

## RESEARCH ARTICLE OPEN ACCESS

# Unveiling the Relationship Between Cultural Values and Public (Dis)Value: The Mediation Role of Corruption Perception and Citizen Trust

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## ABSTRACT

In recent years, much emphasis has been placed in the literature on understanding the dynamics by which public value is created and destroyed, by analyzing how cultural values contribute to these dynamics. This paper aims to explore the mediation role of corruption perception and citizen trust in explaining the relationship between cultural values and public value destruction or public dis/value. The results of this work should explain why similar public initiatives could generate or destroy public value. Partial least square-based structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM) was used to empirically examine the mediation effect of the perception of corruption and citizen trust in explaining the relationship between cultural values and public value destruction. The authors consider the public initiatives to fight the pandemic in EU countries as these measures determine the dyadic tension between the public and private constellation. Findings show that power distance and indulgence determine public dis/value, positively and negatively, respectively. Furthermore, the corruption perception and citizen trust mediate the relationship between cultural values and public dis/value. This work determines a further step for research by identifying the role that cultural dimensions play in the generation of public value. More specifically, governments must consider their own cultural values when they implement initiatives that can impact private interests. In this case, similar initiatives can create public value in some contexts and destroy it in others.

## 1 | Introduction

Scholars in public management have brought in the concept of “public value” (Moore 1995; O’Flynn 2021), highlighting the significance of managers in attaining effectiveness and efficiency goals in public policy implementation (Stoker 2006; O’Flynn 2021; Mazzucato and Ryan-Collins 2022). The public management literature proposed that actions directed toward generating public value were inherently valuable

(Parker et al. 2023). The notion of public value was first articulated by Moore (1995) and is grounded in three critical components: the first pertains to how public activities deliver value to service users, stakeholders, and the general populace; the second involves the ability of public administration to secure resources and derive authority and legitimacy from political engagement; and the third focuses on the performance of public administration, institutions, and services in terms of efficiency and effectiveness, the development of

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service ecosystems, and the pursuit of societal enhancement. Furthermore, the author introduced the ideas of public value that were later expanded upon by Osborne et al. (2016), Crosby et al. (2017), Bryson et al. (2017), de Jong et al. (2017), and Hartley et al. (2019). Recently, there has been a rise in critical perspectives on public value creation processes, resulting in the development of the concept of “dis/value” (Esposito and Ricci 2015; Cluley et al. 2020; Cui and Osborne 2022). The destruction of public value represents a failure of the efforts of various actors to satisfy the needs of society (Bozeman 2002; Esposito and Ricci 2014, 2015; Cluley et al. 2020; Cui and Osborne 2022). As noted by Parker et al. (2023), the person designated to undertake these tasks concerning public service is of significant importance. Earlier, Bozeman (2007) asserted that public values include the rights and responsibilities of citizens, which are critical for ensuring effective governance. Moreover, public disvalue refers to the shortcomings and inefficiencies in processes designed to generate public value (Cluley et al. 2020; Cui and Osborne 2022). In spite of the importance of this topic, previous studies have only given limited focus to it (Van de Walle 2016). According to literary works, the concept of public value destruction refers to actions that diminish value instead of enhancing it. Furthermore, Parker et al. (2023) reveal in their literature review that the idea of “public dis/value” is linked to a range of terms that are used interchangeably, including “public value destruction,” “public value loss,” “value failure,” and “destroyed value.” Prior to delving into the conceptualization of public disvalue, it is important to establish the definition of public value. Plé (2017) and other researchers emphasize the importance of linking the value creation concept with the concept of benefiting citizens. Hence, the endogenous mechanism models when a value-creating action is shared; in one and the same breath, it can bring benefits to large masses of people (Ricci et al. 2023). On the other hand, those who benefit have different degrees and qualities of using such uneven an audience (Cluley and Radnor 2020; Torfing et al. 2021). In other words, public value annihilation refers to any enterprise whatsoever that harms at least one kind of citizen (Cluley and Radnor 2020).

Several scholars, including the reasonable Cui and Osborne et al. (2022) and the monikers of Parker et al. (2023), have pointed out that research in this field has so far been in an “embryonic” stage (Cui and Aulton 2023). In fact, since Bozeman’s (2002) seminal work, a limited number of scholars have examined the factors influencing the various strands of literature concerning the destruction of public value within a relatively brief and contemporary timeframe (Engen et al. 2021; Cui and Osborne 2022). The authors agree with scholars who study how public value is destroyed, in that this work is open and transparent (Bozeman and Sarewitz 2005). This logic is based upon the analysis of individual user satisfaction (Plé and Chumpitaz-Cáceres 2010; Engen et al. 2021), which contrasts with an even further extension of the popular social impact hypothesis for public services (Bellé 2014). This conceptualization of public value was also picked by the authors in line with the spirit of this study. The research aims to find out which factors cause public value as well as costs to be met by citizens.

This work represents a contribution to the literature on public management, as it is one of the first empirical studies dealing

with public disvalue through the analysis of a European sample. At the basis of this research idea, there is the joint consideration of various variables like Hofstede’s cultural values, corruption perception, and citizen trust in public administration. In this study, the authors consider public dis/value as discussed by Kim (2017), Peerthum and Luckho (2021), and Elia (2022). In fact, Kim’s (2017) study analyzes the relationship between Hofstede’s cultural values and motivation for public service, whereas the study by Peerthum and Luckho (2021) analyses the mechanisms that determine the perception of corruption and public trust. Finally, Elia (2022) shows that the relationship between Hofstede’s cultural values and pro-environmental behavior is moderated by citizen trust in public administration. Therefore, this work aims to identify how cultural values, the perception of corruption, and citizen trust in public institutions impact the creation/destruction of created/destroyed public value. This is achieved by implementing an empirical analysis of the data collected by the Eurobarometer. The data used are those that the Eurobarometer collected through a survey launched in 27 EU countries to assess the attitude of the European population towards the Coronavirus pandemic (European Parliament, Directorate-General for Communication, Public Opinion Monitoring Unit 2021a, 2021b). The Eurobarometer data are fundamental for this work. In fact, the survey collected many interesting topics: satisfaction with the national government’s measures to combat the Coronavirus pandemic, differential views on the consequences of restriction measures in their own country, opinions on the trade-off between health benefits and economic damage related to restrictions, solidarity between EU Member States in combating the Coronavirus pandemic, and the degree of awareness and satisfaction with the measures taken by the EU to respond to the Coronavirus pandemic.

The Eurobarometer collected this data in two rounds, in fact the authors decided to conduct the empirical analysis in Round 2 and use Round 3 to test the robustness of the empirical model. In addition, the authors have integrated the data set with the data provided by the OECD on citizen trust and perception of corruption. The empirical model implemented is PLS-SEM (Leguina 2015; Hair et al. 2022), which is one of the evolutions of the SEM model. PLS-SEM is not only a “methodology suitable for estimating and testing a network of relationships between measured variables and latent constructs” (Suhr 2006, 1) such as SEM, but it also has the advantage of implementing a hierarchical model with repeated use of manifest variables (Tenenhaus et al. 2005). This makes it possible to obtain a latent variable that contains all the indicators below. Consequently, PLS-SEM allows the use of latent variable scores calculated for lower-order constructs as manifest variables for higher-order latent variables (Tenenhaus et al. 2005).

Empirical analysis shows that power distance positively impacts public disvalue, whereas indulgence impacts it negatively. Moreover, the perception of corruption and citizen trust mediate that relationship.

The study continues as follows: Section 2 contains the literature review and the development of the hypotheses; Section 3 contains the methodological description; Section 4 contains the results; and finally, Section 5 contains the discussion and conclusion.

## 2 | Literature Background and Hypotheses Development

### 2.1 | Public Dis/Value in Public Service Logic (PSL)

Under the paradigm of PSL, the relationship between public services and all actors involved in their fruition is investigated with a focus on the creation or destruction of public value (Osborne 2020; Engen et al. 2021; Röhnebæk et al. 2022). From the standpoint of the PSL, Osborne (2020) articulated that public services represent service ecosystems that operate by connecting distinct service providers, thereby augmenting societal public value and value-in-use for service users. In this context, the concept of “public dis/value” is essential for understanding how value (or disvalue) is created and perceived through interactions between public administrations and citizens (Esposito and Ricci 2015). This concept not only examines the positive effects but also considers the negative impacts that public actions may have on the community, acknowledging that value is co-created by citizens based on individual perceptions and experiences. This perspective challenges the traditional view of public administration as solely a value-generating entity (Esposito and Ricci 2015): public disvalue can be transformed into new public value by recognizing that negative experiences with public services can generate disvalue when services fail to meet citizens' expectations or prove to be ineffective, inefficient, or unjust. An illustrative example from Italy is the ineffective waste management in certain regions, which not only creates service failure but also damages public perception of administrative effectiveness (Esposito, Ricci, et al. 2021; Esposito, Dicorato, et al. 2021; Esposito et al. 2024).

Hartley et al. (2019) extend the discussion on public value and disvalue by exploring the role of leadership in managing and recognizing them. The authors argue that a key element of public sector leadership is the ability to identify and assess existing disvalues, which may manifest as inequalities or adverse impacts on certain population groups. Effective public leadership should acknowledge both value and disvalue, using them to guide public policies in a more equitable and inclusive manner. In this context, leadership is tasked with remedying and converting disvalue into public value through accountability and transparency, aiming to obtain feedback that reflects citizens' real experiences (Hartley et al. 2019).

Moreover, public management started to consider public dis/value after the seminal work of Bozeman (2002). As evidenced by Parker et al. (2023), “a variety of terms have been used in public value literature to refer to dis/value.” Bozeman (2002) argues that public value failures occur when neither sector can meet societal needs, highlighting the importance of public values in guiding policy and governance. Moreover, Bozeman (2007) posited that public values encompass citizens' rights, responsibilities, and the foundational beliefs that underpin effective governance.

In this perspective, the position of scholars who support PSL has gained prominence. They consider public service as the action of helping someone (Osborne 2021; Cui and Osborne 2022), and

they state that value creation should be considered on the individual level (Eriksson and Hellstrom 2021; Osborne et al. 2021; Cui and Osborne 2022).

In the perspective of PSL, value destruction can also be configured within the processes of public service provision, based on the use/consumption of public services (Cui and Osborne 2022). In this perspective, the destruction of value can also manifest itself by satisfying user expectations (Eriksson et al. 2020). This perspective of conceptualization of public dis/value, as indicated by Parker et al. (2023), is based on the interactive experience between the “public provider” and the user of the service (Kaartemo and Känkäkoski 2018; Engen et al. 2021; Espersson and Westrup 2020). Indeed, Alford (2016) argues that in this perspective, “the value of services lies in experience rather than tangible objects.”

### 2.2 | Cultural Values and Public Dis/Value

The concept of cultural value in public service and policy highlights the ways in which cultural experiences, institutions, and activities contribute to individual and community well-being, enriching social cohesion and identity (Holden 2006). Cultural value thus plays a crucial role in public administration, where policies and services often aim to enhance access to and appreciation of cultural resources, fostering social inclusion and community resilience (Belfiore 2012). However, the concept of public disvalue—or the negative impacts of public services—also intersects with cultural value, particularly when cultural initiatives fail to meet diverse community expectations or inadvertently exacerbate social inequalities (Esposito and Ricci 2015).

Public disvalue in cultural services can arise when these services are seen as exclusive or disconnected from local identities and traditions, thereby failing to resonate with or benefit the broader public (Hartley et al. 2019). For example, cultural programs that prioritize elite or narrow representations may inadvertently alienate certain community segments, leading to perceptions of exclusion rather than inclusion (Belfiore and Bennett 2008). Addressing this potential for disvalue in cultural services requires a public administration approach that is adaptive and responsive to the diversity of cultural needs, focusing on co-creation and community engagement to ensure that cultural policies generate genuine value across all societal sectors (Hartley et al. 2019; Sancino et al. 2022).

In this framework, PSL suggests that both cultural value and disvalue must be recognized and managed actively, as value is co-created with the public and relies heavily on public perception and experience (Osborne 2018).

Institutional theory sustains that culture is an institutional factor (Ahlstrom and Bruton 2002; Kreiser et al. 2010). Faulkner and Kaufman (2018) introduced a model containing four key public value concepts: satisfaction, economic benefit, political influence, and impact on financial and non-financial performance. Cwiklicki (2016) noted an increase in the use of “public value measurement frameworks” over the past 10 years. The specific important role of social entrepreneurship in creating public value, as an example (Chandra and Paras 2021). Moreover,

Meynhardt and Jasinenko (2021) view value “as multi-faceted, encompassing hedonistic-aesthetical, utilitarian-instrumental, political-social, and moral-ethical dimensions.” In addition, DiMaggio (1997), and Hofstede (2001a, 2001b) emphasize that culture is closely related to cognition, as it provides the tools to perceive and evaluate. Thus, “national culture influences more than individuals’ expectations, perceptions, and judgments” (Perez-Cornejo et al. 2021). Hofstede (1980) is the foundation of this research, which aims to explore how national cultural values can determine public disvalue. For the purpose of this research, the authors consider the six cultural values that Hofstede et al. (2010) calculated for 76 countries.

The authors recognize the links provided by the literature that allow the definition of this research model. They identify the relationship between power distance, individualism, uncertainty avoidance, masculinity, indulgence, short-term orientation, and public dis/value.

Hofstede et al. (2010, 61) define power distance as “the extent to which the less powerful members of institutions and organizations within a country expect and accept that power is distributed unequally.” Countries characterized by high power distance scores are inhabited by individuals who accept the hierarchical order and, therefore, have a less democratic vision of society (Hofstede 2001a, 2001b).

As a result, these citizens have a less critical view of public institutions, and the authors assume that they uncritically accept the services provided by public bodies. Therefore, the authors can propose the following hypothesis:

**H1.** *Power distance is negatively associated with public dis/value.*

Hofstede et al. (2010: 92) state that “individualism belongs to societies where the bonds between individuals are loose: everyone must take care of himself and his family.” Consequently, such cultural value measures the degree of interdependence between individuals. People of an individualistic culture are more interested in their own self-interest, and are less interested in the interest of the community (Yang et al. 2020). However, in collectivist societies, people seek to pursue what is best for the whole collective (Hofstede et al. 2010).

As a result, individualistic villagers are more likely to be dissatisfied with public services.

**H2.** *Individualism is positively associated with public dis/value.*

Hofstede et al. (2010, 191) define uncertainty avoidance as “the extent to which members of a culture feel threatened by ambiguous or unknown situations.” Societies with high levels of uncertainty avoidance exhibit a strong preference for stability, well-defined regulations, and clear guidelines, while demonstrating a reluctance to embrace novel ideas or uncertain conditions. In such cultural contexts, individuals prioritize certainty over flexibility, often favoring structured environments that minimize risks and unpredictability (Hofstede 2001a, 2001b; Hofstede et al. 2010).

From a public value perspective, public dis/value emerges from the collective evaluation of government policies, services, and institutional decisions in terms of their contribution to societal well-being (Moore 1995; Benington 2011). A crucial component of public value creation is the ability of institutions to innovate, adapt, and respond to changing societal needs (Meynhardt 2009). However, in societies characterized by high uncertainty avoidance, there is a tendency to resist changes that challenge the status quo, which can impede institutional innovation and the adoption of transformative public policies (Van der Wal et al. 2015). This rigidity may limit the ability of governments and public institutions to generate public value effectively, as risk-averse behaviors and procedural rigidity reduce responsiveness to emerging societal challenges.

Given these theoretical foundations, the following hypothesis is proposed:

**H3.** *Uncertainty avoidance is negatively associated with public dis/value.*

This hypothesis is grounded in the notion that in societies with high uncertainty avoidance, institutional and cultural barriers to change restrict innovation in the public sector, thereby diminishing the capacity to generate positive public value while potentially exacerbating public disvalue (Hofstede et al. 2010; Moore 1995; Benington 2011).

Hofstede et al. (2010) define masculinity as a cultural dimension that emphasizes competition, achievement, and success, often at the expense of cooperation, social well-being, and inclusivity. Societies with high masculinity scores prioritize efficiency over effectiveness, meaning they value productivity, economic performance, and measurable success indicators rather than broader societal outcomes such as citizen well-being and participatory governance (Hofstede 2001a, 2001b; Hofstede et al. 2010). From a public value perspective, effectiveness is a crucial determinant of value creation, as it ensures that public institutions serve the interests of citizens comprehensively rather than merely optimizing performance metrics (Moore 1995; Meynhardt 2009). However, highly masculine cultures may prioritize economic efficiency and output-driven governance models, which can lead to public disvalue when institutions neglect social equity, inclusiveness, and citizen participation (Benington 2011; Jørgensen and Bozeman 2007). One of the key mechanisms linking masculinity to public disvalue is the level of public scrutiny and civic engagement in governance. Highly masculine societies tend to promote hierarchical structures where authority figures are respected and questioned less frequently (Hofstede 2001a, 2001b). Research on public value creation highlights that constructive citizen criticism, transparency, and democratic oversight are essential for maintaining accountable, responsive, and high-quality public services (Bozeman 2002; Van der Wal et al. 2015). In cultures where public bodies face lower levels of scrutiny, there is an increased risk of institutional rigidity, inefficiency, and reduced responsiveness to societal needs, which can generate public disvalue (Hartley et al. 2013). Moreover, a performance-driven mentality in masculine cultures may encourage short-term policy decisions that prioritize measurable outputs—such as GDP growth or infrastructure expansion—over long-term social sustainability, participatory governance,

and citizen well-being (Moore 1995; Talbot 2009). This approach can lead to public disvalue when social policies, environmental concerns, and equitable resource distribution are subordinated to economic performance indicators (Ashkanasy et al. 2004). Under these theoretical foundations, the authors propose the following hypothesis:

**H4.** *Masculinity is positively associated with public dis/value.*

This hypothesis is supported by the idea that masculine societies, which emphasize efficiency, competition, and hierarchical respect, may foster governance models that prioritize economic performance over citizen-centered effectiveness. The lack of strong public scrutiny and participatory decision-making in such cultures may further limit institutional responsiveness, increasing the likelihood of public disvalue generation (Hofstede et al. 2010; Bozeman 2002; Van der Wal et al. 2015).

The inhabitants of countries characterized by high indulgence can freely realize their desires without being subject to strict social norms (Hofstede et al. 2010). As a result, these countries are characterized by democratic values (Hofstede et al. 2010). As a result, these citizens have a more critical view of public institutions, and the authors assume that they do not uncritically accept the services provided by public bodies. Thus, the authors can propose the following hypothesis:

**H5.** *Indulgence is positively associated with public dis/value.*

Short-term orientation characterizes the citizens of those countries that seek immediate gratification (Hofstede et al. 2010). On the contrary, people who make their own decisions considering future perspectives not only understand how present actions affect the future but are also more tolerant of sacrifices. As a result, these citizens have a more critical view of public institutions, and the authors assume that they do not uncritically accept the services provided by public bodies. Therefore, the authors can propose the following hypothesis:

**H6.** *Short-term orientation is positively associated with public dis/value.*

### 2.3 | Mediation Role of Perception of Corruption and Citizen Trust

The literature has identified that corruption negatively impacts the implementation of the efficiency and effectiveness of government projects, which determines public dissatisfaction and, therefore, dis/value (Cui and Osborne 2022). Moreover, the literature has demonstrated that there is also a cultural dimension to explain corruption. According to earlier literature, Davis and Ruhe (2003) argue that corruption is not easily defined and prefer to consider “what an individual perceives as corruption.” As the above authors claim, “the perception of a country’s corruption or the country’s reputation with regard to corruption becomes the assessment of an organization of that country’s corruption; it is their reality” (Davis and Ruhe 2003).

Yeganeh (2014) has already talked about the link between the perception of corruption and culture. In addition, Rothstein

and Torsello (2014) argue that the perception of corruption varies from one culture to another. Finally, the study by Davis and Ruhe (2003) empirically shows that cultural characteristics influence an individual’s perception of a country’s corruption. Indeed, Davis and Ruhe (2003) state that in countries with a high power gap, there is a centralized and bureaucratic organization in which the boss is right as a leader. As a result, the scholars mentioned above claim that, in such organizations, there is minimal opposition to authority, and corruption is often tolerated. They claim that countries with a greater power distance will have a higher level of corruption. Moreover, people in countries characterized by a high perception of corruption have a more oriented attitude toward dissatisfaction with public services (Bozeman et al. 2018). Based on this, the authors can identify the following research hypotheses:

**H7.** *Perception of corruption significantly mediates the association between power distance and public dis/value.*

Davis and Ruhe (2003) also state that the perception of corruption will be higher in countries with high avoidance of uncertainty. Hence, the authors can make the following hypothesis:

**H8.** *Perception of corruption significantly mediates the relationship between uncertainty avoidance and public dis/value.*

Finally, Davis and Ruhe (2003) argue that individualism and masculinity also positively impact the perception of corruption. In addition, the authors extend similar considerations in reference to indulgence and short-term orientation. In conclusion, the authors can speculate the following assumptions:

**H9.** *Perception of corruption significantly mediates the relationship between individualism and public dis/value.*

**H10.** *Perception of corruption significantly mediates the relationship between masculinity and public dis/value.*

**H11.** *Perception of corruption significantly mediates the relationship between indulgence and public dis/value.*

**H12.** *Perception of corruption significantly mediates the relationship between short-term orientation and public dis/value.*

Starting from the work of Elia (2022), who identifies the moderator role of citizen trust in public institutions in the relationship between cultural values and pro-environmental behavior, this study assumes that the relationship between cultural values and public dis/value can be moderated by citizen trust. Alzahrani et al. (2018) define citizen trust as the belief that public institutions perform best the functions for which they have been designated to represent citizens’ interests. Rawlins (2008) claims that citizen trust in public institutions is linked to the transparency, usability, and voluntary nature of the information disseminated by the institutions themselves.

Based on this, the authors hypothesize the following assumptions:

**H13.** *Citizen trust significantly mediates the relationship between power distance and public dis/value.*

- H14.** Citizen trust significantly mediates the relationship between individualism and public dis/value.
- H15.** Citizen trust significantly mediates the relationship between uncertainty avoidance and public dis/value.
- H16.** Citizen trust significantly mediates the relationship between masculinity and public dis/value.
- H17.** Citizen trust significantly mediates the relationship between indulgence and public dis/value.
- H18.** Citizen trust significantly mediates the relationship between short-term orientation and public dis/value.

## 2.4 | The Research Model

Based on the problem statement, the research model of the study is shown below (see Figure 1).

## 3 | Research Methods

The main aim of this study is to investigate the impact of various cultural values on public dis/value.

Moreover, the interactive effects of citizen trust and perception of corruption with these cultural values are examined to check the mediation. The theoretical framework was tested using data from 27 European countries provided by the Eurobarometer (European Parliament, Directorate-General for Communication, Public Opinion Monitoring Unit 2021a, 2021b). In 2020, the European Parliament commissioned a public opinion survey on the topic of the COVID-19 pandemic with the title “Public Opinion in Times of COVID-19.”

The Eurobarometer has launched three survey rounds to collect data to understand the opinion of EU citizens on policy interventions to combat the pandemic.

In particular, Round 1 was aimed only at 21 EU nations, while Rounds 2 and 3 were aimed at all 27 EU countries. The fact that several rounds of surveys have been carried out on the same audience of citizens offers a rare opportunity to replicate the empirical analysis on two separate samples to verify the robustness of the results obtained. To this end, the authors will replicate the analysis of the data collected by the Eurobarometer in Rounds 2 and 3, as addressed to the same 27 countries of the European Union.

Partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM) presents several advantages over covariance-based structural equation modeling (CB-SEM), often referred to simply as SEM, particularly in contexts involving complex models, prediction-oriented research, and when dealing with smaller sample sizes or formative constructs (Cribbie 2007; Hair et al. 2011; Sarstedt et al. 2016; Dash and Paul 2021).

In their comparison of these two widely used SEM methods, Dash and Paul (2021) highlight that PLS-SEM is particularly effective when addressing complex systems. PLS-SEM can manage models with a large number of indicators and latent constructs more efficiently than CB-SEM, making it especially useful for exploratory analysis or research involving more intricate theoretical frameworks.

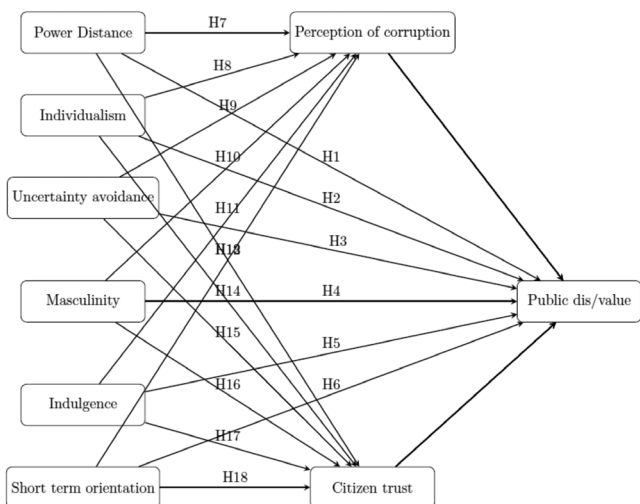
Moreover, unlike SEM, which relies on the assumption of multivariate normality, PLS-SEM is capable of handling non-normally distributed data. This flexibility enables researchers to apply PLS-SEM in a variety of scenarios where the data may not follow normal distribution patterns (Hair et al. 2011; Sarstedt et al. 2016; Dash and Paul 2021).

In relation to this research purpose, the authors have chosen to use PLS-SEM due to the complexity of the model being analyzed (Cribbie 2007; Hair et al. 2011; Sarstedt et al. 2016; Dash and Paul 2021).

## 3.1 | Sample

The sample of the data used for empirical analysis was constructed from data provided by the Eurobarometer, the OECD, and Hofstede (2015). Specifically, the Eurobarometer provided data collected on 27 European countries and 25,000 citizens to estimate how European citizens assessed the public measures against the pandemic and on how the pandemic impacted various aspects of their personal lives. The questions cover a range of issues related to the pandemic. Below are the main topics (European Parliament, Directorate-General for Communication, Public Opinion Monitoring Unit 2021a, 2021b):

- “satisfaction with the national government in general;
- satisfaction with the measures of the national government to fight the Coronavirus pandemic;
- health benefits are more significant than economic damage; economic damage is greater than health benefits.
- satisfaction with solidarity between EU member states in fighting the Coronavirus pandemic;



**FIGURE 1** | The research model.

- awareness of measures taken by the EU to respond to the Coronavirus pandemic and satisfaction with these measures;
- opinion of EU competences to deal with crises such as the Coronavirus pandemic;
- preferred EU measures to respond to the Coronavirus crisis;
- personally experienced effects of the Coronavirus pandemic in their country of origin as loss of income, difficulties paying rent or bills or bank loans, use of personal savings sooner than planned, unemployment, bankruptcy, difficulties having proper and decent-quality meals, asked for financial help from family or friends, other financial issues;
- attitude toward the European Union;
- change in the feeling of attachment since the beginning of the pandemic in their country of origin concerning local community, country of origin, EU;
- EU image;
- impact of the pandemic on EU image;
- participation in the last European Parliamentary elections.”

The OECD (2021) microdata provided the information needed to estimate citizens' confidence in public administration and the perception of corruption. The authors conducted an additional window resize activity on the database. This process involved adjusting the parameters of this analysis window, which allowed to better capture the underlying patterns in the data. As a result, the authors increased the significance of several estimators, leading to more reliable insights. Finally, the data provided by Hofstede (2015) allowed the estimation of cultural values.

The initial sample consisted of 25,000 observations; however, following data cleaning procedures, the final sample was reduced to 21,000 observations. This reduction resulted from the removal of incomplete, inconsistent, or outlier data points to ensure the robustness and reliability of the analysis. The data cleaning methodology applied is detailed in Sections 3.1.1 and 3.1.2.

Data cleaning is a crucial step in empirical research, as it enhances data quality by eliminating errors and inconsistencies that may bias statistical analyses (Gelman et al. 2020; Osborne 2013). The applied procedures align with best practices in statistical pre-processing, ensuring that only valid and representative data are included in the final data set (Acock 2018; Van den Broeck et al. 2005).

### 3.1.1 | Data Management Procedures of Sample

The authors implemented a series of data management procedures to enhance the robustness and reliability of the results by reducing statistical noise. These measures also aimed to improve the precision of key estimators, thereby increasing statistical significance and minimizing distortions caused by

outliers, missing values, or suboptimal windowing strategies, ultimately improving the generalizability of the findings. To address the presence of extreme values, the interquartile range (IQR) filtering method was applied, identifying and excluding observations that exceeded 1.5 times the IQR from the data set (Tukey 1977; Leys et al. 2019). Additionally, Winsorization was employed to limit the influence of extreme values while preserving the overall distribution structure (Ghosh and Vogt 2012; Xu et al. 2022). These techniques ensured that outliers did not disproportionately affect statistical estimates, leading to more robust and reliable conclusions. Given the presence of non-normally distributed variables, median imputation was selected as a more robust alternative to mean imputation, as it better handles skewed data and extreme values (Acuna and Rodriguez 2004; Rubin 2004; Harezlak et al. 2018; Jakobsen et al. 2017). This approach maintained the integrity of the data set while minimizing the biases associated with missing data imputation.

By implementing these data management strategies, the study ensured that the results remained statistically reliable and generalizable across different analytical scenarios.

### 3.1.2 | Merge of Data Set

This study combines multiple data sources to analyze citizens' confidence in public administration, perceptions of corruption, and the influence of cultural values on governance. Specifically, the authors integrate individual-level survey responses from the Eurobarometer, national governance indicators from the OECD (2021) microdata, and cultural dimensions from Hofstede's (2015) framework. This multi-source approach allows for a comprehensive examination of governance and institutional trust while ensuring methodological consistency across data sets.

To assess governance perceptions, the authors merged two key data sources:

1. OECD (2021) microdata, which provides nationally representative estimates of citizens' confidence in public administration and perceptions of corruption.
2. Eurobarometer survey data, which capture self-reported attitudes on these topics at the individual level.

Given that the OECD data set consists of national-level indicators while the Eurobarometer data represents individual responses, the authors linked these data sets at the country level using a unique country identifier. This approach ensures that national governance indicators and individual perceptions remain aligned.

To achieve statistical robustness in the merging process, the authors employed a two-step aggregation and linkage approach:

- Step 1: Country-Level Aggregation—The authors aggregated Eurobarometer responses on corruption perception and trust in institutions at the national level, generating country-specific means and standard deviations. This

standardization ensures comparability with OECD national indicators (Charron et al. 2022; OECD 2021).

- Step 2: Probabilistic Record Linkage—Given potential variations in survey methodologies across data sets, the authors used a probabilistic linkage method (Fellegi and Sunter 1969), which assigns weights to matched records based on statistical probability. This technique minimizes bias and allows for greater precision in linking micro- and macro-level data (Murtin et al. 2018).

This approach follows best practices in cross-national research that integrate survey and official statistical data for governance analysis (e.g., Neudorfer and Neumayer 2022; Bauhr and Charron 2020).

In addition to governance indicators, this study examines the role of cultural values in shaping trust and corruption perceptions by integrating Hofstede's (2015) cultural dimensions. These dimensions—including individualism, power distance, and uncertainty avoidance—provide a framework for understanding societal differences in governance attitudes.

Since Hofstede's cultural values are available only at the national level, these scores were assigned uniformly to all respondents within each country in both the Eurobarometer and OECD data sets. While this approach assumes cultural homogeneity within a country, extensive prior research has demonstrated that national cultural traits remain relatively stable over time and exert a significant influence on governance and institutional trust (Kaasa 2021; Minkov and Kaasa 2021).

To ensure accurate integration, the authors used a direct deterministic linkage method, which assigns country-specific cultural values to all observations based on national identifiers. This methodology is widely employed in cross-national studies analyzing institutional trust and governance outcomes (Ruck et al. 2021).

In this study, the authors assume that perceptions of corruption, institutional trust, and cultural values remain constant across respondents within the same country. This assumption is well supported by the literature:

- Corruption and Trust: Although individual perceptions may differ, national corruption indices (e.g., Transparency International's Corruption Perceptions Index, OECD indicators) provide widely accepted measures of a country's corruption environment, which significantly shape public trust (Bauhr and Charron 2020; Neudorfer and Neumayer 2022).
- Cultural Dimensions: Hofstede's framework, along with subsequent cultural studies, confirms that national cultural traits are stable over time and significantly influence governance perceptions and institutional trust (Minkov 2018; Kaasa 2021; Esposito et al. 2025).

By integrating these data sets using rigorous statistical methodologies, this study ensures that both individual and national influences are captured while maintaining methodological consistency with previous research in governance, trust, and corruption studies (Charron et al. 2022; OECD 2021).

### 3.2 | Measure of the Study

The authors use eight items to measure public dis/value. The items used follow the instructions provided by Radnor et al. (2014), Osborne (2018), and Osborne (2020). The related Eurobarometer questions are the following:

- “Q1: Overall, to what extent do you support or oppose the (NATIONALITY) government in general?”
- Q1r: How satisfied or not are you with the measures your government has taken so far against the coronavirus pandemic?
- Q2: Where do you position yourself between these two statements regarding the consequences of the restriction measures in (OUR COUNTRY)?
- Q3: Please use this scale from 1 to 6 to position yourself between these two statements, where “1” means that the fight against the Coronavirus pandemic fully justifies recent limitations to your individual freedoms, and “6” means that you are strongly opposed to any limitations of your individual freedoms, regardless of the Coronavirus pandemic.
- Q4: Would you be in favor or opposed to (NATIONALITY) public authorities using applications on your mobile phone to fight the virus' expansion?
- Q6: How satisfied or not are you with the solidarity between EU Member States in fighting the Coronavirus pandemic?
- Q9: Have you already heard, seen, or read about measures or actions initiated by the EU to respond to the Coronavirus pandemic?
- Q10: How satisfied or not are you with the measures the EU has taken so far against the coronavirus pandemic?

Hofstede (2015) provided the cultural dimensions used to measure the six cultural values: power distance, individualism, masculinity, uncertainty avoidance, indulgence, and short-term orientation. The authors assessed public dis/value by utilizing responses from Eurobarometer data, specifically focusing on several key questions aimed at gauging public sentiment toward governmental actions and EU-level measures in response to the coronavirus pandemic.

The authors conducted several rigorous tests to ensure the reliability and internal consistency of the latent constructs derived from these survey responses.

Citizen trust is measured by 10 items, of which the first 7 are inherent in the trust of national public institutions and the other 3 in the trust of European institutions. Indications for identifying the most appropriate items were provided by Elia (2022) and Parent et al. (2005).

Finally, the corruption perception is measured by 11 items related to corruption perceived by respondents at the national and European levels. The indications for identifying the most appropriate items were taken from Davis and Ruhe (2003).

### 3.3 | Respondents Profile

The results show that 50.89% of respondents are male, and 49.11% are female. 55.4% of respondents are married, whereas 44.7% are unmarried. Participants' ages range from 19 to 69, with a mean of 34.37 years. In addition, 58.5% of the participants are graduates, 30.5% are undergraduates, and 11% are highly qualified. Moreover, 18.3% are students, 35.2% are employees, 26.5% are self-employed, 10% are unemployed, and 10% are retired citizens.

The statistics reflect a variety of respondents that allow a good representation of the entire European population (European Parliament, Directorate-General for Communication, Public Opinion Monitoring Unit 2021a, 2021b).

## 4 | Data Analysis and Results

### 4.1 | Assessing the Measurement Model

The analysis was performed in Stata 17 software with the PLS-SEM command provided by Venturini and Mehmetoglu (2019). Moreover, to calculate the reliability of the measures, Cronbach's  $\alpha$  and composite reliability (CR) were assessed (Henseler et al. 2015; Mansoor 2021; Mansoor and Wijaksana 2023). Table 1 elucidates the results of the tests. By employing these reliability tests, the authors ensured that the constructs measured public dis/value consistently and validly. This enabled them to draw robust conclusions regarding public perceptions of government and EU actions during the pandemic. Both Cronbach's  $\alpha$  and CR demonstrated values exceeding 0.7, which assured the internal consistency of the constructs (Henseler et al. 2015; Mansoor 2021; Mansoor and Wijaksana 2023). Furthermore, the factor loadings for all indicator variables were within an acceptable range, with values above 0.65. The average variance extracted (AVE) for each latent construct was greater than 0.50, thereby establishing the convergent validity of the constructs (Hair et al. 2011; Mohd Noor et al. 2023).

### 4.2 | Assessing the Structural Model

Although in this case it is not necessary to test the multicollinearity of the model, as the authors carried out the bootstrap of the data (Venturini and Mehmetoglu 2019), the authors launched the model estimate with the data not bootstrapped, and the authors calculated the variance inflation factor (VIF) (Hair et al. 2022). Since Hair et al. (2022) sustain that VIF values  $< 3$  reflect no issues of collinearity, the authors can say that the structural model does not have multicollinearity (Table 2).

### 4.3 | Direct Hypothesis

Figure 2 represents the relation between the latent variables (Figure 1). The authors test not only the direct relation between cultural values and public dis/value but also their indirect relationship due to the mediation of citizen trust and perception of corruption.

The results of the study (Table 3) show that power distance and indulgence are statistically significant public impacts dis/value positively and negatively, respectively; hence, H1, H2, H3, H4, H5, H7, H8, H9, H10, H11, H12, H13, H15, H17, and H18 are not supported by the results of this research. The relationship between citizen trust and public dis/value is positively significant, while the relationship between the perception of corruption and public dis/value is negative, showing empirical results that are different from those expected.

### 4.4 | Mediation Hypothesis

The results presented in Table 4 allow assessing whether citizen trust and perception of corruption mediate the relationship between cultural values and public dis/value. Specifically, the empirical analysis confirms that citizen trust and perception of corruption significantly mediate this relationship, supporting H7–H18. The statistical significance of these mediation effects is evidenced by  $p$  values below the 5% threshold, indicating robust indirect effects. To estimate these indirect effects, the authors employed SEM with bootstrapped confidence intervals—a widely recognized methodology for testing mediation within complex models (Preacher and Hayes 2008; Hair et al. 2022). This approach allows for a nuanced understanding of how cultural values influence public dis/value through intermediary variables such as trust and corruption perceptions.

Findings align with contemporary research that highlights the pivotal role of trust and corruption perceptions in governance frameworks. For instance, Murtin et al. (2018) and Charron et al. (2022) have demonstrated that citizen trust functions as a crucial mechanism through which cultural norms shape attitudes toward governance and public institutions. Similarly, studies by Neudorfer and Neumayer (2022) and Bauhr and Charron (2020) identify perceptions of corruption as key mediators affecting institutional legitimacy and democratic accountability.

By implementing a rigorous SEM-based mediation analysis, this study provides empirical evidence that cultural values indirectly influence governance perceptions via trust and corruption perceptions. These insights contribute to the ongoing discourse on the impact of societal values on institutional legitimacy and public sector performance.

### 4.5 | Robustness

The analysis was also replicated on the Eurobarometer Round 3 data in order to verify the robustness of the estimates made on Round 2 data.

The robustness analysis (estimates are given in Tables A1–A3) confirmed the results obtained previously, thus ensuring the external validity of the empirical findings of the study.

The authors do not calculate the goodness-of-fit (GoF) for the model, as it holds limited significance in the context of PLS-SEM (Henseler and Sarstedt 2013). Unlike CB-SEM, PLS-SEM does not optimize a unique global scalar function, and consequently, does not have established global GoF measures (Ringle

**TABLE 1** | Reliability and validity results.

Variable/item	Factor loading			CR $\alpha$	DG	Rho_A	AVE
	1	2	3				
Public dis/value				0.787	0.859	0.642	0.594
q1	0.842						
q1r	0.810						
q2	0.785						
q3	0.442						
q4	0.338						
q6	0.382						
q9	0.559						
q10	0.636						
Trust				0.826	0.884	0.382	0.580
fid 6		0.669					
fid 7		0.557					
fid 8		0.392					
fid 9		0.654					
fid 10		0.718					
fid 11		0.790					
fid 12		0.807					
fideu 3		0.652					
fideu 2		0.661					
fideu 1		0.640					
Perception of corruption				0.794	0.887	0.861	0.558
corrup 5			0.844				
corrup 6			0.846				
corrup7 2			0.807				
corrup7 3			0.247				
corrup7 4			0.426				
corrup7 6			0.669				
corrup7 7			0.320				
corrup8 1			-0.468				
corrup8 2			-0.571				
corrup8 3			-0.554				
corrup8			-0.459				

et al. 2024). It is important to recognize the fundamental difference in the concept of “fit” between CB-SEM and PLS-SEM. In CB-SEM, fit statistics are derived from the discrepancy between the empirical covariance matrix and the model-implied (theoretical) covariance matrix. In contrast, PLS-SEM focuses on the discrepancy between the observed or approximated values of dependent variables, whether manifest or latent, and the

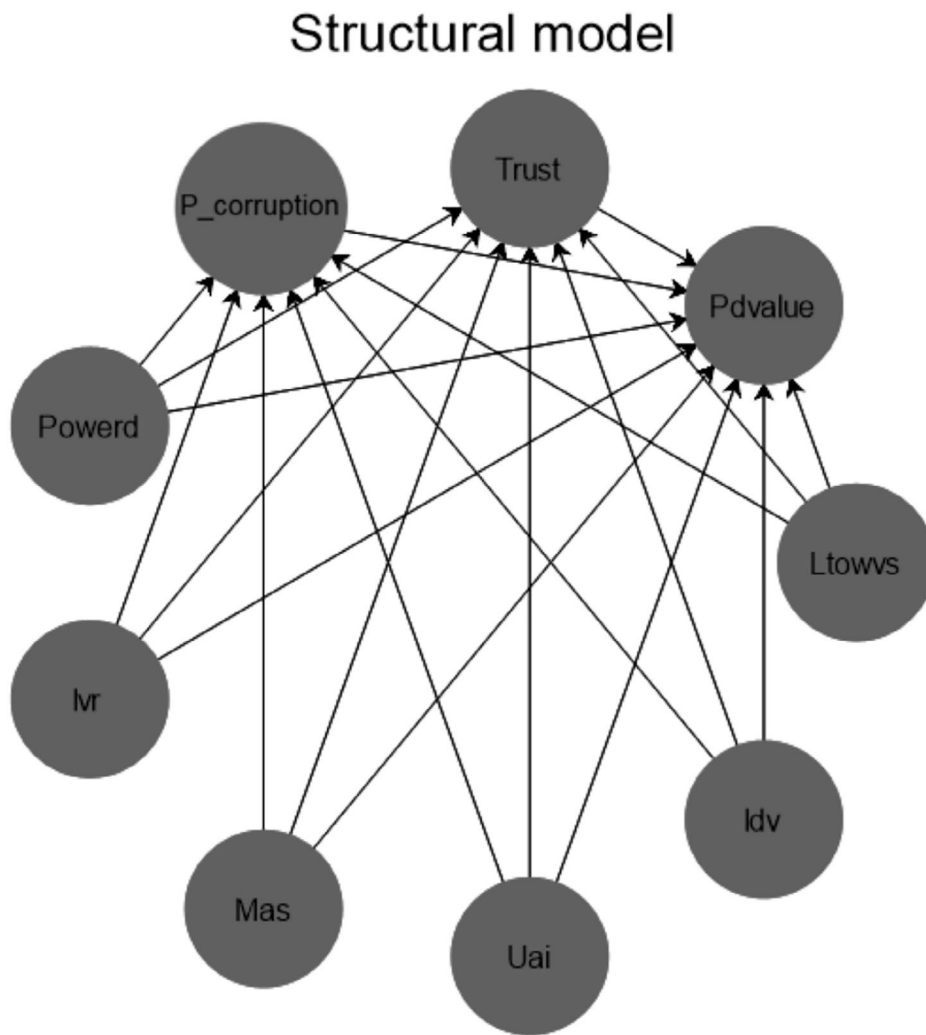
values predicted by the model (Shmueli et al. 2016; Shmueli, Ray, et al. 2019; Shmueli, Sarstedt, et al. 2019; Vaithilingam et al. 2024). For this reason, PLS-SEM fit measures have limited efficacy in identifying mis-specified models. Henseler and Sarstedt (2013), supported by Sarstedt et al. (2024), provide a detailed explanation, emphasizing that the global GoF measure should not be utilized as an indicator of model fit in PLS-SEM.

**TABLE 2** | Structural model—Multicollinearity check using VIF.

Variable	Public dis/ value	Trust	Perception of corruption
Trust	1.211		
Perception of corruption	2.050		
Power distance	2.907	2.614	2.614
Indugence	2.626	2.427	2.427
Masculinity	2.177	2.129	2.129
Uncertainty avoidance	2.886	2.980	2.980
Individualism	2.378	2.979	2.979
Short-term orientation	2.004	1.975	1.975

#### 4.6 | Evaluation of the Model's Explanatory and Predictive Power

To ensure the robustness of the model, both explanatory power and predictive power were evaluated in accordance with the methodological guidelines outlined by Hair et al. (2022). Explanatory power was assessed using the coefficient of determination ( $R^2$  and adjusted  $R^2$ ), while predictive power was examined through PLS-Predict, employing the Stone-Geisser criterion ( $Q^2$ ) and standard predictive accuracy metrics such as root mean square error (RMSE) and mean absolute error (MAE). The model's explanatory power was first assessed using  $R^2$  and adjusted  $R^2$ , which measure the proportion of variance in the dependent variable that is explained by the independent variables. The results indicate that the model demonstrates substantial explanatory power, with an  $R^2$  value of 0.79 and an adjusted  $R^2$  of 0.79. This suggests that the independent variables account for approximately 79% of the variance in public dis/value, including cultural dimensions, perception of corruption, and citizen trust. These values



**FIGURE 2** | Specification model.

**TABLE 3** | Structural model.

Variable	Public dis/value	Trust	Perception of corruption
Trust	0.027 (0.033)		
Perception of corruption	-0.024 (0.037)		
Power distance	0.116 (0.002)	0.119 (0.000)	-0.371 (0.000)
Indulgence	-0.095 (0.026)	-0.174 (0.000)	0.219 (0.000)
Masculinity	-0.130 (0.047)	0.039 (0.219)	0.171 (0.000)
Uncertainty avoidance	0.102 (0.041)	0.171 (0.000)	0.638 (0.000)
Individualism	0.059 (0.043)	-0.021 (0.099)	-0.273 (0.000)
Short-term orientation	0.031 (0.257)	-0.187 (0.000)	-0.069 (0.037)
$R^2$	0.43	0.372	0.511

**TABLE 4** | Significance testing of (standardized) indirect effects.

	Statistics				
	Indirect effect	Standard error	Z-statistics	p	Conf. interval
Public dis/value ← Trust ← Power distance	0.009	0.003	2.910	0.004	(0.003, 0.014)
Public dis/value ← Perception of corruption ← Power distance	0.017	0.007	2.415	0.016	(0.003, 0.030)
Public dis/value ← Trust ← Indulgence	-0.012	0.003	-3.322	0.001	(-0.018, -0.005)
Public dis/value ← Perception of corruption ← Indulgence	-0.013	0.005	-2.403	0.016	(-0.023, -0.002)
Public dis/value ← Trust ← Masculinity	0.003	0.0013	2.3071	0.06	(0.001, 0.005)
Public dis/value ← Perception of corruption ← Masculinity	-0.007	0.003	-2.333	0.020	(-0.013, -0.001)
Public dis/value ← Trust ← Uncertainty avoidance	0.013	0.004	3.308	0.001	(0.005, 0.020)
Public dis/value ← Perception of corruption ← Uncertainty avoidance	-0.029	0.012	-2.429	0.015	(-0.053, -0.006)
Public dis/value ← Trust ← Individualism	-0.001	0.0005	-2.2222	0.020	(-0.006, 0.003)
Public dis/value ← Perception of corruption ← Individualism	0.012	0.005	2.386	0.017	(0.002, 0.022)
Public dis/value ← Trust ← Short-term orientation	-0.010	0.003	-3.316	0.001	(-0.016, -0.004)
Public dis/value ← Perception of corruption ← Short-term orientation	0.003	0.001	1.909	0.056	(-0.000, 0.005)

exceed the commonly accepted thresholds in SEM, where  $R^2$  values above 0.50 indicate moderate explanatory power, and values above 0.75 suggest substantial explanatory power (Hair et al. 2022; Sarstedt et al. 2022). The model's strong explanatory power indicates that the selected predictors significantly contribute to explaining public dis/value.

The cross-validated redundancy measure ( $Q^2$ ) was employed to assess the model's predictive relevance. The analysis yielded a  $Q^2$  value of 0.80, confirming high predictive relevance, as  $Q^2$

values above zero indicate that the model exhibits valid predictive capability (Shmueli, Ray, et al. 2019; Shmueli, Sarstedt, et al. 2019).

Additionally, predictive accuracy was evaluated using the following error metrics:

- RMSE = 4.96
- MAE = 3.96

These results confirm that the error associated with the model's predictions is within acceptable limits, supporting its practical applicability in governance and institutional trust studies (Rigdon 2016; Sarstedt et al. 2022).

The combination of high explanatory power ( $R^2=0.79$ , adjusted  $R^2=0.79$ ) and strong predictive relevance ( $Q^2=0.80$ ) indicates that the model effectively captures the relationships between cultural values, perception of corruption, citizen trust, and public dis/value. These findings reinforce the robustness and validity of the model, aligning with recent advancements in SEM methodology and predictive modelling in governance research (Hair et al. 2022; Shmueli, Ray, et al. 2019; Shmueli, Sarstedt, et al. 2019).

## 5 | Discussion and Conclusions

Based on the PSL theory of public dis/value, this study analyses the direct and interactive effect of cultural values, citizen trust, and perception of corruption in the process of destruction and generation of public value. By examining a very large data set, public value destruction is examined as an individual variable that is influenced by characteristics at a national level. The results show that power distance is a factor that positively affects the generation/destruction of public value. Contrary to what is hypothesized, according to literature analysis, individuals in countries with high power distance and, therefore, with rigid hierarchical structures (Hofstede 2015) are more likely to be disappointed with their expectations of public service and/or action or policy. Instead, citizens living in countries with high indulgence, where rules are not rigid and individuals are free to seek their own happiness (Hofstede 2015), will be less likely to be disappointed with public service. The study also considers the mediation effect of citizen trust in institutions and the perception of corruption. Even in this case, the empirical results contradict the initial assumptions. Indeed, trust and corruption perception have an unexpected impact on public disvalue, as trust has a positive impact and perception a negative one. This would imply that people who have more trust in public institutions are more likely to be disappointed with public services, while those who perceive the environment in which they live as corrupt are less likely to be disappointed. Finally, the authors verified that there is a mediation effect due to citizen trust and corruption perception in the relationship between cultural values and public dis/value.

This study is the first large-scale international survey of public dis/value and consequently expands previous theorizing and research considering individual and organizational characteristics as predictive factors of public disvalue. Moreover, this study provides empirical support for the idea that national culture is associated with individual public dis/value. Therefore, the main contribution of this article is to have carried out an empirical-quantitative study on a topic of increasing interest in the field of public management: public value destruction. In addition, supporting the idea that the generation/destruction of public value is determined by the interaction between the user and the public provider (Cui and Osborne 2022), this study could lead to further developments in the literature. Finally, this work provides useful support to public managers, as it allows them to

understand that the creation/destruction of value also depends on factors beyond their control.

This would explain why the same actions were successful in one context and not in another. The main limitation of this article is that no ad hoc survey was carried out to measure public dis/value, but data collected was used to measure the degree of satisfaction with pandemic control policies.

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## Appendix A

**TABLE A1** | Structural model—Robustness.

Variable	Public dis/value	Trust	Perception of corruption
Trust	0.025 (0.05)		
Perception of corruption	−0.031 (0.09)		
Power distance	0.106 (0.002)	0.124 (0.000)	−0.385 (0.000)
Indulgence	−0.195 (0.026)	−0.174 (0.000)	0.285 (0.000)
Masculinity	−0.040 (0.347)	0.023 (0.249)	0.152 (0.000)
Uncertainty avoidance	0.002 (0.961)	0.129 (0.000)	0.748 (0.000)
Individualism	0.008 (0.843)	−0.016 (0.599)	−0.210 (0.000)
Short-term orientation	0.028 (0.357)	−0.178 (0.000)	−0.065 (0.050)
R <sup>2</sup>	0.23	0.152	0.571

**TABLE A2** | Significance testing of (standardized) indirect effects—Robustness.

	Statistics				
	Indirect effect	Standard error	Z-statistics	p	Conf. interval
Public dis/value ← Trust ← Power distance	0.009	0.003	2.910	0.004	(0.003, 0.014)
Public dis/value ← Perception of corruption ← Power distance	0.017	0.007	2.415	0.016	(0.003, 0.030)
Public dis/value ← Trust ← Indugence	−0.012	0.003	−3.322	0.001	(−0.018, −0.005)
Public dis/value ← Perception of corruption ← Indugence	−0.013	0.005	−2.403	0.016	(−0.023, −0.002)
Public dis/value ← Trust ← Masculinity	0.003	0.0013	2.3071	0.06	(0.001, 0.005)
Public dis/value ← Perception of corruption ← Masculinity	−0.007	0.003	−2.333	0.020	(−0.013, −0.001)
Public dis/value ← Trust ← Uncertainty avoidance	0.013	0.004	3.308	0.001	(0.005, 0.020)
Public dis/value ← Perception of corruption ← Uncertainty avoidance	−0.029	0.012	−2.429	0.015	(−0.053, −0.006)
Public dis/value ← Trust ← Individualism	−0.001	0.0005	−2.2222	0.020	(−0.006, 0.003)
Public dis/value ← Perception of corruption ← Individualism	0.012	0.005	2.386	0.017	(0.002, 0.022)
Public dis/value ← Trust ← Short-term orientation	−0.010	0.003	−3.316	0.001	(−0.016, −0.004)
Public dis/value ← Perception of corruption ← Short-term orientation	0.003	0.001	1.909	0.056	(−0.000, 0.005)

**TABLE A3** | Descriptive statistics.

Variables/item	Average	SD	q1	q1r	q2	q3	q4	q6	q9	q10	fid_6	fid_7	fid_8	fid_9	fid_10	fid_11	fid_12	fidcu_1	fidcu_2	fidcu_3	fidcu_5	corrup_5	corrup_6	
Public dis/ value	0.79	78.91%	1.00																					
q1r	3.99	32.18%	0.10	1.00																				
q2	2.60	9.91%	0.00	0.48	1.00																			
q3	0.57	68.23%	0.10	0.10	-0.14	1.00																		
q4	5.71	89.32%	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.82	1.00																	
q6	1.07	61.32%	0.10	0.09	0.10	0.10	0.00	1.00																
q9	3.47	79.82%	-0.81	0.00	0.00	0.00	-0.68	0.65	1.00															
q10	2.17	12.57%	0.89	0.10	0.00	0.10	0.00	0.00	0.14	1.00														
fid_6	4.33	30.45%	0.16	0.51	0.10	0.30	0.10	0.36	0.03	0.10	1.00													
fid_7	2.01	67.22%	-0.99	-0.24	-0.29	-0.59	0.54	0.40	0.10	-0.34	0.61	1.00												
fid_8	3.68	77.07%	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.87	0.87	-0.90	0.70	0.25	-0.87	0.10	1.00											
fid_9	2.68	66.03%	0.10	0.00	-0.23	0.00	0.10	0.57	0.00	-0.33	0.09	0.10	-1.00	1.00										
fid_10	0.88	16.06%	0.06	0.20	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.00	0.02	0.20	-0.53	0.92	0.86	0.61	1.00									
fid_11	0.88	50.09%	0.51	0.10	0.10	0.00	-0.52	0.09	-0.62	0.00	0.00	-0.87	0.62	0.10	1.00									
fid_12	5.64	81.84%	0.00	-0.65	0.10	-0.07	0.40	0.10	0.10	0.37	0.00	0.00	0.10	0.00	0.10	1.00								
fidcu_3	3.93	95.88%	-0.77	-0.38	-0.97	0.00	-0.68	0.10	0.10	0.00	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10	-0.63	1.00							
fidcu_2	3.52	6.60%	0.00	0.00	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.00	0.18	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.00	-0.33	0.70	-0.60	1.00					
fidcu_1	1.99	65.68%	0.10	0.10	0.37	0.10	0.10	0.63	0.10	0.00	0.10	0.10	0.97	0.58	0.00	-0.45	-0.36	0.10	0.05	1.00				
corrup_5	0.01	18.53%	0.46	0.83	0.10	-0.33	0.10	0.00	0.00	-0.50	-0.06	0.10	-0.12	0.00	0.10	-0.46	0.10	0.00	0.98	0.10	1.00			
corrup_6	3.02	67.11%	0.00	-0.82	0.00	0.99	0.10	0.59	-0.15	0.10	0.00	0.00	0.10	0.88	0.41	0.10	0.07	0.00	0.10	0.16	0.00	1.00		
corrup_2	2.91	99.19%	0.10	-0.70	-0.77	0.00	0.10	0.00	0.10	0.10	0.13	0.10	-0.40	-0.53	-0.52	-0.50	0.10	-0.69	0.10	0.39	-0.99	0.00		
corrup_3	0.79	42.76%	0.00	0.97	0.00	-0.38	0.10	0.54	0.10	0.68	-0.06	0.00	0.00	0.10	0.10	-0.22	0.34	-0.37	-0.47	0.10	0.10	0.59		
corrup_4	1.20	73.59%	0.10	0.00	0.87	0.64	0.10	0.47	0.10	0.09	-0.98	-0.54	-0.79	-0.39	0.10	0.10	0.00	0.00	0.10	0.10	0.00	0.10		
corrup_6	3.06	59.63%	0.00	0.14	0.10	-0.83	-0.17	0.46	0.10	0.10	0.00	0.10	0.00	0.10	0.10	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.10	0.71	0.75	0.10		
corrup_7	5.00	51.20%	0.00	0.99	0.00	0.00	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.86	0.10	0.62	-0.92	0.10	0.59	-0.39	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.00	0.00	-0.73	
corrup_8_1	2.43	85.67%	0.38	0.10	-0.32	0.10	0.03	0.10	0.44	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.10	0.10	-0.79	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.99	0.10	0.00	0.10		
corrup_8_2	2.44	1.42%	0.10	0.00	0.10	0.00	0.00	0.10	-0.77	-0.98	0.10	0.10	0.00	0.42	0.84	0.90	0.10	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.10	0.16	
corrup_8_3	4.74	21.88%	0.10	0.10	0.10	-0.07	-0.16	0.10	0.00	0.00	0.10	0.10	0.00	-0.41	0.10	-0.50	0.10	-0.35	0.74	-0.30	0.10	0.84		
corrup_8	2.13	74.88%	0.10	-0.23	-0.27	0.10	0.10	-0.21	0.10	0.10	0.10	-0.69	0.10	0.03	0.10	0.10	0.17	0.00	0.00	0.10	0.10	0.10	-0.01	

(Continues)

Variables/item	Average	SD	q1	q1r	q2	q3	q4	q6	q9	q10	fid_6	fid_7	fid_8	fid_9	fid_10	fid_11	fid_12	fideu_1	corrup_5	corrup_6	
Hofstede																					
Power distance	4.69	54.06%	0.00	0.10	0.00	0.14	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.00	0.34	0.61	0.91	0.10	0.00	-0.81	0.10	0.00	0.00	-0.65	0.10
Individualism	0.45	92.15%	0.52	-0.27	0.00	0.00	0.01	-0.01	0.10	-0.59	0.45	0.00	0.10	0.99	0.10	0.10	-0.68	0.00	-0.63	0.00	0.52
Uncertainty avoidance	5.02	43.99%	0.00	0.10	-0.69	0.00	0.00	0.72	-0.27	-0.73	0.10	0.00	-0.69	0.00	0.10	0.34	0.10	0.48	-0.65	0.49	0.10
Masculinity	4.06	1.42%	0.10	0.10	0.00	0.10	0.10	0.26	0.83	0.00	0.10	0.99	-0.95	-0.70	-0.77	-0.93	0.20	0.49	-0.51	0.44	-0.09
Indulgence	4.27	12.42%	0.73	-0.94	-0.08	0.94	0.00	0.28	0.00	0.10	0.00	-0.09	-0.64	-0.19	0.10	0.10	-0.09	0.00	0.10	0.58	-0.09
Short-term orientation	2.85	2.98%	0.10	0.00	0.93	0.72	0.60	0.65	0.00	-0.54	0.10	-0.14	-0.08	0.87	-0.80	0.52	0.10	0.79	0.10	-0.17	-0.50

Variables/item	Average	SD	corrup_2	corrup_3	corrup_4	corrup_7_4	corrup_7_6	corrup_7_7	corrup_8_1	corrup_8_2	corrup_8_3	corrup_8_4	Power distance	Individualism	Uncertainty avoidance	Masculinity	Short-term orientation
Public dis/ value																	
q1	0.79	78.91%															
q1r	3.99	32.18%															
q2	2.60	9.91%															
q3	0.57	68.23%															
q4	5.71	89.32%															
q6	1.07	61.32%															
q9	3.47	79.82%															
q10	2.17	12.57%															
fid_6	4.33	30.45%															
fid_7	2.01	67.22%															
fid_8	3.68	77.07%															
fid_9	2.68	66.03%															
fid_10	0.88	16.06%															
fid_11	0.88	50.09%															
fid_12	5.64	81.84%															
fideu_3	3.93	95.88%															
fideu_2	3.52	6.60%															
fideu_1	1.99	65.68%															

(Continues)

TABLE A3 | (Continued)

Variables/item	Average	SD	corrup7_2	corrup7_3	corrup7_4	corrup7_6	corrup7_7	corrup8_1	corrup8_2	corrup8_3	corrup8	Power distance	Individualism	Uncertainty avoidance	Masculinity	Indulgence	Short-term orientation
Corruption																	
corrup_5	0.01	18.53%															
corrup_6	3.02	67.11%															
corrup7_2	2.91	99.19%	1.00														
corrup7_3	0.79	42.76%	0.77	1.00													
corrup7_4	1.20	73.59%	-0.38	0.10	1.00												
corrup7_6	3.06	59.63%	0.93	0.00	0.11	1.00											
corrup7_7	5.00	51.20%	0.10	0.00	0.10	-0.78	1.00										
corrup8_1	2.43	85.67%	0.00	0.10	0.10	0.00	0.10	1.00									
corrup8_2	2.44	81.42%	0.10	-0.46	0.64	0.10	-0.46	0.52	1.00								
corrup8_3	4.74	21.88%	-0.20	0.10	-0.61	0.23	0.10	0.83	0.10	1.00							
corrup8	2.13	74.88%	0.00	-0.68	0.10	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	-0.48	1.00						
Power distance	4.69	54.06%	0.00	0.10	-0.44	0.00	-0.09	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.65	1.00					
Individualism	0.45	92.15%	-0.85	-0.26	0.65	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.00	1.00				
Uncertainty avoidance	5.02	43.99%	0.66	0.26	0.00	-0.20	0.88	0.10	0.54	0.10	0.10	-0.58	0.00	1.00			
Masculinity	4.06	1.42%	0.00	0.00	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.00	0.10	0.60	0.10	0.00	0.10	1.00		
Indulgence	4.27	12.42%	-0.54	-0.88	-0.12	0.37	0.13	0.00	0.69	-0.98	0.10	0.63	0.10	0.00	-0.50	1.00	
Short-term orientation	2.85	2.98%	0.00	0.53	-0.92	0.10	0.00	-0.07	0.10	0.00	0.10	0.00	0.00	0.10	-0.32	-0.94	1.00