Finding Workable Levers over Work Motivation: Comparing Job Satisfaction, Job Involvement and Organizational Commitment

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Abstract:
This article draws on a sample of state government health and human service managers to develop and test a model of work motivation. We examine the effect of individual attributes, job characteristics, and organizational variables on three aspects of work motivation: job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and job involvement. We find that managers have varying degrees of influence over these different aspects of work motivation, with greatest influence over job satisfaction and least influence over job involvement. A number of variables are important for work motivation, including public service motivation, advancement opportunities, role clarity, job routineness, and group culture.

Key words: job satisfaction, organizational commitment, job involvement, work motivation, culture

Introduction

This article examines the ways in which public managers can influence different aspects of work motivation. Why does work motivation matter? Herbert Simon suggested that the basic challenge for all organizations is "inducing their employees to work toward organizational goals" (Simon 1997, p.276). More recently, Pfeffer (1998) has argued that the key to long-term success has been, and will continue to be, how organizations manage their employees, since creating meaningful work and otherwise keeping employees happy is central to fostering organizational effectiveness.

But how do organizations know if they are keeping employees happy, motivated, and actively committed to the organization? There is no simple answer, because what we refer to as work motivation is a multidimensional concept linked to how employees interact with and view their organizations, and is reflected in the degree to which the employee feels a sense of connection, obligation, and reward in working for the organization (Allen & Meyer 1990). Locke and Latham's definition reflects the broad scope of work motivation: "The concept of motivation refers to internal factors that impel action and to external factors that can act as inducements to action" (2004, p.388).

In operationalizing work motivation we do not reinvent the wheel, but instead employ three previously established concepts as dependent variables: job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and job involvement. Locke's (1997) review of the theories and associated empirical work on work motivation places these as central and interrelated components in explaining or representing the concept of work motivation. Job satisfaction has been defined as the "pleasurable or positive emotional state resulting from the appraisal of one's job or job experience" (Locke, 1976, p.1300). Employee commitment indicates the sense of loyalty and

obligation the employee holds toward the organization (Allen & Meyer 1990). Organizational

commitment helps to motivate individuals to pursue collective goals rather than individual

outcomes (Ellemers, de Gilder & Van den Heuvel, 1998). Job involvement indicates the degree

to which the workplace contributes to one's self image (Lodahl & Kejner, 1965) and satisfies

important needs (Dubin, 1956; 1968).

Consistent with Locke and Latham, we conceptualize motivation broadly, to incorporate

factors that make the employee more committed to the organization. This point is important

because some research in organization behavior categorizes the motivation more narrowly, and

has noted that such motivation does not necessarily overlap with job satisfaction. However, job

satisfaction is a critical predictor of turnover and absenteeism, and so our construction of

motivation is broader than the arousal of effort, but also includes factors relating to the

motivation to come to work and engagement with the work environment.

Recent work from Harrison, Newman and Roth (2006) supports this perspective, arguing that

variables such as job satisfaction and organizational commitment overlap a good deal and could

be collectively considered when examining employee attitudes and behavior. Rather than

describing their approach in terms of motivation, they describe an "attitude-engagement" model,

arguing that "*when attempting to understand patterns of work behavior from attitudes such as

job satisfaction and organizational commitment, researchers should conceptualize the criterion

at a high level of abstraction.*" (Harrison et al. 2006, p. 316, italics in original). Harrison et al.

point to the importance of such attitudes to outcome measures such as lateness, absenteeism,

turnover and some aspects of performance. Our approach rests on similar assumptions to

Harrison et al., but also incorporates job involvement as an important employee attitude. These

measures are correlated enough to be credibly considered together (in our sample organizational

commitment and job satisfaction are correlated at .526, job involvement is correlated with job satisfaction at .319 and with organizational commitment at .395), although distinctions (examined in the next section) are significant enough to merit treating each as a separate variable.

   The use of these different concepts as dependent variables facilitates the primary purpose of this article, which is to understand what fosters work motivation in the public sector and the relative degree of managerial influence over different aspects of motivation.[1] Different aspects of work motivation are usually examined without reference to one another. For our purposes we wish to examine these concepts side-by-side to gain a greater understanding of the distinctions between them.

   For managers, these distinctions are important, because they inform the possibilities of influencing individual motivation and thereby potentially improving organizational performance. Managers have varying degrees of influence over different factors that shape motivation, and a comparative approach illustrates when managerial controls can make a difference. We hypothesize that organizations will have greatest influence over job satisfaction, less influence over employee commitment, and the least influence over job involvement.

   The next section of this article outlines the basic model we propose for work motivation. We examine the role of individual attributes, job characteristics, and organizational factors. We then test the model on our three dependent variables, drawing on a national survey of state managers in health and human service functions. Finally, we discuss the results and future research opportunities.

MODEL OF WORK MOTIVATION: FINDING WORKABLE LEVERS

The personnel literature on employee motivation, commitment, and job satisfaction suggests that employee attitudes are essentially driven by both individual attributes and work context. A model of work motivation, therefore, seems relatively straightforward, implying the need to account for the relevant individual and work environment variables.

One area of complexity is in modeling the effect of the organization on work motivation. In recent years Wright and colleagues (Wright, 2001, 2003; Wright & Davis, 2002; Kim & Wright, 2004) have developed exemplary models of employee motivation, job satisfaction, and work alienation. This work is most valuable in mapping distinctions and interrelationships between different organizational variables. For a start, Wright distinguishes between job characteristics and organizational characteristics. "Job characteristics describe aspects of the job or task an employee performs, while work context pertains to characteristics of the organizational setting (e.g., the organization's reward systems, goals, or degree of formalization) in which the employee must perform work" (Wright, 2001, p.562). Wright's work also identifies organizational factors as exerting an influence on employee attitudes indirectly via job characteristics. For example, organizational level conflict and goal clarity will in turn foster job level conflict and role clarity respectively. Our theory also makes room for organizational factors having a direct effect on employee attitudes, building on the work of Ting (1997) in the area of job satisfaction.

Efforts to foster a shared organizational culture and sense of organizational purpose are examples of organizational factors that managers have some measure of influence over. We refer to these factors as workable levers. Workable levers are not simply extrinsic to the individual (such as pay and promotion), but are also shaped by how the individual interacts with the work environment and perceives the organization. For this reason, we are especially

interested in the impact that organizational culture and sense of purpose have on work motivation. Our model seeks to identify which of these workable levers are relevant to work motivation, and the varying levels of influence these levers provide to managers.

The practice of public management is defined by its formal constraints and informal opportunities (Bozeman, 2000; Rainey, Backoff & Levine, 1976; Wilson, 1989). Managers have limited tools by which they may motivate and retain their employees, since civil service rules and standard pay grades limit the ability to recognize and reward individuals through pay, promotion, or bonuses (Klingner & Nalbandian, 2003). Some levers can only be exercised rarely, and so making the right decision is critical. To the extent that individual traits affect work motivation, organizations can shape such traits most effectively through recruiting, hiring and promoting the right people.

Some levers are more accessible than others – for instance, individual managers might be relatively successful at shaping a sense of shared culture among employees, but the routine nature of a specific job is a matter of job design that is dictated by organizational leaders, or even legislation. But both are ultimately management functions. Training, experience, and professional identity will guide the perspective of managers as to how to go about creating conditions to keep their employees engaged. However, rewriting these constraints is complex, politically difficult, and usually beyond the purview of even the most senior managers.

In the area of work motivation, we expect that organizations will have greatest influence over job satisfaction, less influence over employee commitment, and the least influence over employee involvement. The motivation for our hypothesis is based on the nature of the type of work motivation, which in turn shapes which workable levers are useful. For some types of work motivation, managers have a relatively good understanding of how to affect the particular

aspect of motivation and access to appropriate workable levers. We expect organizations to have

the greatest influence over job satisfaction, in part because job satisfaction might be "the most

intensively studied variable in organizational research" (Rainey, 1997, 244), meaning that the

antecedents of this concept are well understood. Just over half of our sample are members of

professional organizations, and through meetings and literature, and through organizational

training, are likely to have some basic understanding of the causes of job satisfaction. Perhaps a

more important reason that organizations will be well-informed about job satisfaction is because

employees have a strong measure of self-interest in and awareness of their own satisfaction.

They can express their preferences both directly to management and via collective surrogates, i.e.

unions. The nature of this concept – am I satisfied with my job? – leads employees to ask

another question: is the organization doing what it reasonably can to satisfy the work conditions I

desire? It is possible that employees have work they do not find fulfilling, but they understand

that their organization is doing what it can to keep them happy. The key issue for job

satisfaction, therefore, seems to be the work conditions the employee faces, or as Wright puts it

"job satisfaction reflects the employee's reactions to what they receive" (2001, 562)

Employee commitment is a more general sense of normative obligation to the organization,

reflected in a sense of loyalty and a reluctance to leave. This sense of obligation operates at

different levels and is determined by both the individual and the work environment. Cohen

(1993; 2003) identifies three different dimensions of commitment – identification, affiliation and

moral involvement. While the identification dimension involves adoption of goals and values,

moral involvement entails internalization of the goals and values of the organization. Employee

commitment is a salient characteristic because it facilitates organizational identification by

providing the motive for incorporating organizational goals and values into a system of personal

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goals and values (Wiener, 1982). Organizational identification, in turn, can be expected to lead to the expenditure of high levels of individual effort in pursuit of organizational goals. We expect organizational commitment to be partly the result of inherent individual attributes and partly the result of how employees perceive the organization and their immediate work role.

The concept of job involvement reflects the extent to which work is a central life interest. As Dubin (1956; 1968) describes it, job involvement is the degree to which the total job situation is perceived to be a major source of satisfaction of important needs. Along the same lines, Lodahl and Kejner (1965) defined job involvement as the degree of importance of one's work to one's total self-image. Job involvement, therefore, seems to be primarily determined first by the individual's self-image and understanding of what is important in life, and only secondarily by the influence of organizational characteristics. We expect that job involvement will be primarily shaped by individual attributes and previous life experiences rather than by workable levers. We examine these individual attributes, job characteristics, and organizational level variables in greater detail in the following sections.

H1: Organizations will have greatest influence over job satisfaction, less influence over employee commitment, and the least influence over job involvement.

It is worth noting that the variables we examine are among the most studied in the organizational behavior literature. This makes it difficult for any study of these variables to add much that is new in terms of individual independent-dependent variable relationships. While we examine some relatively untested variables and offer some surprising results, our primary purpose here is broader than an interest in individual variables. We seek to understand the extent to which three important attitudinal variables are driven by individual characteristics versus

variables that are directly or indirectly under the influence of the organization, i.e., job

characteristics and aspects of the organizational culture respectively. The results therefore

inform the notion that organizations can influence critical job attitudes, but also that the level of

influence an organization has varies with the type of job attitude in question. To illustrate this

point we select a handful of the independent variables from literally hundreds of possible

candidates that could be tested to make this point. These variables are among the best

established in organizational theory through prior studies of job satisfaction, organizational

commitment and job involvement, but others variables could have been used to make the same

claims that we advance.

Individual Attributes

The first source of antecedents for work motivation comes from the employee's individual

attributes. Individual attributes are what an employee brings to the organization, and consists of

characteristics such as demographic characteristics or predispositions that are difficult or

impossible to change. The critical levers managers have to shape the individual characteristics

of their employees are recruitment, selection, hiring, promotion and firing, although such levers

are constrained by rules that seek to avoid unfair treatment.

We expect that the employee's age, background, and beliefs will have some impact on

whether an employee is engaged in the workplace or not.[2] The literature on motivation points

out that an individual's beliefs about what is important in life, and in their job, can be

characterized in terms of intrinsic and extrinsic motivations. Intrinsic motivators in public

organizations are somewhat distinct from the private sector, because of the issue of context and

evidence that public employees are motivated by doing public work (Rainey, 1982; Wittmer,

1991). An intrinsic motivator reflective of public sector work, therefore, would be Public

Service Motivation (PSM): "an individual's predisposition to respond to motives grounded

primarily or uniquely in public institutions and organizations" (Perry and Wise, 1990, p.368).

Crewson (1997) finds that PSM is a positive predictor of organizational commitment (Crewson,

1997), and Naff and Crum (1999) find that federal employees with high PSM were more likely

to perceive that their work was meaningful and report higher job satisfaction, although Ting

(1997) does not report a relationship between PSM and satisfaction. Lewis and Frank (2002)

find that individuals with high levels of PSM are more likely to want to work for government, so

we might expect that PSM encourages and sustains a sense of engagement toward public sector

work. Given that our sample comes from public sector employees, this leads us to the following

hypothesis:

    H2: Employees with high levels of PSM will have higher levels of work motivation.

    Extrinsic motivators may also foster employee engagement. An example of such a motivator

is opportunity for work advancement. Herzberg (1966) proposes that opportunity for

advancement is a key motivator, and there is evidence from different levels of government that

advancement opportunities are positively associated with job satisfaction (Ellickson, 2002;

Wright & Kim, 2004; Ting, 1997). We expect that employees who value opportunities for

advancement will display a higher level of work involvement in the hopes of soliciting such a

reward. Of course, if employees do not see advancement opportunities materialize, this effect

will be lost. While criticized for many reasons, the hierarchical and insular nature of state civil

service systems do provide for clear and predictable internal advancement. Opportunities for

advancement are also likely to be currently high for our sample of mid-level managers because

of demographic changes that have caused a crisis in human capital in the public sector (Ingraham, Selden & Moynihan, 2000). As baby-boomers retire, mid-level managers have enhanced opportunities for advancement.

H3: Employees who value advancement opportunities will have higher levels of work motivation.

Other individual attributes reflect the role of time and work motivation. Time can matter in three ways: employee age, length of time with the organization, and length of time in position. The balance of the empirical literature suggests that older employees in the public sector are more positively engaged with their work. Although Wright and Davis (2002) find no relationship between age and job satisfaction, other empirical work provides evidence of a positive relationship (Ting, 1997; deLeon & Taher, 1996; Naff & Crum 1999). Older employees are also more likely to have a stronger sense of public service (Perry, 1997, Moynihan & Pandey, 2007) and be more likely to want to work in the public sector (Lewis & Frank, 2002). The positive relationship could be the result of generational differences – older members of the population may be less cynical about the possibility of public service, and have seen enough business cycles to value the security of a public sector job. Older employees are more likely to possess traditional values and a supportive work ethic, making them more positive about their position (Ting, 1997). Ting (1997) also points out that older employees may have less opportunity to move relative to younger employees, and are more likely to cognitively rationalize the benefits of remaining with their organization.

Some have argued that length of organizational membership rather than age drives the positive relationship between older employees and job attitude – the longer individuals continue with the

same organization, the stronger their sense of organizational loyalty (Romzek, 1990). The evidence here is mixed. Crewson (1997) finds that correlates of length of organizational membership, seniority and pay grade, have been found to have a positive relationship with organizational commitment, and Kim (2002) finds that length of organizational membership is positively related to job satisfaction. However, neither study controlled for age. Traut, Larsen and Feimer (2000) find that length of service is negatively related to a variety of aspects of job satisfaction among fire-fighters, including satisfaction with departmental relationships, with supervisor, with job content, training and overall satisfaction.

Other work that has actually controlled for both tenure and age effects suggests that length of organizational membership weakens job satisfaction (Naff & Crum, 1999) and sense of public service (Moynihan & Pandey, 2007). An older study of Australian public employees, finds significant positive and negative relationships for both age and tenure on one hand, and what they present as surrogates of job satisfaction on the other, such as promotion opportunities, pay satisfaction, supervisory relationships (Hunt & Saul 1975). However, the lack of a simple, direct measure of job satisfaction hampered their ability to establish clear relationships. Why would those who stay longer with an organization be less motivated? Carson and Carson (1997) argue that "career entrenchment" can foster career dissatisfaction. Individuals who perceive a poor fit between aspirations and their career, and yet see high potential costs of quitting, may remain in their job even as they become less satisfied and less engaged. Another possible reason is that length of time in an organization gives employees an opportunity to discover and become disillusioned with organizational politics, which Vigoda (2000) finds is negatively related to job satisfaction and organizational commitment among Israeli public servants. Our sample includes both measures of employee age and length of organizational membership, which enables us to

offer some insights into the relationship between age, length of organizational membership and employee engagement.

A third argument is that the factor that leads to a negative relationship between length of tenure and job attitudes is length of time in the same position. As workers become entrenched in one position, they become less involved in their organization. The career entrenchment effect that Carson and Carson (1997) identify is likely to be even more important for those stuck in the same position. Stevens, Beyer and Trice (1978) report that age is significantly and positively correlated with job involvement, that length of organizational membership is not significantly correlated, but that length of time in the same position is negatively and significantly correlated with job involvement. This suggests that the key effect on length of organizational membership is tenure in same position rather than organization. To test this, we also include a measure of time in position.

H4: Older employees will have higher levels of work motivation.

H5: Length of organizational membership affects employee levels of work motivation.

H6: Length of time in same position weakens work motivation.

Goal theory and social cognitive theory offer a well-established logic for the importance of role conflict, role clarity, self efficacy, and feedback as important predictors of employee attitudes.[3] One difference between self-efficacy and these other variables is that it is primarily considered to be an individual characteristic, rather than a job characteristic. We therefore include in the category of individual characteristics, although we note that self-efficacy might also be considered as a variable that reflects both individual and job characteristics since it measures individual confidence that they can undertake a given task or role, and such confidence may vary with the nature of the job.

Goal theory proposes that difficult goals require employees to focus on the problem, increase their sense of goal importance, and encourage them to persist and work harder to achieve the goals. Studies of employee motivation have suggested the benefits of combining goal theory with cognitive theories of motivation to better understand the effect of difficult goals (Locke & Latham, 2004; Wright, 2003). Cognitive theory suggests that the critical motivating factor is the perceived gap between an individual's self-assessment of performance and how they want to perform. If employees perceive a large gap, they will become more discouraged (Bandura, 1988). The combination of goal difficulty and the performance-gap hypotheses is reflected in the concept of self-efficacy, which incorporates the perception of the difficulty of a goal and the perceived ability to achieve the goal. In terms of individual behavior, self-efficacy is the sense of confidence in an ability to overcome obstacles and to therefore persist in their presence (Bandura, 1988). Greater self-efficacy should be positively related to the employee's perception that they are successfully contributing to meaningful work, and therefore foster enhanced work motivation.

H7: Employees who express strong self-efficacy will have higher levels of work motivation.

Job Characteristics

Job characteristics are aspects of the individual employee's job and tasks which shape how the individual perceives their particular role in the organization. Goal theory suggests that goals that are both specific and difficult to achieve lead to higher performance than goals that tend to be easy or ambiguous (Locke & Latham, 1990). Role clarity provides a sense of purpose and increases the individual's belief that the goal is achievable. Ting (1997) finds that clarity of

tasks leads to greater job satisfaction. We expect that greater role clarity will create employees who are more satisfied with, committed to, and involved in their work.

H8: Employees with clear roles will have higher levels of work motivation.

Classical organization theory argued for routinization of work, in the belief that the employee is, by nature, a creature of habit (Gulick, 1937) and that such routinization would foster enhanced productivity (Talyor, 1919). The human relations school questioned this view, and evidence has accumulated that a monotonous and dull task environment alienates employees (Shepard, 1977). Employees who experience greater variety in their day-to-day work have been shown to be less likely to lose interest in their job and become bored (Stimson & Johnson, 1977) and are likely to be more satisfied (Wright & Davis, 2002).

H9: Employees who experience job routineness will have lower levels of work motivation.

Organizational Factors

While organizational factors may shape employee jobs and tasks in specific ways, we also propose that employee perceptions about organizational culture, purpose, achievement, and progress will influence their sense of whether the organization is a rewarding place to work and deserves their active engagement. In considering organizational factors, we sought to exclude factors that plausibly have, or have been shown to have, indirect effects on work motivation via work characteristics, such as organizational resources, procedural constraints, or organizational goal clarity.

Instead we focus on what Barnard (1938) referred to as "methods of persuasion": ways in which managers seek to shape the employee-held views of the organization. Perhaps the most

potent way in which this occurs is through organizational culture. A basic purpose of an

organizational culture is to foster internal integration and to differentiate the organization and its

members from the outside world (Schein, 1996). Culture, like work motivation itself, is a multi-

dimensional concept (Quinn & Rohrbaugh, 1984). Zammuto & Krakower (1991) operationalize

organizational culture as being comprised of four distinct dimensions. One of these dimensions

stands out as being likely to foster high levels of work motivation. Group cultures are associated

with a focus on people rather than the organization, flexibility rather than control. Group

cultures are also characterized by an emphasis on employee cohesion and morale. When

employees believe that their organization is a closely-knit team, this creates a sense of mutual

expectation and commitment. Ouchi (1981) referred to this as a "clan culture" (see also Ban,

1995). Kaufman's (1967) classic study of forest rangers had already illustrated how clan-like

cultures could foster and reinforce a sense of shared commitment among employees. Kaufman

built on insights first developed by the Hawthorne experiments – that employees consider

themselves as part of a social network. Group norms are powerful shapers of individual attitudes

and actions. Empirical support comes from Khojasteh (1993) and Ting (1997), who find that

interpersonal relations are important to job satisfaction, and Kim (2002), who finds that more

inclusive and participatory styles of management also foster increased job satisfaction.

Ellickson (2002) also finds that the sense of esprit de corps or departmental pride was the most

influential predictor of job satisfaction in his sample of municipal employees, while Steijn (2004)

finds that organizational climate was important in predicting job satisfaction.

    H10: Employees who experience a strong group culture will have higher levels of work

    motivation.

Another way in which organizations can induce higher levels of work motivation is through fostering a sense of purpose and progress among its employees. If employees perceive that the work they are doing is worthwhile and serves the need of citizens, this will foster higher commitment to the workplace (Romzek, 1990). This proposal draws on well-established claims in the public management field. Rainey and Steinbauer's (1999) review of effective organizations suggests the importance of creating an attractive mission and a supportive organizational culture. For such characteristics to improve performance, they must first change employee attitudes. Managers seeking to improve organizational effectiveness may therefore seek to influence employee perceptions about the organization itself. There is the potential for reverse causality here, i.e. that highly engaged employees create more effective organizations. However, this is not a serious threat for two reasons. First, we measure employee perceptions of purpose, rather than program or organizational measures of effectiveness (see Appendix 1). Second, there is evidence on the nature of the causal direction that supports our hypothesis that perceptions of purpose shape employee satisfaction and commitment (Caldwell & O'Reilly, 1990; Lawler, 1994).

H11: Employees who perceive a sense of organizational purpose will have higher levels of work motivation.

DATA AND METHODS

The data for this study were collected in Phase II of the National Administrative Studies Project (NASP-II). The theoretical population of interest for NASP-II was comprised of managers engaged in information management activities working in state-level primary health and human service agencies. Primary health and human service agencies were identified

according to the definition used by American Public Human Services Association (APHSA, formerly APWA) and include agencies housing programs related to Medicaid, TANF, and child welfare. Just two of the programs administered by these agencies, Medicaid and State Children's Health Insurance Program, serve over 50 million beneficiaries with total spending likely to exceed $300 billion in financial year 2004 (Smith et al. 2004). Medicaid designed initially as a health care program for the indigent has shown surprising malleability and continues to evolve, currently providing benefits to a significant segment of middle-class Americans as well (Grogan & Patashnik 2003; Pandey 2002). The institutional environment of state health and human service agencies, however, is somewhat more complicated than that of federal agencies (Daniels 1998; Thompson & Dilulio 1998). In addition to influences arising out of separation of powers and interest groups, state health and human service agencies have to operate under the purview of federal statutory and administrative guidelines.

A word about our respondents is necessary. Even though we targeted information management personnel, we employed a broad definition of information management including not only those who manage information systems applications but also managers involved in research and evaluation, managers dealing with public information and communication, and top-level program administrators. Our respondents thus include both program/operations managers as well as those serving in a range of staff functions—such a broad definition of information management is consistent with prior usage (e.g., Caudle 1990). The average age of managers we surveyed was approximately 50 yrs, almost half were women, the average length of stay in the organization was over 15 yrs, and the average salary was between $50,000 and $75,000. This demographic description sounds more consistent with our expectations of a typical career manager in health and human service agency and not the stereotypical image of IT staff as a

peripatetic young male that frequently changes jobs. Of these 274 respondents, 114 had line

responsibilities in managing programs and the rest performed in staff functions. It should,

however, be noted that even managers performing staff functions were senior managers

operating in a large agency and were responsible for providing both operational and strategic

support on an ongoing basis for the wide range of organizational operations. As with any survey

of a particular group, caution needs to be exercised in generalizing study findings. While our

sample is comprised of managers working in health and human service agencies in state

government, these managers also perform a wide range of management functions and come from

agencies across the United States.

Details on the measurement of the variables can be found in Appendix 1, along with

Cronbach's alpha scores for the scales employed. In the interests of using valid measurements

we relied on previously established methods of measurement where possible. In the case of

PSM, we used an abbreviated version of the original scale, which focuses on attraction to policy-

making, because other measures of PSM or the larger scale failed to generate minimally

acceptable Cronbach's alphas. The sources of these measures are also provided in Appendix 1.

Table 1 provides a correlation matrix, while table 2 lists the range of the scales employed, as

well as basic descriptive statistics.

Insert Table 1 and Table 2 about here

Details on the method of data collection, which provided an N of 274 and a response rate of

approximately 53 percent, can be found in Appendix 2. We tested our model with ordinary least

squares, estimating the effects of each independent variable on the three dependent variables

while holding the other independent variables constant.[4] At the request of the reviewers, a number of other variables were added to the original model (level of education, income, professionalism, training, gender, impact of managerial reforms). These variables did not prove to be significant, nor did they have an impact on the nature of the relationship of other variables. In the interests of parsimony and reducing multicollinearity these variables were not included in the final model.

RESULTS

What do the findings tell us? Before we examine the impact of individual variables, it is worth assessing the degree of support for our macro-hypothesis that a seemingly simple concept such as work motivation has different aspects and that managers have varying degrees of influence over what shapes each of these aspects. While our model can be improved further, the results appear to offer support for this proposition. A glance at the three models indicate that our models fare well at explaining job satisfaction (adjusted R^2 of .410), moderately well at explaining organizational commitment (adjusted R^2 of .329), but relatively poorly at explaining job involvement (adjusted R^2 of .107). More to the point, the source of the explanatory power of each model varies in ways that are consistent with our hypothesis. A simple but effective illustration of this point is to compare the nature of the significant variables for each model. For job satisfaction, only two of the seven significant variables come from individual attributes, the rest are the result of either job or organizational characteristics, categories over which senior managers can exert at least some degree of influence. For organizational commitment, two of five significant factors are individual attributes. For job involvement, four of six significant variables are individual attributes.

The results of the PSM variable are also illustrative of our premise, and provide further evidence of the importance of PSM in the public sector. Job satisfaction, which is based largely on the benefits that employees perceive they are receiving from their organization, is positively related with PSM. This is consistent with the findings of Naff and Crum (1999), although our findings employ one subscale of PSM related to attraction to policy-making and rely on a much smaller sample than Naff and Crum. PSM also shapes organizational commitment and involvement. Our measure of extrinsic motivation – advancement opportunities – is significantly and positively related to job satisfaction. Across the three models we find that public employees who place high value on advancement opportunities tend to be more engaged. The nature of the data does not tell us whether this is because such individuals tend to commit more to their work in the hopes of achieving such promotions, or whether public organizations have been successful at satisfying this desire for promotion.

The results also inform the nature of the relationship between age, length of organizational membership, time in the same position and work motivation. Age has a positive and significant relationship with job satisfaction, commitment and job involvement in our findings. In the context of other research (deLeon & Taher, 1996; Lewis & Frank, 2002; Moynihan & Pandey 2007; Naff & Crum 1999; Perry, 1997) these results do suggest something of a generation gap for the public sector, with older employees more likely to be satisfied with and involved in their work. This finding is consistent with the growing human capital crisis resulting from the

"graying" of government. Younger employees seem less interested in or satisfied with government work.

How is it that substantively similar work circumstances invoke different affective and cognitive reactions? One possibility is that older workers' sense of job satisfaction is informed by a longer time-span that covers eras in which public service was held in high esteem (Kelman, 1987; Rainey 1997). More broadly, Herzberg, Mausner, Peterson and Capwell (1957) predicted that age is likely to be positively related to job attitudes because older employees have gained enough experience to modify expectations. Having seen other organizations, they have developed realistic expectations about their job, and are less likely to be disappointed.

Length of time in the same position has a negative relationship with commitment and with job involvement. Length of organizational membership has a negative and significant relationship with job involvement. Together, these findings are somewhat discouraging, suggesting that the longer an employee is a member of the same organization, the less engaged they feel, even when controlling for the frustrations of employees stuck in the same position for a considerable period. Being in the public sector for decades appears to dampen the sense of job involvement employees bring to the public sector. The expectation modification hypothesis of Herzberg et al. (1957) may also be relevant here. Those who have tended to remain in the same organization or position for a considerable period have a much more limited reference point of comparison by which to modify expectations, and are more likely to believe that the grass is greener in other organizations/positions.

We present these findings tentatively, noting that the findings may not be generalizable to areas outside of health and human services or our particular sample, although we note that other scholars have found similar results on length of organizational membership on job satisfaction

(Naff & Crum 1999; Traut, Larsen & Feimer 2000). Additional empirical work is needed to test whether job tenure acts to reduce work motivation and, if it does, how one might structure the job to mitigate this effect. Our work here points to the importance of testing the effects of age, tenure, and position entrenchment simultaneously. Even though the variables appear similar, our results suggest that they have distinct and separate effects. Failure to test each at the same time could lead to a misinterpretation of results.

The policy implication of this finding is not to push the long-term members out of the public sector. Such employees provide organizational memory, and given the current human capital shortage in the public sector, such a recommendation would be foolish. Instead, the finding suggests that organizations need to pay attention to the danger that tenure begets lower work engagement and to find ways to reconnect long-term members to the organization (see also Traut, Larsen & Feimer, 2000). The findings on negative effect of length of time in the same position, along with the findings on the importance of promotional opportunities suggest the critical importance of promotions to reduce the stultifying effect of being in the same position.

Self-efficacy has a positive and significant impact on job satisfaction as predicted, but has a negative and moderately significant impact at the .1 level on organizational commitment, contrary to our hypothesis. One possible explanation is that our measure of self-efficacy is really a measure of boredom. If this were the case we would expect a strong positive correlation with job routineness. The correlation is .156, significant at .1 but not as strong as might be expected. In addition, we would also expect that the self-efficacy as boredom hypothesis would lead to a negative relationship with job satisfaction, while we find the opposite. Another possible explanation for this result in conjunction with the negative effect of organizational tenure on job involvement is that certain aspects of the work environment in the public sector, at least in the

sample we study, have a negative effect on work motivation. Over time, such aspects of the work environment not only reduce job involvement but also impede self efficacy and associated commitment to one's work role from generalizing to a higher level such as the organization. Thus, a highly trained professional in public service would tend to identify and express high commitment with the profession rather than the organization (Mosher 1982).

The findings on job characteristics underline the limited workable levers that managers can use to shape work involvement. Neither job routineness or role clarity, or even self-efficacy, is a significant predictor of work involvement. Job routineness is also a negative and significant predictor of job satisfaction, confirming previous findings (Wright & Davis 2002). Role clarity is a positive and significant predictor of both job satisfaction and organizational commitment. One frequently cited characteristic of the public sector is the potential for ambiguity or outright conflict between competing goals (Chun & Rainey, 2005; Pandey & Rainey 2006; Rainey, Backoff & Levine, 1976; Rainey, 1993). Organizations with clear goals and a clear understanding of those goals are generally expected to be more effective (Wilson, 1989). Organizational goal clarity in turn leads to clearer supervisory feedback and clarity in specific tasks faced by an individual employee (Wright, 2003). Such clarity also positively affects employee attitudes, and our results support similar findings on job satisfaction (Wright & Davis, 2002) and work motivation (Wright, 2003).

This article also sought to make a contribution by arguing that managers could influence work motivation by changing the employees' perception of the organization. While the organizational level variables are not uniformly significant across all measures of work motivation, enough of them are significant to provide support for this claim. Group culture is positively and significantly associated with job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and job

involvement. Our respondents who perceived a shared culture of mutual commitment and a family-like atmosphere felt a higher sense of loyalty to their organization and found work more satisfying. A sense of organizational purpose was also important for job satisfaction and organizational commitment. Taken together, the influence of group culture and sense of purpose suggests that creating a work environment where employees are satisfied means more than satisfying extrinsic motivators and offering accommodating job characteristics. Job satisfaction is similar to other aspects of work motivation in that it can be nurtured by fostering a sense of belonging and shared achievement in a hospitable social network.

CONCLUSION

Before we summarize the contributions of our article it is worth noting its limitations. The article has the usual shortcomings of a cross-sectional analysis, in that our model cannot test causal relationships across time. In addition, our findings may be limited to our particular sample of health and human service managers in state government. Our discussion of the results also identified clear opportunities for further research, particularly on the negative influence of length of organizational tenure, and in exploring the different ways in which self-efficacy affects different measures of work motivation.

Other research can further inform our basic hypothesis testing other likely individual, job or organizational influences on work motivation. The variables we examine are among the most frequently studied in organizational behavior, meaning that there was an array of possible variables to consider, and inevitably we did not test some variables that have been found to be important to all three. In particular, data limitations prevented us from examining other factors we suspect are important, such as work flexibility and family-friendly policies (Selden &

Moynihan, 2000), and the role of supervisors. However, our primary purpose was to identify

how individual, job and organizational characteristics varied in their relationship to three

different organizational attitudes, and for this purpose the measures selected were adequate,

though certainly not exhaustive.

For all of these shortcomings and future research opportunities, the model presented does

advance our understanding of work motivation in a number of ways. First, there is general

support for the theory laid out as to the antecedents of the different aspects of work motivation.

Second, there is also strong support for the proposition that organizations have varying degrees

of influence over these different aspects of work motivation. The workable levers that managers

can use for job satisfaction simply do not work as well for job involvement. It may be that job

involvement is similar to PSM, in that the primary antecedents are societal institutions (Perry,

2000). This suggests that the important variables that foster and maintain job involvement are

not related to the actual job characteristics or organization. This is not to suggest that public

organizations simply give up on the idea of influencing job involvement. It does suggest that for

such variables, the most important workable levers that managers have at their disposal come in

the form of recruitment, selection, hiring, and promotion. Such levers should seek employees

with a strong sense of public service and involvement, and communicate the value of the

employee through offering clear promotion opportunities.

Our findings do not, of course, tell us if organizations should focus their attention on one

aspect of work motivation at the expense of the other, or what alternative workable levers can

employed. These are important questions, and should be the potential for future research. The

results presented here offer a useful starting point by suggesting that the workable levers that

organizations currently employ are more effective for some forms of motivation over others.

A third contribution of the article is to support the proposition that organizational variables can have a direct effect on work motivation if managers can foster a sense of purpose and belonging among members. We live in an era where government is characterized by both an intense focus on measurement of performance and an increasing reliance on third-party actors to deliver services. Both trends, especially the hollowing out of the state, make it more difficult for managers to convince their employees that they are part of a closely-knit team with shared values and loyalties and with a track record of satisfying the needs of the public. It also seems that the employees with high levels of self-efficacy, or those who bring added value, may be looking outside the organization to meet their salient needs. The findings presented here place new emphasis on the importance of creating such a sense of belonging for maintaining an engaged workforce. However, it should be noted that there is also a potential downside to creating a strong group culture. Strong group cultures can lead to groupthink, where members value group membership to the point that they exclude any evidence that is damaging to group members or contrary to group norms (Janis, 1982). This can lead to tolerance for behavior that damages performance, including corruption or incompetence, and has been at the heart of some major public management failures.

Finally, what does this all mean for the actual practice of public management? Our results offer some insights into how managers might seek to foster work motivation among their employees. It helps to recruit employees with higher levels of PSM. Managers can expect that younger employees will be more critical of their workplace. Some aspects of work motivation tend to simply erode as employees stay in the same organization over time, suggesting the need to find ways to help employees recommit to organizational membership. Employees in highly routine jobs are especially likely to have lower work motivation. So, what can foster positive

work motivation? Promotion opportunities help. It is also critical to make clear what the

employee's role is in the organization and communicate how effective in-role performance

creates and advances public value (Moynihan & Pandey 2007; Pandey & Garnett 2006).

Creating a sense of shared culture and sense of organizational purpose and achievement is a real

tool in keeping the workforce engaged. While culture is a critical function of managerial

leadership (Schein, 1996), leaders must realize they have only limited influence over this

variable. A critical challenge is make sure that this culture aligns with the mission and value of

the organization (Rainey & Steinbauer, 1999).

Table 1. Correlation Matrix

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
1. Job satisfaction	1												
2. Organizational commitment	.526	1											
3. Job involvement	.319	.395	1										
4. Public Service Motivation (Attraction to Policymaking)	.136	.175	.138	1									
5. Importance of advancement opportunity	.093	.067	.144	-.088	1								
6. Age	.081	.091	.066	.027	-.271	1							
7. Length of organizational membership	.010	.012	-.123	-.093	-.040	.396	1						
8. Length of time in same position	.-062	-.098	-.136	-.056	-.095	.309	.408	1					
9. Self efficacy	.191	.012	-.002	.024	.142	-.023	-.039	.049	1				
10. Role clarity	.580	.408	.136	.055	.105	.019	.049	-.016	.238	1			
11. Job routineness	-.148	-.109	-.055	-.137	.019	-.077	-.127	-.005	.156	.24	1		
12. Group culture	.447	.526	.177	.063	-.025	.117	.020	-.022	.089	.461	-.149	1	
13. Sense of organizational purpose	.358	.295	.111	.054	.043	.112	.089	-.033	.231	.296	-.107	.318	1

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics

Variables	Potential Scale Range	Mean	Standard Deviation
Job satisfaction	3-15	13.155	2.099
Organizational commitment	3-21	15.205	3.825
Job involvement	3-21	11.849	3.981
Public Service Motivation (Attraction to Policymaking)	3-15	9.663	2.742
Importance of advancement opportunity	1-5	3.410	1.186
Age	# of years	49.891	7.619
Length of organizational membership	# of years	15.439	10.661
Length of time in same position	# of years	5.229	4.521
Self efficacy	1-5	4.201	0.898
Role clarity	3-15	11.324	2.833
Job routineness	1-4	2.480	0.802
Group culture	3-15	9.780	2.545
Sense of organizational purpose	4-20	16.773	2.392

Table 3: Results of OLS Regression on Work Motivation

Variable	Job satisfaction	Organizational commitment	Job involvement
Individual Attributes			
Public Service Motivation (Attraction to Policymaking)	.050+	.177**	.174*
Importance of advancement opportunity	.174*	.367**	.738***
Age	.024+	.039+	.104**
Length of organizational membership	-.008	-.004	-.055*
Length of time in same position	-.024	-.073+	-.106*
Self efficacy	.120	-.512*	-.248
Job Characteristics			
Role clarity	.316***	.250**	.091
Job routineness	-.337**	-.099	-.064
Organizational Characteristics			
Group culture	.407**	1.675***	.551*
Sense of organizational purpose	.128**	.178*	.039
Model F-Value	18.362	13.251	3.770
N	256	258	257
R	.654	.590	.364
Adjusted R^2	.404	.348	.097
Standardized beta coefficients displayed in the table ***statistically significant at .001, **statistically significant at .01, *statistically significant at .05, + statistically significant at .1 Note that significance levels are one-tailed tests if matching a predicted direction, two-tailed tests otherwise.			

Appendix 1: Measurement of study variables
Job Satisfaction Summative index (Cronbach alpha = .87) taken from the Michigan Organizational Assessment Questionnaire (Cook, Hepworth, Wall and Warr, 1981). Please indicate your level of agreement or disagreement with each of the following statement (1= strongly agree, 5= strongly disagree): All in all, I am satisfied with my job In general, I don't like my job (reversed) In general I like working here
Organizational Commitment Summative index (Cronbach alpha = .80) taken from Meyer, Allen and Smith (1993, 544). Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements (7 = strongly agree, 1 = strongly disagree): This organization deserves my loyalty. I would not leave my organization right now because I have a sense of obligation to the people in it. I owe a great deal to my organization.
Job involvement Summative index (Cronbach alpha = .76) taken from Saleh and Hosek (1976, 218). Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements (7 = strongly agree, 1 = strongly disagree) The most important things I do are involved with my job I enjoy my work more than anything else I do The major satisfaction in my life comes from my job
Public Service Motivation Summative index (Cronbach alpha = .65) adapted from Perry (1996). Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each of the following statements regarding public service or politics (1= strongly disagree, 5= strongly agree): Politics is a dirty word (reversed) The given and take of public policy making doesn't appeal to me (reversed) I don't care much for politicians (reversed). I consider public service my civic duty. Meaningful public service is very important to me. I would prefer seeing public officials do what is best for the whole community even if it harmed my interests. I unselfishly contribute to my community. It is difficult for me to contain my feelings when I see people in distress. I am often reminded by daily events how dependent we are on one another. The underprivileged bring their problems on themselves (reversed). I have little compassion for people in need who are unwilling to take the first step to help themselves (reversed).
Importance of Advancement Opportunity

Question taken from the General Social Survey (Davis, Smith and Mardsen, 1999)
Please indicate how important you consider each of the following aspects of your job (1= not important, 5= important):
Good opportunities for advancement.

Age
In what year were you born? (Converted to age in years).

Length of Organizational Membership
How many years have you worked for this organization?

Length of Time in Same Position
How many years have you been in your present position?

Role Clarity
Summative index (Cronbach alpha = .81) based on a three-item scale created by Rizzo, House and Lirtzman (1970).
Please indicate your level of agreement or disagreement with each of the following statement (1= strongly agree, 5= strongly disagree):
My job has clear, planned goals and objectives.
I feel certain about how much authority I have.
I know exactly what is expected of me.

Self Efficacy
Based on Sims et al. (1976).
Please indicated your level of agreement or disagreement with the following statement (1= strongly agree, 5= strongly disagree):
I can successfully perform any task assigned to me on my current job.

Job Routineness
Based on Aiken and Hage (1968).
Please indicate your level of agreement or disagreement with the following statement (1= strongly agree, 5= strongly disagree):
People here do the same job in the same way every day.

Sense of organizational purpose
Summative index (Cronbach alpha = .72) based on Gianakis and Wang (2000)
Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements (5 = strongly agree, 1= strongly disagree).
Our agency can provide services the public needs.
Our agency can satisfy public needs.
Our agency can provide a high quality of service.
Our agency can reduce criticism from citizens and clients

Group culture
Summative index (Cronbach alpha = .69) adapted from Zammuto and Krakower (1991).

Please indicate your agreement or disagreement with how accurately each statement portrays your organization. (1= strongly disagree, 5= strongly agree).

My agency is a very personal place. It is an extended family. People seem to share a lot of themselves

The glue that holds my agency together is loyalty and tradition. Commitment to this agency runs high.

My agency emphasizes human resources. High cohesion and morale in the agency are important.

Appendix 2: Data Collection for Phase II of the National Administrative Studies Project (NASP-II)

The theoretical population of interest for this study was comprised of managers engaged in information management activities working in state-level primary health and human service agencies. The sampling frame was developed with the aid of the most widely used directory of human service agency managers, namely the APHSA directory (APHSA, 2001). Application of study criteria resulted in a sampling frame made of 570 managers from the 50 states and Washington, D.C. Given the small size of the sampling frame, a decision was made to administer the survey to the entire sampling frame (i.e. conduct a census).

As with most survey research projects, minimizing non-response, both to the survey and to specific questionnaire items, was a primary survey administration goal. Dillman's (2000) comprehensive tailored design method approach to maximizing the response rate made up of the following elements was employed in the study:

- A questionnaire with well-designed content;
- Survey questionnaire formatted in accordance with latest advances in cognitive research;
- Multiple personalized contacts, each contact accompanied with a carefully crafted message to encourage the respondent to complete the survey questionnaire;
- Use of real stamps on return envelopes;
- Use of features such as pre-notice letter, fax message, phone call at key points in the survey administration; and
- Use of special delivery (combination of 2-day delivery by Airborne Express and Priority Mail service of US Postal Service).

The data collection phase of the study began in fall of 2002 and concluded in winter of 2003. Approximately a week following an initial alert letter, the survey questionnaire was mailed to the respondents. About ten days later a combination thank you/reminder postcard was sent to all respondents, thanking those who had responded and encouraging those who had not to respond as soon as they possibly could. Nearly a month after the mailing of this postcard, a new cover letter and replacement survey were sent to non-respondents. The final step in survey administration took place about two months later when non-respondents were sent a new cover letter and a second replacement survey with a request to complete the survey.

Based on information cumulated during this period, the size of the sampling frame was reduced from 570 to 518. The principal reason for deletion from the sampling frame was that managers had left the organization before survey administration efforts. Other reasons for deletion from the sampling frame were retirement and death. By the time survey administration concluded in winter of 2003, a total of 274 responses were received. Thus, the response rate for the study was approximately 53 percent.

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[1] Our list of possible dependent variables is not meant to be exclusive or exhaustive; for instance, work alienation is another concept that falls under the banner of work motivation (Kanungo 1979; Pandey and Kingsley 2000).

[2] Individual level controls (education, income and gender) were also included in earlier versions of our model. None of these variables had a significant relationship with the dependent variables. Due to collinearity concerns they were dropped from the final model presented here.

[3] We do not test the influence of goal conflict and feedback because Wright (2003), Wright and Davis (2002), and Kim and Wright (2004) have demonstrated that while these variables are relevant to work engagement, they are not direct influences on work motivation.

[4] We examined the bivariate correlations and the square root of the variance inflation factor (VIF) to detect multicollinearity (Fox 1991, 11). The highest correlation exists between group culture and goal clarity (.461), and years in organization and years in same position (.408). No other correlation exceeds .4. The highest VIF for each model was the years in organization variable or the goal clarity variable, although the highest square root of the VIF was 1.183 (well within tolerable range).