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Public Service and Motivation: Does Mission Matter?

This study advances our understanding of employee work motivation and performance in the public sector by reinterpreting the literature on public service motivation within the psychological framework of goal theory. An empirical test of this new framework suggests that goal theory provides a strong theoretical foundation for understanding the independent contributions of task, mission, and public service to employee work motivation and performance. The importance of an organization's mission increases employee work motivation in the public sector by making the job more important, even after controlling for the effect of performance-related extrinsic rewards.

It is commonly assumed that public sector organizations are more likely to employ individuals whose values and needs are consistent with the public service mission of the organization (Baldwin 1984; Balfour and Wechsler 1990; Crewson 1997; Perry and Wise 1990; Rainey and Steinbauer 1999). Charged with promoting the general social welfare, as well as the protection of society and its citizens, public organizations often have missions with broader scope and more profound impact than those typically found in the private sector (Baldwin 1984). Consequently, the composition of the public workforce is expected to reflect the nature of public sector work by attracting employees who desire opportunities to fulfill higher-order needs and altruistic impulses by performing public service. In fact, considerable empirical support exists for the assertion that employee reward preferences coincide with the function served by the sector in which they are employed. Public sector employees have repeatedly been found to place a lower value on financial rewards and a higher value on helping others (public service) than their private sector counterparts (Boyne 2002; Wright 2001).¹

The existence of sectoral differences in reward preferences is not just a matter of purely academic interest; rather, it is assumed that these differences have a practical influence on the performance of public sector organizations. Studies that have found similar levels of work motivation among public and private employees

suggest that the importance employees place on contributing to the public service mission of their organizations may provide intrinsic rewards that compensate for the low levels of extrinsic rewards commonly associated with public sector work (Baldwin 1984; Emmert and Taher 1992; Frank and Lewis 2004; Posner and Schmidt 1982; Rainey 1979, 1983). Attempts to link differences in public sector employee motivation to any specific performance-related attitudinal or behavioral consequences, however, have produced mixed results. Although Rainey (1982) found no relationship between the importance employees place on public service and their job involvement, Crewson (1997) found that federal employees who prefer service over economic rewards are more committed to the organizations in which they work. Similarly, though Naff and Crum (1999) found that employees with high public service values are less likely to leave government employment and more likely to receive better performance evaluations, Alonso and Lewis (2001) found no relationship between public service orientation and performance evaluations or career achievement. The inconsistency of the empirical findings, however, may be the result of incomplete rather than inaccurate theoretical models, as these studies often do not include any underlying process variables that explain *how* such differences have an impact on employee work motivation or performance. In fact, previous reviews of this literature have found that the empirical research on sector differences lacks strong theory (Baldwin 1991; Perry and Porter 1982; Perry and Rainey 1988), and the research investigating the motivation of public employees generally has not done so within the broader framework of psychological process theories of work motivation (Gibson and Teasley 1973; Wright 2001).

This study contributes to the literature on public sector employee performance in two ways. First, it uses the goal theory of motivation (Locke and Latham 1990, 2002) to propose a theoretical model explaining the potential effects of the importance of

organizational mission on employee work motivation, suggesting that the importance employees place on mission enhances their perceived importance their jobs, which, in turn, enhances motivation. Second, this research uses this model to empirically test the relationship between the importance of organizational mission and employee work motivation that is often asserted—but rarely tested—in the public administration literature.

Goal Theory and Public Service Motivation

One avenue for investigating the influence of organizational goals on employee performance is to emphasize the role of employee commitment. Although previous research has identified many types of employee commitment (Morrow 1983), the public sector research has focused primarily on the extent to which employees are committed to the organization (Balfour and Wechsler 1990, 1996; Buchanan 1974; Moon 2000), with little attention given to the employee's commitment to performing the work itself. Although it may be more likely that individuals who are committed to the organization will also be committed to achieving the performance objectives assigned by the organization, such is not always the case. Studies have found that although organizational commitment is often strongly related to job involvement (Brown 1996; Mathieu and Zajac 1990) and, to a lesser degree, goal commitment (Klein et al. 1999), these notions appear to be conceptually distinct. An individual “may be committed to his job or task but not necessarily to his organization and vice versa” (Wiener and Vardi 1980, 82). In fact, the distinction between these two concepts becomes even clearer when viewed in light of their respective behavioral consequences. Commitment at the organizational level primarily influences employee retention (Mathieu and Zajac 1990), whereas commitment at the job level—job involvement and goal commitment—is more closely associated with employee work effort or performance (Brown 1996; Klein et al. 1999). In order to understand employee performance, public sector scholars and organizations must investigate the motivation to work hard and well within the organization, in addition to the motivation to join and stay in the organization (Barnard 1938).

To accomplish this, several public management scholars have suggested the importance of goal theory in understanding the motivational context of public organizations (Gibson and Teasley 1973; Perry and Porter 1982; Selden and Brewer 2000; Wright 2001, 2004). This suggestion is consistent with recent reviews of work motivation theories, which recommend that any model of work motivation should contain the underlying factors that explain how goals affect work motivation (Kanfer 1992; Katzell and Thompson 1990; Mitchell 1997). These factors fall into two

categories: goal content and goal commitment. Goal content refers to the way that certain characteristics of goals or jobs, such as their difficulty and specificity, influence the goal–performance relationship by directing or energizing behavior. Alternatively, goal commitment refers to job attitudes that influence the persistence of goal-related behavior, focusing on whether the individual accepts the goal and is determined to reach it, even if confronted with setbacks or obstacles. Recent empirical work suggests these factors can help us to understand the potential impact of ambiguous, conflicting, and important organizational goals on employee performance (Selden and Brewer 2000; Wright 2004). Unfortunately, these studies provide only a partial test of goal theory's application in the public sector, either by focusing on goal content over goal commitment (Wright 2004) or failing to investigate the relationships between goal-related constructs (Selden and Brewer 2000).² Although goal commitment is particularly salient to understanding the effects of organizational mission on public employee work motivation, a more comprehensive model of the influence of these factors is necessary. To that end, this study advances our understanding of work motivation in the public sector by using the conceptual framework of goal theory to investigate the effect of organizational mission valence on employee commitment to assigned performance objectives.

Performance-Goal Commitment

There is growing recognition of the importance of commitment in understanding employee performance (Denhardt, Denhardt, and Aristigueta 2002; Klein et al. 1999). Goal commitment depicts the extent to which an individual accepts a performance goal and is determined to reach it, even if confronted with setbacks or obstacles (Erez, Earley, and Hulin 1985). Although research has identified a wide variety of factors that may contribute to goal commitment, two conditions seem particularly important: Individuals are more committed to their performance objectives when they believe those objectives are achievable and will result in important outcomes for themselves or, to the extent they are committed to organizational goals, the organization in which they work. Together, these two conditions, represented in figure 1 by self-efficacy and job-goal importance, determine the degree to which individuals are committed to performing their work tasks, whereas other identified factors are more distal antecedents and only influence such commitment indirectly as a result of their effect on these conditions (Hollenbeck and Klein 1987; Klein 1991; Klein et al. 1999; Locke, Latham, and Erez 1988; Wofford, Goodwin, and Premack 1992). Therefore, an understanding of the motivational context requires a discussion of not only each of the conditions that directly influence goal commitment but also how the separate but related contributions of

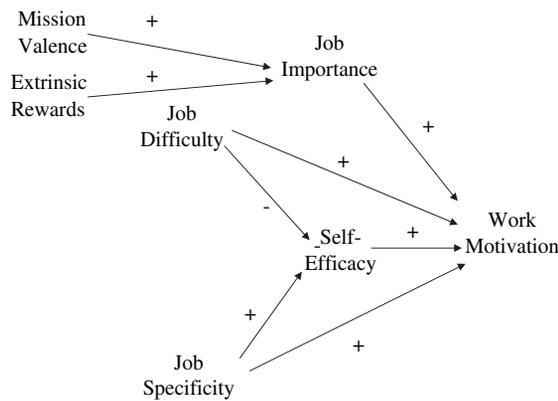


Figure 1 Conceptual Model

task and mission characteristics affect employee motivation.

Job-Goal Importance

If individuals do not perceive performance objectives as meaningful or important, they have little reason to strive to achieve them. This is of particular interest in the work setting, where employees are expected to achieve not their own personal objectives but performance objectives assigned by others. In practice, however, there may be little distinction between assigned goals and self-selected goals.³ In fact, many studies have found a strong link between assigned goals and subsequent personal goals (Early and Lituchy 1991; Locke and Latham 1990), with assigned goals proving to be just as effective at increasing performance as participatively set goals, as long as some rationale for the goal is provided (Latham, Erez, and Locke 1988).

There are a number of ways in which organizations can affect employees' perceptions of the importance of their assigned work. For example, Rainey and Steinbauer (1999) suggest that the effectiveness and performance of government agencies may be enhanced by three interrelated levels of intrinsic rewards—task, mission, and public service—that are available through the employee's role in the organization. This assertion is consistent with the goal theory of work motivation and its expectation that employees will expend greater effort toward achieving performance goals that they believe will result in important outcomes (Locke and Latham 1990). Similar to the concept of task significance, if employees view the organization's mission as important and congruent with their own values, then they are more likely to incorporate organizational goals into their own sense of identity and view their assigned roles in achieving those goals as personally meaningful (Weiss and Piderit 1999) (see figure 1). This emphasis on the relationship between the importance of job goals and organizational goals may be especially important for public sector organizations (Wright 2001), as they are

more likely to employ individuals whose values and needs are consistent with the altruistic or community service nature of the organization's mission or goals (Crewson 1997; Frank and Lewis 2004; Houston 2000; Perry and Wise 1990). Consistent with this research, goal theory provides an important theoretical framework for investigating the separate but related contributions of task and mission motivation by suggesting that public employees are motivated to achieve their performance objectives because they place greater importance on their jobs when working for an organization that they believe provides a valuable public service.

Another way that organizations can make assigned performance goals important to the employee is by providing appropriate rewards for goal attainment (Klein 1991; Mowen, Middlemist, and Luther 1981; Wright 1989). In contrast to intrinsic rewards that are self-administered by the employee for good performance, rewards such as pay, promotion, and recognition granted by others in the organization are extrinsic rewards. Assigning difficult goals, for example, has been found to improve performance merely because such goals are perceived to be associated with more beneficial outcomes or extrinsic rewards than easy goals (Mento, Locke, and Klein 1992). Although the type and amount of the reward is important, extrinsic rewards only act as performance incentives when they are contingent on performance. If employees perceive a weak link between performance and extrinsic rewards, the utility of this method for enhancing goal importance is severely limited (Lawler 1994). Therefore, consistent with previous studies, three hypotheses regarding the influence of work context on work motivation are offered:

H₁: Job-goal importance has a direct, positive effect on work motivation.

H₂: The perceived importance of organizational goals (mission valence) has an indirect, positive effect on work motivation through its influence on job-goal importance.

H₃: Extrinsic rewards that are contingent on performance have an indirect, positive effect on work motivation through their influence on job-goal importance.

Self-Efficacy

Regardless of how important performance goals may be, employees are unlikely to exhibit commitment to their work objectives unless they also perceive those objectives as achievable. Consequently, an individual's self-efficacy—that is, the judgment of his or her own "capabilities to organize and execute courses of action required to attain designated types of performances" (Bandura 1986, 391)—plays an essential role

in the individual's incentive and commitment to act. Self-efficacy influences motivation through its effect on the direction and persistence of behavior. Higher levels of self-efficacy are often associated with better performance because employees are more likely to expend the necessary effort and persist in the face of obstacles if they feel that their efforts will eventually be successful (Bandura 1988; Bandura and Cervone 1983, 1986; Early and Lituchy 1991). Recent applications of goal theory in public sector organizations provide empirical evidence to support this relationship (Wright 2004).

Building on goal theory research, a number of factors by which public organizations can influence employee self-efficacy have been identified (Wright 2001), including job-goal difficulty, job-goal specificity, performance feedback, and procedural constraints. Although job-goal difficulty and specificity have direct effects on self-efficacy, feedback and procedural constraints have been shown to affect self-efficacy only indirectly through their effects on job-goal specificity (Wright 2004). For this reason, the current study focuses only on the former goal-related properties (figure 1).

Job-goal difficulty and specificity refer to performance-goal content or properties that, consistent with goal theory (Locke and Latham 1990), have been shown to have direct effects on both the self-efficacy and work motivation of public employees (Wright 2004). For example, although goal difficulty may enhance motivation by requiring the individual to expend greater effort to attain the positive self-evaluation that drives behavior (Bandura 1986; Locke and Latham 1990), it can also lower performance-goal commitment by reducing the probability of successfully achieving the performance goals. Job-goal specificity, on the other hand, can increase motivation by focusing the employee's attention and effort on those behaviors that are most pertinent to the desired performance (Locke and Latham 1990). Job-goal specificity may also have a direct effect on performance-goal commitment because a better understanding of performance expectations makes employees feel more responsibility for work outcomes (Salancik 1977). In addition to directly affecting employee performance by focusing the employee on the task at

hand, such direction can increase self-efficacy by reducing the sense of futility that is commonly associated with role or task ambiguity (Hartline and Ferrell 1996; Kahn et al. 1964; Wright 2004). Thus, the following hypotheses are offered:

H₄: Self-efficacy has a direct positive effect on work motivation.

H_{5a}: Job-goal difficulty has a direct positive effect on work motivation.

H_{5b}: Job-goal difficulty has an indirect negative effect on work motivation through its influence on employee self-efficacy.

H_{6a}: Job-goal specificity has a direct positive effect on work motivation.

H_{6b}: Job-goal specificity has an indirect positive effect on work motivation through its influence on employee self-efficacy.

Research Methodology

Sample Selection and Survey Administration

The data used to test this model were collected from a survey of a large New York State agency with approximately 2,200 employees. The survey was administered by a group of external consultants on site, with each employee given a designated time and place to take the survey. Questionnaires were completed and returned by 1,895 employees, for an 86.9 percent response rate. Most previous research on public service motivation has focused on public sector managers and professionals; therefore, respondents were included in this study only if they self-identified with these occupational categories and the pay grades typically associated with that type of work (at or above salary grade 18).⁴ Using these criteria, data from 807 employees were included in the analysis.

Measures

The self-administered survey instrument was designed to elicit information on employee perceptions of job characteristics, the work environment, human resources management practices, turnover intentions, and job alternatives, as well as demographic information.

Table 1 Univariate Statistics

	Items in Scale	Scale Range	Midpoint	Observed Minimum Score	Observed Maximum Score	Mean	Standard Deviation
Work motivation	4	3–22	11.0	4	20	16.74	2.84
Job-goal importance	2	1–10	5.5	1	10	7.87	1.78
Self-efficacy	3	3–18	10.5	3	18	14.80	2.58
Job-goal specificity	2	1–10	5.5	1	10	6.31	2.31
Job-goal difficulty	3	2–16	9.0	2	16	12.79	2.50
Mission valence	3	2–16	9.0	2	16	12.82	2.97
Extrinsic rewards	3	2–16	9.0	2	16	8.80	3.74

Table 2 Bivariate Correlations and Reliabilities

		1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1	Work motivation	(0.68)						
2	Job-goal importance	0.61*	(0.67)					
3	Self-efficacy	0.25*	0.16*	(0.68)				
4	Job-goal specificity	0.31*	0.31*	0.15*	(0.76)			
5	Job-goal difficulty	0.47*	0.48*	-0.06	0.14*	(0.77)		
6	Mission valence	0.54*	0.64*	0.10*	0.29*	0.37*	(0.77)	
7	Extrinsic rewards	0.43*	0.45*	0.04	0.50*	0.28*	0.48*	(0.79)

* $p < 0.05$. Cronbach's alpha in parentheses.

Wherever possible, the study variables were measured using items from previous measures. Employee work motivation was measured using three items from Patchen's (1970) motivation scale representing intensity and direction of effort, and a fourth item measuring persistence of effort from Baldwin's (1991) adaptation of that scale. Self-efficacy was measured using three items taken from a scale of effort-performance expectancy (Sims, Szilagyi, and McKemey 1976), job-goal specificity was measured using two items adapted from a role ambiguity scale (Beehr, Walsh, and Taber 1976), and job-goal difficulty was gauged using a three-item measure similar to that employed by Wright (2004).

Questionnaire items were identified to measure the remaining study variables based on the descriptions found in the literature (Locke and Latham 1990;

Steers and Porter 1974). Responses to all questionnaire items were recorded using a five-point Likert scale (ranging from 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree), or a five-point frequency of occurrence scale (almost never, rarely, sometimes, often, almost always). Multiple items were used to measure all seven study variables. The appendix presents the questionnaire items and coding scales associated with all measures.

Survey Respondents

As mentioned previously, the data used for this analysis came from 807 public employees who self-identified as managers and professionals with pay grades typically associated with that type of work (at or above salary grade 18).⁵ The majority of respondents identified themselves as male (63.5 percent) and Caucasian (90.8 percent). On average, the sample

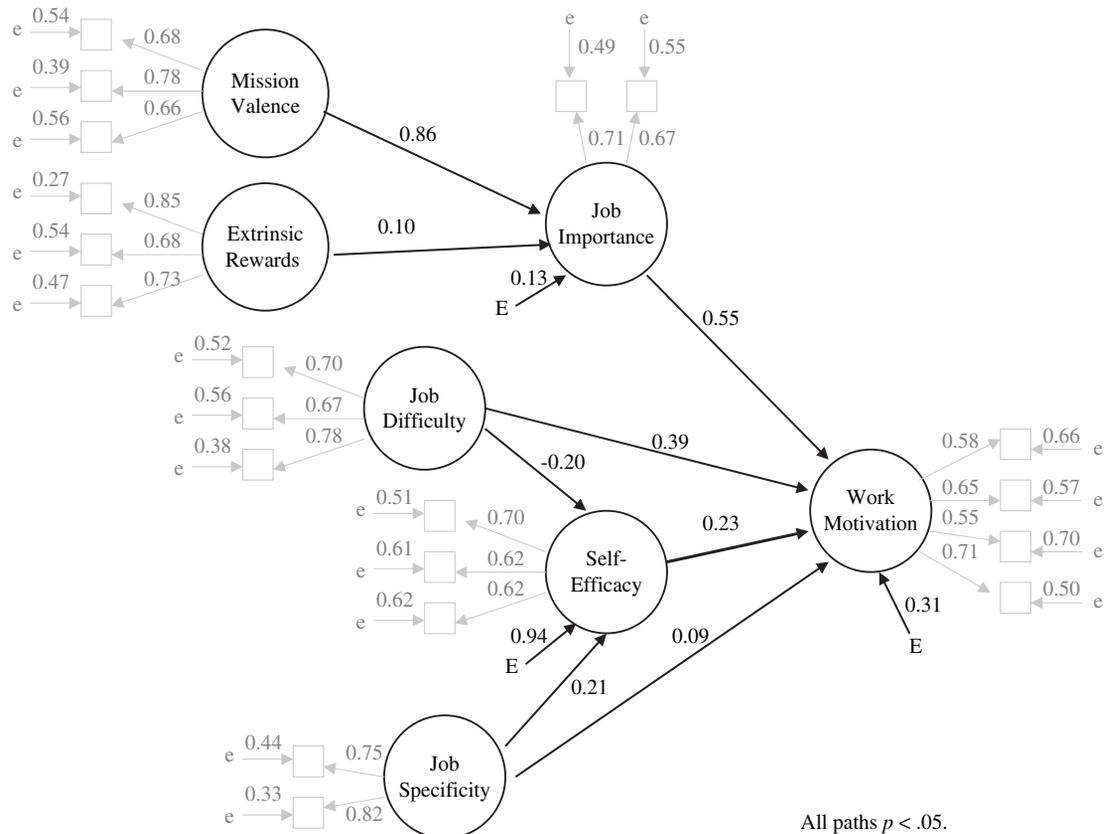


Figure 2 Empirical Findings

respondents had worked for the agency for 16 years, with seven years of tenure in their current positions. Salary grade provided a measure of organizational level and responsibility. Approximately two-thirds of the respondents (68.2 percent) reported themselves at salary grades 18–25, which represent low- to mid-level professionals, while the remaining one-third (31.8 percent) were at the senior management or executive levels (salary grades 26–M4).

Results and Findings

Psychometric Properties of the Measures

Table 2 reports reliability estimates for each of the seven study measures included in the analysis, as well as the zero-order correlations between them. Reliability estimates (Cronbach's alpha) for the study measures (corresponding to the constructs depicted in figure 1) ranged from .67 to .79. A confirmatory factor analysis offered support for the discriminant validity of the measures used. All of the scale items were found to have statistically significant factor loadings ($p < .05$) for their respective latent constructs (lambda values ranged from .55 to .86; see figure 2), and the goodness-of-fit indexes indicated that this measurement model provided a good fit to the data (CFI = .96, GFI = .92, RMSEA = .07, and $\chi^2(149) = 637.83, p < .05$).

All but two of the 21 bivariate correlations in table 2 were statistically significant at $p < .05$. The prevalence of significant relationships may suggest some weaknesses in the study measures. In particular, it may be a product of monomethod bias, whereby the measures are correlated over and above the true variance of the underlying latent variables because of shared systematic or source errors associated with collecting self-report data at a single point in time (Sullivan and Feldman 1979). Although some degree of monomethod bias is certain to exist, the prevalence of significant relationships is to be expected for two reasons that are endemic to the study. First, a considerable degree of interrelatedness between the study variables was expected with eight hypothesized direct relationships, as well as the corresponding indirect and spurious relationships. Second, the sample size used in the study was large enough to be sensitive to small effects (Cohen 1988), finding statistically significant relationships in which only 0.5 percent of the variance was shared. Regardless of the prevalence of significant relationships between the seven study measures, the strength and pattern of the measures suggest that they are relatively distinct. The bivariate correlations ranged from .04 to .64, with an average correlation among the measures of .34. On average, the proportion of shared variance between any two measures was low ($r^2 = .11$), and no measure shared more than 41 percent variance with any other measure.

Univariate Analysis

Table 1 reports the univariate statistics for each measure. The potential range of values for each scale varied depending on the number of items or questions used to create each measure. Distributions for six of the seven measures were negatively skewed, with respondents reporting a relatively high degree of work motivation, self-efficacy, job-goal importance, job-goal specificity, job-goal difficulty, and mission valence. Although the distributions for all seven measures show a moderate degree of variability, tests of univariate nonnormality were not significant and fell within the range ($+/-1$ skewness and $+/-1$ kurtosis) considered acceptable for maximum likelihood estimation linear structural relationships (LISREL) analysis (Jaccard and Wan 1996).

Looking at the univariate statistics, two findings are of interest. First, respondents reported rather high levels of work motivation. Although this finding may be counter to general public employee stereotypes, it is consistent with previous studies that found the work motivation of public sector employees to be similar to their private sector counterparts (Baldwin 1984; Emmert and Taher 1992; Posner and Schmidt 1982; Rainey 1979, 1983). This finding may be suspect, however, because of the potential for social desirability bias (Rainey 1993) or the subjectivity inherent in self-reported motivation (Blunt 1987). A second finding of interest is that the degree of mission valence and extrinsic rewards that public employees experience at work is consistent with expectations regarding the relative availability of intrinsic and extrinsic rewards in the public sector. These public employees reported placing considerable importance on the goals of their organization while simultaneously noting relatively lower levels of extrinsic rewards, with the latter measure scoring slightly below the scale midpoint.

Multivariate Analysis

The analysis of the hypothesized relationships among the latent constructs was tested in a structural model using LISREL (version 8.30).⁶ The overall model fit of the hypothesized structural model was tested using fit indexes recommended by Jaccard and Wan (1996). The majority of these indexes suggested that the theoretical model accurately captured the pattern of relationships found in the data. The comparative fit index (CFI) was .95 and the goodness-of-fit index (GFI) was .91, both greater than the .90 value used to suggest good model fit. The root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) was .07, lower than the threshold of .08 generally considered necessary for a satisfactory model fit. Only the maximum likelihood chi-square ($\chi^2[155] = 733.49, p < .05$) was not consistent with overall model fit. The lack of fit found by the chi-square test, however, was not particularly troubling, as this particular index is sensitive to

sample size, with larger samples inflating the chi square and decreasing the likelihood of achieving a good model fit (James, Mulaik, Brett 1982).

Figure 2 presents the parameter estimates for the structural model as standardized regression weights. The *t*-statistics for path coefficients for all of the hypothesized relationships were statistically significant ($p < .05$) and in the predicted direction, providing additional support for the accuracy of the theoretical model. These findings confirm the importance of goal content (specificity and difficulty) and commitment (importance and self-efficacy) in understanding public sector employee work motivation. When taken together, these variables explain just over two-thirds (69 percent) of the variance in employee work motivation.⁷ Additionally, this analysis supports the general assertion that mission valence plays an important role in determining work motivation by enhancing the importance or meaningfulness employees find in their job. The relative importance of mission valence over extrinsic rewards when explaining job-goal importance ($\beta = .86$ and $.10$, respectively) is also consistent with previous public service motivation research. Together with extrinsic reward, mission valence explains the vast majority (87 percent) of the variance in the importance that employees see in their job.

Conclusion

Although the results of any single study should be viewed with caution, this study advances our understanding of employee work motivation and performance in the public sector by reinterpreting the existing literature on public service motivation within the psychological conceptual framework of goal theory to suggest a specific process by which employee values influence behavior. The empirical test of this new framework suggests that goal theory provides a strong theoretical foundation for understanding the separate but related contributions of task and mission characteristics on the work motivation and performance of professional employees in the public sector. At the task or job level, these findings are consistent with the basic tenets of the goal theory of motivation. Public employees are more motivated to perform their work when they have clearly understood and challenging tasks that they feel are important and achievable. Simultaneously, when looking at the potential influence of organizational mission, these findings are consistent with the public service motivation literature. The intrinsic value that employees see in the mission of their organization was found to influence their work motivation by increasing the importance they placed on their own work. As expected by goal theorists, the availability of extrinsic rewards contingent on performance was also found to have a significant influence on the degree of importance employees

placed on their jobs. This influence, however, was less than that exhibited by the intrinsic value afforded by the organization's mission. Again, this suggests that the basic framework provided by goal theory can not only incorporate but also support the fundamental assumption of public service motivation: that the intrinsic rewards provided by the nature or function of the organization may be more important to public sector employees than—or compensate for the limited availability of—performance-related extrinsic rewards (Perry and Wise 1990).

In addition to providing support for the usefulness of goal theory as a theoretical framework for future studies of public service motivation, this study also has important implications for the management of public organizations. Admittedly, these implications are not new but are derived by combining the lessons previously offered by the proponents of these two theories. Nonetheless, valuable insights can be gained by seeing that these lessons support rather than contradict one another. For example, though providing extrinsic rewards that are contingent on performance can play a significant role in the work motivation of public employees (Alonso and Lewis 2001; Rainey 1982), there are other factors that are of equal or greater importance (Crewson 1997; Naff and Crum 1999). Public managers should neither ignore the importance of such rewards nor look to them as a primary solution to the motivation puzzle. They should, however, take care to assign performance expectations in ways that not only clearly explain what employees should do and how they should do it but also *why* they should do it. Such communication is important in facilitating employee work motivation and is also within the purview of the manager. Explaining the performance expectation in terms of both outcomes and processes can help direct employee behavior toward the most desired tasks and sustain this behavior by enhancing their confidence in their abilities.

Managers should also look at organizational mission as a motivational tool that can link employee performance to employee self-concept (Weiss 1996). The motivational power of public service, however, should be nurtured rather than assumed. Again, communication is necessary to capitalize on the opportunity afforded by the public sector mission. To ensure that employees see working on organizational tasks as a way to validate their self-concept, managers must emphasize not only how the organization's values coincide with those of employees but also how employee performance contributes to the organization's ability to operationalize those values. In other words, managers can inspire their employees to work harder by clearly communicating how their work benefits society.

Notes

1. As these literature reviews note, however, the empirical support for these differences has not always been consistent.
2. Selden and Brewer do not empirically test the interrelationships (mediators and moderators) suggested in Locke and Latham's high performance cycle (1990), and they operationalize commitment more in terms of the organization's commitment to the employee (e.g., participation in decision making, supervisor trust, and encouragement of personal development) than the employee's commitment to performing his or her own work.
3. The same two factors, goal importance and self-efficacy, have been found to predict both goal commitment and goal choice (Latham and Locke 1991).
4. Although limiting the sample to professional and managerial employees is consistent with the previous research on public service motivation, it does limit the generalizability of the results. In particular, the sample may be biased toward employees who are more predisposed to identify with the organization, its mission, or even the work itself. Studies have found that employees at higher hierarchical and salary levels exhibit greater public service motivation (Bright 2005), job involvement (Brown 1996), and, to a lesser degree, organizational commitment (Mathieu and Zajac 1990).
5. Although pay rates for these grade levels vary depending on the bargaining unit, the starting salary for grade level 18 ranges from \$37,000 to \$39,000.
6. Figure 2 represents the entire model tested, the structural model (bolded), and the underlying measurement model.
7. Coefficients of determination for the endogenous variables can be calculated from figure 1 as 1 minus the error term for the latent variable (E).

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Appendix: Survey Measures

Work Motivation

- I put forth my best effort to get my job done regardless of the difficulties.*
- It has been hard for me to get very involved in my current job.* (R)
- I probably do not work as hard as others who do the same type of work. (R)
- Time seems to drag while I am on the job. (R)

Job-Goal Specificity

- My immediate supervisor properly instructs me regarding how to do my job.*
- My supervisor clearly expresses work expectations to me.

Job-Goal Difficulty

- The work objectives in my job require a great deal of effort.*
- Jobs like mine are quite demanding day after day.*
- My work is very challenging.

Job-Goal Importance

- I feel that my work is important.*
- I work on tasks that seem useless or unnecessary. (R)

Self-Efficacy

- I am confident that I can successfully perform any tasks assigned to me on my current job.*
- I can complete the work that is expected of me.*
- I am not as well prepared as I could be to meet all the demands of my job.* (R)

Mission Valence

- The work of this division is not very significant in the broader scheme of things.* (R)
- I believe that the priorities of this division are quite important.*
- This division provides valuable public services.

Extrinsic Rewards

- Working hard is recognized by upper management.*
- Fulfilling all my job responsibilities does little to improve my chances for a promotion.* (R)
- I have seen good job performance rewarded in my work unit.

*Response measured on a six-point (1–6) scale: strongly disagree, generally disagree, disagree, agree, generally agree, strongly agree. Responses for all other items were measured on a five-point (0–4) scale: almost never or never, rarely, sometimes, often, almost always or always. (R) = Reverse coded.

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