on the literature mostly from western nations, the following hypothesis is tested in the study:

H4: Interesting job is positively associated with the choice of public sector employment.

Work Autonomy—Working Independently and Deciding Time of Work

Work autonomy is an important intrinsic motivational factor (Hackman & Oldham, 1980). Autonomy is described as the degree to which a person feels they have freedom and can use their discretion to schedule the work and decide how to complete it (Hackman & Oldham, 1980). According to the Cognitive Evaluation Theory (CET) developed by Deci and Ryan (2000), an individual will not enhance intrinsic motivation unless it is accompanied by a sense of autonomy. Given the pivotal factor that autonomy plays in whether an individual is intrinsically motivated from the standpoint of CET theory at a minimum, it is legitimate that "working independently" be included in the research of this nature (London, 2009).

Previous research shows that having independence in a job gives the employees the feeling that they provide a valuable contribution (Lowe, Levitt, & Wilson, 2008). With the loss of employee autonomy being detrimental to work satisfaction and subjective well-being at work (Green, 2006), individuals often must spend a considerable amount of time before joining the work sector. One recent research supports this sentiment and argues that independence at work is one of the most important factors that makes their work more enjoyable and therefore is an important element in one's choice for work (Lehto & Sutela, 2005).

The literature makes important distinctions that represent two dimensions of work autonomy—task discretion and time management (also known as scheduling autonomy).³ Studies around the world generally agree that although some studies show that task-oriented autonomy is competitive to a degree both in the public and private sector jobs, private sector jobs provide more task discretion while public sector jobs are known to place a heavier burden on scheduling autonomy. For instance, based on studies from western nations, major constraints in public sector organizations are mandates and obligations which significantly limit autonomy and flexibility (Nutt, 2005). Similarly, Bozeman (1987) argues that public sector decision makers have weaker power bases and lack the funds to make investments that reshape systems they manage, compared to private sector managers, which limits their autonomy and flexibility. For example, he argues that a welfare administrator may know how to improve fund disbursement efficiency but have no way to initiate useful changes without petitioning a legislative body

³The past several decades of research on autonomy suggest that autonomy is multi-dimensional. For example, Breugh's (1985) instrument illustrates three distinct types of work autonomy—method autonomy, scheduling autonomy, and criteria autonomy. While the author recognizes the importance of various dimensions of work autonomy, the current study focuses on unbundling the unique dimensions of "extrinsic rewards." It is suggested that the term in this article generally represents "independence" of work that promotes professionalism and responsibility without supervision and therefore, one or more dimensions of work autonomy is implied in this item.

for funding to develop the idea, which results in fewer investments to uncover alternatives than those found in private sector organizations.

Similar arguments are reflected in international studies. For instance, in a study comparing public and private sector organizations in their work culture and resulting human resource management practices in the context of India, autonomy was significantly higher in the private sector than it was in the public sector (Mathur et al., 1996). More specifically in the case of India, given the excessive bureaucratization and emphasis on rules and regulations in the public sector (Sinha, 1973), employees' lack of willingness to take responsibility (Elhance & Agarwal, 1975), inefficiency and lack of autonomy in the decision-making process (Krishna, 1981; Nigam, 1971), and a lack of well-defined criteria for performance appraisal (Khandwalla, 1990), it is fitting that individuals who value work autonomy are more likely to choose jobs in the private sector. Therefore, the following hypotheses are tested in this study:

- H5:** Working independently is negatively associated with the choice of working in the public sector.
- H6:** Deciding time of work is negatively associated with the choice of working in the public sector.

Public Service Motivation—Helping Other People and a Job Useful to Society

Perry (1996) defines public service motivation (PSM) as “an individual’s predisposition to respond to motives grounded primarily or uniquely in public institutions.” One prominent argument on PSM notes that if values associated with the public sector are attractive to individuals, hiring these individuals helps to overcome incentive problems in the public sector (Georgellis, Iossa, & Tabvuma, 2010). Several scholars provide a clear distinction in the literature between PSM and intrinsic motivation (i.e., see Grant, 2008) although some studies show that PSM can be enhanced by the presence of intrinsic motivation (Georgellis, Iossa, & Tabvuma, 2010).

Numerous empirical studies support the argument that individuals with a relatively high level of PSM are more likely to choose public sector employment than those with a low degree of PSM. Research shows that public sector employees place higher values on service to society as opposed to monetary rewards than private managers do (Crewson, 1997; Guyot, 1962; Kilpatrick, Cummings, & Jennings, 1964; Rainey, 1982b; Warner et al., 1963). For example, Lewis and Frank (2002) show that public sector employees have high levels of PSM, while the impact is most significant for college graduates and teachers jobs. Research also recognizes that while PSM does not predict that an individual’s first job will be in the public sector, it increases the probability that future employment will be in the public sector (Wright & Christensen, 2007). This suggests that those

who are among the unemployed and are looking for a new position are likely to prefer working in the public sector. Against this backdrop, the following hypotheses are tested in this study:

- H7:** Individuals who find helping other people to be highly valuable are more likely than others to consider working in the public sector.
- H8:** Individuals who find usefulness of the job to the society to be highly valuable are more likely than others to consider working in the public sector.

DATA AND METHODOLOGY

Sample

This study uses the third wave of datasets from the International Social Survey Program (ISSP) on work orientations module in 2005. The ISSP data collection applies a multi-stage stratified random-sampling method to select adults in each country. Since this study focuses on comparing the job motivations as determinants of sector choice between the employed and the unemployed workers in East Asia, only the respondents who participated from the countries in that region were taken into account. Individuals selected as “employed” were the respondents who indicated at the time of the survey that they were working for pay (regardless of the status of employment, i.e., full-time, part-time). All others were treated as “unemployed.”⁴ The number of unemployed workers were 564 (Philippines), 347 (Japan), 834 (Taiwan), and 712 (South Korea), for a total of 2,457. The number of employed workers were 636 (Philippines), 570 (Japan), 1337 (Taiwan), and 901 (South Korea), for a total of 3,444.

Measurements

The dependent variable of employment choice in sector was measured by respondents choosing between two different work types—“working in private business” and “working for government or civil service.” Working for government or civil service” is coded as 1 while “working in private business” is coded as 0. In order to make the distinction between the employed and the unemployed, respondents were asked the following question: “Are you currently working for pay?” Respondents who identified themselves with “Yes” were coded as 1, while others with “No” were coded as 0.

⁴Literature often distinguishes the different characteristics of individuals by employment status (i.e., full-time, part-time). Therefore, while grouping and treating all individuals currently working for pay as employed may not be a realistic control group to compare against those without employment, the author focuses on whether the difference in pay (i.e., working for pay vs. not working) provides a different environment.

Regarding extrinsic motivation factors, the respondents were asked to rate how important

- (1) job security,
- (2) high income, and
- (3) good opportunities for advancement are on a scale of 1 (not important at all) to 5 (very important).

To measure intrinsic motivation factors, the respondents were also asked how important the following statements are on a scale of 1 (not important at all) to 5 (very important):

- (1) "How important [do you personally think] is it to have a job that is interesting?"
- (2) "How important [do you personally think] is it to have a job that allows someone to work independently?"
- (3) "How important [do you personally think] is it to have a job that allows someone to decide their times or days of work?"

Public service motivation (PSM) was measured by asking the respondents to rate how important the following statements are on a scale of 1 (not important at all) to 5 (very important):

- (1) "How important [do you personally think] is it to have a job that allows someone to help other people?"
- (2) "How important [do you personally think] is it to have a job that is useful to society?"⁵

Preference for different kinds of jobs (being self-employed (coded as 1) versus being an employee), size of organization (large firm (coded as 1) versus small firm), gender (female), age, education,⁶ and number of persons in household were also included as control variables. While studies that link preference for self-employment to a sector choice are rare, a recent international study suggests that self-employment is often linked to individuals with entrepreneurial intentions (The Gallup Organization, 2009).

⁵The author acknowledges that this is not a sufficient proxy for measuring PSM. For example, Perry (1996) proxies PSM by survey questions focusing on attraction to policy making, commitment to public interest, compassion, and self-sacrifice, whereas Feeny (2008) uses responses to the question about the importance of "... the ability to serve the public and the public interest ... in making your decision to take a job at your current organization." Although items that measure an element of altruistic, prosocial or other regarding behavior are more ideal for PSM (Georgellis, Iossa, & Tabvuma, 2010), such measures were not available in the ISSP data. However, several scholars used such similar items as "helping other people" and "job that is useful to society" (Crewson, 1997; Lewis & Frank, 2002; Tschirhart et al., 2008; Westover & Taylor, 2010). This article follows the latter.

⁶To make sure that education categories are consistent throughout the countries used in this study, the following format was used: "No formal qualification (0)," "Lowest formal qualification (1)," "Above lowest qualification (2)," "Higher secondary completed (3)," "Above higher secondary level (4)," "University degree completed (5)."

On the other hand, according to the report by the Gallup Organization (2009), people are likely to cite "regular and fixed income" and "stability of employment" as the main reason for preferring to be an employee rather than to be self-employed. These characteristics are similar to the benefits that are cited as incentives for joining the public sector. Respondents from the Gallup report (2009) also concluded that people in EU countries viewed both self-employment and entrepreneurs as facilitators of job creation and new inventions that are primarily associated with private sector characteristics. While the literature does not link people's preference for large organizations directly to sector choice, one European study shows that the association between job security and the choice of working in the public sector is stronger in large organizations (Gallup Organization, 2009).

Sector choice studies around the globe generally suggest that several demographic controls may affect an individual's job choice (Boudreau et al., 2001; Christofides & Pashardes, 2002; Judge & Bretz, 1992). For instance, one study shows that those with at least two years of college and beyond are more likely to choose public sector employment while also preferring to be an employee over being self-employed (Christofides & Pashardes, 2002). The same study also showed that those with children are more likely to choose public sector employment, while people over the age of 40 were also more likely than those younger to consider public organizations.⁷ Table 1 summarizes the distribution of the various job motivation measures along with control variables used in this analysis.

FINDINGS

Descriptive Statistics

Regarding demographics for the survey respondents from the Philippines, Japan, Taiwan, and South Korea, Table 1 shows that while variations exist among the countries, larger share of females were represented among the unemployed workers than those among the employed (Unemployed, mean = 0.66; Employed, mean = 0.41). Mean age among the unemployed workers was also higher (mean = 49.2) compared to the employed workers (mean = 42.2). Education level and persons in household were generally higher among the employed workers (Education, mean = 3.19; Number of persons in household, mean = 4.13). The difference in the number of household, however, was not statistically

⁷It is important to note the changing influence of gender and education on sector choice. For instance, while studies in the 1980s or before often portrayed gender as having no significant effect on employees' working in the public sector (Blank, 1985), recent studies show that women are not only the majority at many levels of government but are also heavily represented in middle and senior management positions in the public sector (McMahon et al., 2006).

TABLE 1
Descriptive Statistics of Employed and Unemployed Workers

		Unemployed					Employed				
		Country					Country				
		Philippines	Japan	Taiwan	S. Korea	All	Philippines	Japan	Taiwan	S. Korea	All
job security***	Mean	4.53	4.12	4.36	4.49	4.41	4.59	4.14	4.46	4.61	4.47
	S.D.	0.676	0.802	0.706	0.62	0.702	0.647	0.863	0.644	0.555	0.68
high income	Mean	4.6	3.94	3.81	4.31	4.16	4.65	3.94	3.93	4.35	4.17
	S.D.	0.606	0.767	0.821	0.719	0.804	0.576	0.86	0.804	0.647	0.79
opportunity for advancement**	Mean	4.44	3.05	3.8	4.31	4	4.45	2.76	3.82	4.42	3.92
	S.D.	0.666	0.992	0.821	0.712	0.904	0.68	1.019	0.893	0.716	1.02
interesting job***	Mean	4.2	3.87	4	4.42	4.15	4.28	3.97	4.23	4.47	4.26
	S.D.	0.793	0.811	0.791	0.725	0.8	0.753	0.809	0.716	0.691	0.75
work independently***	Mean	4.12	3.13	3.3	3.71	3.59	4.22	3.13	3.55	3.96	3.72
	S.D.	0.839	0.988	0.876	0.937	0.969	0.799	1.009	0.851	0.876	0.95
decide time of work**	Mean	3.76	3.49	3.73	3.73	3.71	3.91	3.43	3.81	3.84	3.77
	S.D.	1.025	0.909	0.855	0.949	0.935	0.954	0.945	0.865	0.947	0.93
help other people*	Mean	4.1	3.75	3.88	4.08	3.97	4.18	3.75	3.98	4.13	4.02
	S.D.	0.813	0.777	0.676	0.784	0.765	0.803	0.844	0.648	0.761	0.76
a job useful to society*	Mean	4.11	3.9	3.96	4.17	4.05	4.17	3.88	4.04	4.21	4.08
	S.D.	0.781	0.745	0.663	0.737	0.731	0.784	0.806	0.648	0.77	0.74
Choice between jobs (1 = being self-employed, 0 = being an employee)*	Mean	0.81	0.29	0.49	0.62	0.58	0.83	0.38	0.51	0.68	0.6
	S.D.	0.396	0.453	0.5	0.485	0.494	0.372	0.486	0.5	0.467	0.49
Firm size (1 = large firm, 0 = small firm)	Mean	0.73	0.64	0.57	0.66	0.64	0.73	0.54	0.61	0.65	0.63
	S.D.	0.442	0.481	0.496	0.473	0.479	0.446	0.499	0.488	0.478	0.48
Female***	Mean	0.68	0.66	0.58	0.73	0.66	0.34	0.46	0.43	0.4	0.41
	S.D.	0.467	0.473	0.494	0.445	0.475	0.474	0.499	0.496	0.49	0.49
Age***	Mean	40.83	60.73	52.18	46.72	49.2	42.68	47.73	39.16	42.97	42.2
	S.D.	17.107	20.45	20.295	19.994	20.52	13.211	14.99	11.928	13.134	13.4
Education***	Mean	2.62	2.59	2.17	2.74	2.5	2.75	3.31	3.21	3.39	3.19
	S.D.	1.405	1.345	1.601	1.566	1.532	1.541	1.219	1.314	1.455	1.4
Number in household	Mean	5.29	3.17	4.71	3.01	4.13	5.14	3.63	4.66	3.15	4.19
	S.D.	2.499	1.646	3.929	1.391	2.921	2.463	1.557	2.197	1.305	2.1

*Significant differences between unemployed and employed workers at $p < .1$; **Significant at $p < .01$; ***Significant at $p < .001$.

significant between the two groups. In terms of the respondents preferring to be self-employed, both the unemployed and the employed slightly preferred to be self-employed (Unemployed, mean = 0.58; Employed, mean = 0.6). The respondents also generally preferred working in a large firm (Unemployed, mean = 0.64; Employed, mean = 0.63).

Regarding the study variables, Table 1 shows that the employed workers generally showed higher scores in both extrinsic and intrinsic factors and PSM, except for the “opportunity for advancement” where the mean value for the unemployed workers was 4, compared to 3.92 among the employed workers. Statistically significant differences in mean scores between the unemployed and the employed workers were observed in all intrinsic motivation factors and PSM. Most of the items under extrinsic motivation factors showed statistically significant difference by employment status, except for the “high income” category where no statistically significant difference was observed between the unemployed and the employed workers. This sketchy description of demographic and motivational differences suggests that there may be significant differences between

the employed and the unemployed workers. Correlations among the study variables are shown in Table 2.

Logistic Regression Result

As previously described above, this study uses three broad categories of independent variables—namely, extrinsic and intrinsic rewards, and PSM—which may have an influence on the dependent variable. The variables were drawn largely from the literature. However, that the objective of this study was not to explain some modalities of choosing to work in the public and private sector employment but to identify variables associated with the way in which different people (by employment status) choose a career choice. The general hypothesis for this study suggests that the choice of workplace between the public and private sector may be influenced by a range of factors relating to the individuals who seek future jobs. Another goal is to examine whether the significance (or insignificance) of the factors believed to be related to sector choice varies between people

TABLE 2
Inter-Correlation Results

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
Choice between different work types (1 = Govt or civil service, 0 = Private)															
Respondent currently working for pay (1 = Yes, 0 = No)	-.078**														
Job security	.067**	.047**													
High income	.009	.011	.377**												
Opportunity for advancement	.038**	-.037**	.365**	.449**											
Interesting job	-.029*	.071**	.284**	.240**	.403**										
Work independently	-.063**	.064**	.243**	.271**	.375**	.356**									
Decide time of work	-.022	.035**	.200**	.192**	.231**	.279**	.369**								
help other people	-.035*	.033*	.238**	.172**	.309**	.377**	.422**	.335**							
Job useful to society	-.007	.024	.246**	.172**	.278**	.365**	.342**	.345**	.721**						
Choice between different kinds of jobs (1 = being self-employed, 0 = being an employee)	-.134**	.022	.045**	.154**	.194**	.052**	.175**	.106**	.070**	.055**					
Choice between kinds of firms (1 = large firm, 0 = small firm)	.249**	-.013	.059**	.149**	.173**	.065**	.045**	-.002	.027	.035*	-.046**				
Sex (1 = Female, 0 = Male)	.096**	-.243**	-.023	.002	-.023	-.012	-.026	.043**	.009	.01	-.104**	-.006			
R: Age	.078**	-.202**	-.103**	-.075**	-.202**	-.209**	-.091**	-.069**	-.017	.006	.007	-.054**	.019		
R: Education level	-.068**	.229**	.072**	.014	.130**	.233**	.085**	.068**	.067**	.064**	-.057**	.096**	-.092**	-.473**	
Number of persons in household	-.01	.011	.021	.022	.057**	-.008	.044**	.025	.016	-.004	.059**	.015	-.009	-.163**	-.0023

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

*Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

of different employment background (unemployed vs. employed).

Table 3 shows the results of the binary logistic regression analysis used in this study. Overall, as shown in aggregate results in the last column of the table, job security was positively associated with public sector for both unemployed ($p < .001$) and employed workers ($p < .01$). This trend, however, was not true for all four countries. In fact, Taiwan was the only country where the importance of job security was significantly associated with public sector employment for both groups, while the unemployed workers in the Philippines treated job security as having a significant influence on the dependent variable ($p < .1$). Aggregate results also showed that while high income ($p < .05$) was negatively associated with public sector employment among the unemployed workers, statistically significant relationship was not observed among the employed workers despite achieving the negative relationship as hypothesized. High income, however, was positively associated with public sector choice among the employed workers ($p < .1$) in Japan.

A statistically significant difference was observed in opportunity for advancement between unemployed and employed workers as show in the aggregate column in Table 3. For instance, opportunity for advancement was positively associated with public sector job for the employed workers, while the hypothesis was partially supported in which the direction was positive but it did not achieve the minimum threshold ($p < .1$) to be statistically significant. Overall, job security and high income were shown to be statistically significant predictors of sector choice for the unemployed workers. Opportunity for advancement was not a significant predictor of sector choice for the same group.

Regarding intrinsic factors, differences were noticeable by both country and employment status. For instance, the aggregate column shows that having an interesting job ($p < .1$) is positively associated with public sector for the unemployed workers, while it was negatively associated ($p < .01$) with public sector job for the employed workers. There are some distinctive country differences—for instance, interesting job was negatively associated with public sector among the employed workers in both Philippines ($p < .01$) and Taiwan ($p < .01$). In contrast, interesting job ($p < .05$) was a positive factor among the unemployed workers in South Korea. Working independently was considered a negative factor for both groups ($p < .01$ for unemployed; $p < .1$ for employed) as shown in the aggregate column. This trend, however, was not observed when examined for each country separately. Consistent across the countries and by employment status, “deciding time of work” was not a significant predictor of sector choice. Overall, working independently was a negative predictor of public sector employment for both the unemployed and the employed workers, while job interesting was considered differently between unemployed (positive) and employed (negative) workers.

As for the public service motivation variables, based on the aggregate results, neither helping other people nor

job being useful to society was a significant factor of sector choice for the unemployed workers. This trend among the unemployed workers was also true for all four countries. Among the employed workers, while helping other people ($p < .1$) was regarded as a negative factor for choosing public sector employment, job’s usefulness to society ($p < .1$) was considered to be a positive factor for joining the public sector employment. Overall, unemployed workers in general regarded either element of public service motivation as non-significant factor, while the employed workers regarded them as significant predictors of sector choice. Concerning people’s general preferences of different types and size of organizations, the results were consistent across the countries. For instance, the respondents generally regarded preference for self-employment as a negative factor (Unemployed, $p < .001$; Employed, $p < .001$) for public sector employment. On the other hand, respondents generally regarded their preference for working in a large firm as a positive influence for choosing public sector employment (Unemployed, $p < .001$; Employed, $p < .001$). Among the demographic control variables, females were more likely to consider public sector employment as shown in the aggregate column, while education was negatively associated with public sector job.

DISCUSSION

The findings of this study are subject to a few caveats. First, literature distinguishes on a variety of characteristics between full-time and part-time workers or between full-time and voluntary workers. Therefore, the current results due to the grouping of some employment statuses can be improved. Second, the measures used here are perceptual rather than objective; a more complete analysis would require additional data to account for different dimensions of job motivation variables. Third, this study is based on limited survey data collected in 2005. In order to conduct a rigorous comparative study on employment choice, long-term studies need to be considered while developing additional measurement tools on sector choice. The current study based on the non-panel nature of data can be a problem as the direction of causality among the variables cannot be examined as easily as might be possible with panel longitudinal data (Westover & Taylor, 2010). Fourth, caution is warranted as data collected from self-completed survey such as this can also suffer from common method variance (Westover & Taylor, 2010). Despite these limitations, as one of the first studies of its kind in public management literature, this research establishes a general baseline of how people of different labor background can choose jobs differently. Also, the exploratory nature of the present study establishes the foundation upon which future debate can be discussed and empirically analyzed.

This study found that there are similarities as well as differences between people with different employment status

TABLE 3
Logit Models for Sector Choice by Employment Status and Country

	Philippines			South Korea			Taiwan			Japan			All						
	Unemployed		Employed	Unemployed		Employed	Unemployed		Employed	Unemployed		Employed	Unemployed		Employed				
	B	S.E.	B	S.E.	B	S.E.	B	S.E.	B	S.E.	B	S.E.	B	S.E.	B	S.E.			
Job security	0.357*	0.19	-0.083	0.17	0.283	0.18	0.129	0.15	0.409*	0.17	0.518***	0.12	-0.214	0.3	0.315***	0.09	0.211**	0.07	
High income	0.019	0.23	-0.047	0.21	-0.122	0.16	0.094	0.13	0.036	0.14	0.105	0.1	0.257	0.32	-0.182*	0.08	-0.045	0.06	
Advancement	-0.053	0.21	0.509*	0.21	-0.261	0.19	0.187	0.14	0.172	0.15	-0.083	0.09	-0.138	0.22	0.11	0.08	0.125*	0.05	
Interesting job	-0.034	0.19	-0.548**	0.17	0.454*	0.19	-0.165	0.14	-0.086	0.15	-0.289**	0.11	0.356	0.27	0.157*	0.08	-0.171**	0.07	
Working independently	-0.138	0.17	-0.064	0.16	-0.049	0.14	0.021	0.11	-0.058	0.12	-0.12	0.09	-0.166	0.2	-0.196**	0.07	-0.094*	0.05	
Deciding time of work	-0.052	0.12	-0.078	0.12	0.093	0.12	0.021	0.1	0.111	0.12	-0.068	0.08	-0.199	0.23	0.06	0.06	-0.025	0.05	
Helping other people	-0.323	0.2	-0.268	0.19	0.038	0.19	-0.168	0.17	-0.158	0.22	-0.322*	0.14	-0.16	0.36	0.723**	0.24	-0.152*	0.08	
Job useful to society	0.327	0.2	0.124	0.19	-0.261	0.2	0.101	0.16	-0.003	0.22	0.312*	0.14	-0.456	0.38	-0.388*	0.23	0.14*	0.08	
Preferred employment	-0.589*	0.25	-0.551*	0.24	-0.592**	0.22	-0.63**	0.18	-0.078	0.2	-0.195	0.14	-1.565**	0.45	-0.498***	0.34	-0.51***	0.09	
(1 = being self-employed)																			
Size of firm	0.807**	0.24	0.756**	0.22	1.572***	0.21	1.489***	0.16	1.271***	0.2	1.137***	0.14	1.621***	0.46	1.154***	0.33	1.092***	0.09	
Gender	-0.052	0.22	0.058	0.2	0.637**	0.22	0.292*	0.17	0.775***	0.2	0.351*	0.14	0.987*	0.44	0.422***	0.11	0.297***	0.08	
Age	0**	0.01	-0.016*	0.01	0.003	0.01	0.007	0.01	0.028***	0.01	0.017*	0.01	0.046***	0.01	0.012***	0	0.002	0	
Education	-0.095	0.08	-0.091	0.07	-0.096	0.09	-0.001	0.07	0.001	0.09	-0.21**	0.06	-0.199	0.15	0.024	0.12	-0.08*	0.03	
Household	-0.048	0.04	0.016	0.04	-0.082	0.08	0.087	0.06	0.032	0.04	0.06*	0.03	0.311*	0.15	0.199*	0.09	0.009	0.02	
N	447		531		592		832		607		1971		179		308		2,742		
Pseudo R ²	0.082		0.108		0.218		0.2		0.213		0.173		0.417		0.376		0.147		0.126

* Significant differences between unemployed and employed workers at p < .1; ** Significant at p < .01; *** Significant at p < .001.

(employed vs. unemployed) in the job motivation factors affecting sector choice for employment. One of the main findings from this study were the clear differences in public service motivation where it played a non-significant role on sector choice for the unemployed workers, compared to the employed workers who regarded helping others and job's usefulness to society as significant contributors of sector choice.

Some distinct differences between the countries in East Asia and the United States (see Appendix) should also be noted. For instance, unemployed workers in the United States regarded job's usefulness to society as a positive factor for considering public sector employment. Also, while helping other people was regarded as a negative factor for choosing public sector employment in Asian countries, the same did not receive statistical significance in the United States. These results are alarming as well as surprising because previous research indicates that people's trust in government is the highest compared to Latin America, Africa, and Northern Europe (Bratton, Chu, Lagos, & Rose, 2005). Kim (2010) suggests that trust in government is correlated with government's performance (i.e., standard of living, economy, quality of public services) and empowerment (i.e., official attention to citizen input). Given this backdrop, the notion that the respondents in East Asia preferred other sectors (nonprofit and for-profit agencies) for helping others suggests that the perception of what government ought to do may be interpreted differently in Asia compared to its meaning in western nations. This may not be a reflection of negative image of their government; rather, citizens in Asian countries may simply consider, for example, nonprofit organizations to be the symbol of humanitarian efforts.

Is the PSM construct universally accepted? The answer is both yes and no. For instance, while the geographic scope of the research on public service motivation has expanded beyond the U.S. border and into Europe and Australia (Perry & Hondeghem, 2008), the results of studies of whether research on PSM is equally successful on such outcome variables as job satisfaction, performance, and employment choice in the context of Asia has been inconsistent at best. While one recent study shows efforts to develop a measurement instrument for PSM for cross-national research and comparison (Kim et al., 2011), the results found in their study were based on local government employees only. They recognize that the results might be different when surveying central government employees or other specific groups in the public sector.⁸ Other scholars have attempted to extend the research to such geographic contexts as Western Europe

(Castaing, 2006; Steijn, 2006; Vandenabeele & Hondeghem, 2004), Southern Europe (Camilleri, 2006, 2007; Cerase & Farinella, 2006), and most recently to Asia (Choi, 2004; Kim, 2005; Turner & Halligan, 1999). Most studies in general admit that the factorial structure of the measurement instrument is likely to differ across countries (Castaing, 2006; Vandenabeele, 2006; Vandenabeele & Hondeghem, 2004) as well as the values associated with public service motivation which is also likely to be different across regional settings (Norris, 2003).

Another interesting finding was that while there were more similarities than differences between the Asian countries and the United States on extrinsic factors, there were stark differences when it came to comparing the effects of intrinsic factors for sector choice. The difference between employed and unemployed workers may in part be affected by the lack of transparency in government in Asia. For instance, although the potential implications beyond the results of the study are limited, one could argue that unemployed workers are significantly limited in understanding what goes on inside the public bureaucracies in Asian governments. In that regard, people's inclination to view government work "interesting" may derive from their curiosity to know more about the public sector. Also, similar to the results comparing the effects of public service motivation factors in Asia and the United States, the respondents in Asia were more likely to consider other sectors for employment when considering working independently.

CONCLUSION

This article illustrates how one's job motivation is affected depending on his or her employment background in regards to the choice of employment. Moreover, this article demonstrates that job motivation is likely to change depending on the cultural context. While this study is one of the first in examining the different effects of employment background on sector preference rather broadly at a macro level, the variations observed by country among Asian countries suggest that more systematic development of instruments that can explain the unique and even subtle differences in job motivations will help enhance our current understanding of the sector preferences and the nature of organizations more broadly. As discussed and implied previously, more systematic understanding the nature of citizens' trust in government, views of their citizenship, and views towards the role of government may help us connect the dots in the current gap of knowledge between job motivations and sector preference. On a practical note, understanding these job motivation factors for the unemployed workers can also help organizations to better recruit those whose characteristics match their mission and goals. Also, with emphasis in the Asian context, more efforts for promoting transparency between government and the public may help lessen the

⁸Kim et al. (2011) argue that because of potential impact of the same bias that needs to be considered, survey items measuring PSM should be examined with different samples in various areas and at different government levels. This also implies that PSM is likely to differ among people in different employment status (i.e., full/part-time & employed/self-employed/unemployed).

misunderstanding and gap between the employed workers and unemployed workers. Although beyond the scope of this research, another potential fruitful area of research that was not examined here is that the previous employment sector among the unemployed workers may provide a more accurate assessment of the relationship between job motivations and sector choice.

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APPENDIX

Logistic Model of Sector Choice in United States by Employment Status

	United States					
	Unemployed			Employed		
	B	S.E.	Sig.	B	S.E.	Sig.
Job security	0.32	0.164	0.051	0.201	0.119	0.091
High income	0.006	0.144	0.968	-0.012	0.1	0.905
Opportunity for advancement	0.069	0.16	0.667	0.189	0.113	0.094
Interesting job	-0.092	0.177	0.605	-0.061	0.134	0.649
Working independently	-0.176	0.136	0.196	0.052	0.102	0.614
Deciding time of work	0.077	0.112	0.495	-0.045	0.075	0.551
Helping other people	-0.109	0.194	0.575	-0.118	0.137	0.387
Job useful to society	0.377	0.188	0.045	0.275	0.136	0.043
Preferred employment (1 = being self-employed)	-0.092	0.224	0.68	-0.366	0.16	0.022
Preferred size of firm (1 = large firm)	0.996	0.225	0.000	0.759	0.159	0.000
Gender (female)	0.279	0.233	0.23	0.225	0.151	0.136
Age	0.004	0.006	0.561	-0.008	0.007	0.249
Education Level	-0.019	0.09	0.832	-0.047	0.066	0.478
Number of persons in household	-0.066	0.09	0.463	0.128	0.054	0.018
N		454			941	
Pseudo R ²		0.115			0.099	