

What Makes Mission Matter? Mission Valence, Public Service Motivation and Human Resource Outcomes

Bradley E. Wright
University of North Carolina at Charlotte
Department of Political Science
9201 University City Blvd.
Charlotte, NC 28223-0001
704.687.4530 (v); bwright@uncc.edu (e-mail)

Sanjay K. Pandey
University of Kansas
Department of Public Administration
Blake Hall #318
1541 Lilac Lane
Lawrence, KS 66044
785.864.1887 (v); 785.864.5208 (f)
skpandey@ku.edu (e-mail)

Prepared for the
9th Public Management Research Conference
October 25-27, 2007

What Makes Mission Matter? Mission Valence, Public Service Motivation and Human Resource Outcomes

Introduction

An organization's mission can be a powerful and positive force. As a formal system of cooperation, an organization's purpose can not only be used to direct and evaluate but also drive its activities. That said, Barnard (1938, p. 146) observed that an organization's ability to use its mission to "satisfy personal ideals relating to nonmaterial, future, or altruistic relations" is one of "the most powerful and most neglected" ways to induce cooperation (Barnard, p. 146). Chester Barnard's assessment of organizational reliance on organizational purposes to motivate employees, made in the early twentieth century, seems current even today. Given the service and community-oriented nature of organization goals in the public sector, it is not surprising that public management scholars have highlighted organizational missions as potentially important asset of public organizations (Perry & Porter, 1982; Perry & Wise, 1990; Rainey & Steinbauer, 1999; Weiss, 1996; Wright, 2007). In particular, it has been suggested that "the more engaging, attractive and worthwhile the mission is to people, the more the agency will be able to attract support from those people, to attract some of them to join the agency, and to motivate them to perform well in the agency" (Rainey & Steinbauer, 1999, 16). In support of these claims about potential benefits of an attractive mission, several recent studies have begun to link an organization's mission valence (as perceived by its employees) to such outcomes as work motivation (Wright, 2007) and organizational commitment (Pandey, Wright, & Moynihan forthcoming). To date, however, little empirical research has investigated the ways in which these benefits can be cultivated

rather than neglected. Building on previous claims regarding the goals of public sector organizations, this study will advance our understanding of this phenomenon in two ways. First, it will investigate ways in which the power of the mission can be harnessed by testing existing propositions in the literature regarding the conditions that are expected to enhance the mission valence of held by employees within an organization. Second, this study will attempt to provide additional evidence of the potential benefits of a public organization's mission by investigating the effects of mission valence on two important human resource outcomes, job satisfaction and absenteeism.

Antecedents of Mission Valence

Drawing from the expectancy theory of work motivation, Rainey and Steinbauer (1999) advance the concept of mission valence to describe employee perceptions of the attractiveness of an organization's purpose and general social contribution. The attractiveness of the mission is expected to influence the ability of the organization to recruit, retain and motivate its work force. Consistent with these expectations, it has been found that the more attractive the mission, the more likely an employee will want to be associated with the organization (Pandey, Wright & Moynihan, forthcoming) and strive to help it succeed (Wright, 2007). If higher mission valence can increase an organization's efficiency and effectiveness, then public managers could benefit by understanding and facilitating the conditions that are likely to enhance employee interest in their organization's social purpose and contribution. With this in mind, Rainey and Steinbauer (1999) identify six conditions that enhance the attractiveness of an organization's mission, namely "difficult but feasible, reasonably clear and understandable, worthy/worthwhile/legitimate, interesting/exciting, important/influential,

and distinctiveness” (p. 3). While this study does not provide direct tests of these six conditions, hypotheses consistent with these expectations will be developed by discussing each condition within a broader framework provided by three factors—perceived work impact, organizational goal clarity and public service motivation—that the public management literature suggests may facilitate them.

Several recent studies have found that state government employees are less likely to be committed to goals without evidence that a goal can be achieved (Wright 2004, 2007) or that their work makes a meaningful contribution to the organization and its external constituents (Buchanan, 1974; Vinzant, 1998; Weiss, 1996). Under either condition, being associated with (or responsible for) such organizational goals would not only seem unattractive but also futile. To achieve a positive self image and gain respect from others, employees want to succeed in their work and be associated with a successful organization. This not only requires evidence that an employee’s work can influence organizational performance but also that the organization’s work can influence desired social outcomes. In either case, to capitalize on the motivating value of its mission an organization “must sharpen and make salient the relations of individuals to the mission” (Rainey & Steinbauer, 1999, 26). Therefore, to the degree that employees see the impact of their work on the organization and its external clientele, employees’ perceptions of the mission’s valence will increase in a number of important ways. First, employees’ perceived work impact will provide clear evidence that the organization’s goals are both achievable and influential. Second, employees’ perceived work impact will provide a personal level of “meaningfulness” associated with the organizational mission by strengthening the connection between individual performance and organizational success.

Thus, consistent with Rainey and Steinbauer's (1999) expectation that mission valence will increase when the organization's mission seems feasible and influential, we hypothesize:

Hypothesis 1. Employee ability to see how their work contributes to the organization and its external constituents will increase employee perceptions of the organization's mission valence.

As noted earlier, organizational goals serve a number of useful functions. In particular, they establish a vision of a desired future state which, in turn, provides both rationale for the organization's existence and standards by which performance can be measured. In other words, they direct, justify, and drive cooperative behavior. To do this successfully, organizational goals need to be reasonably explicit in their communication of the desired outcomes used to guide employee attitudes and behavior.¹ Clearer goals, for example, helps employees see connections between their values and the values of the organization that can, in turn, increase the degree to which employees will incorporate the organization's goals into their sense of identity and find meaning and self affirmation from the organization's work (Weiss, 1996; Weiss & Piderit, 1999). In addition, the clarity of organizational goals can also increase employee perceptions of mission valence because they "articulate what is distinctive about the organization in ways that clarify the agency's contribution to a larger policy domain" (Weiss & Piderit, 1999, 196). Thus, consistent with Rainey and Steinbauer's (1999) expectation that mission valence will increase when the organization's mission is reasonably clear, understandable and distinctive, we hypothesize:

Hypothesis 2. Clear and understandable organizational goals will increase employee perceptions of the organization's mission valence.

A third factor discussed in the public management literature that may be especially relevant to mission valence is public service motivation. The theory of public service motivation suggests that public employees are more likely than private sector employees to hold pro-social values and seek opportunities to help others and benefit society. A growing body of empirical evidence supports this assertion (Crewson, 1997; Brewer, 2003; Frank & Lewis, 2004; Houston, 2006; Rainey, 1982). Given the altruistic or community service nature of public organization goals and activities, employees with PSM should be more likely to view their organization's mission as important because its congruence with their own values encourages employees to incorporate the organizational goals into their own sense of identity and view those goals as personally meaningful (Weiss & Piderit, 1999). There is some, albeit not universal, support for this claim. While employee surveys have found that government employment can provide more avenues for worthwhile accomplishment (Posner & Schmidt, 1982), others have found that public sector employees experience lower personal significance reinforcement (Buchanan 1974) and view the private sector as having a better capacity to provide exciting, challenging, and fulfilling work (Gabris & Simo, 1995). More recent research, however, has found that government employment provides more opportunity to "help others" or be "useful to society" (Frank & Lewis, 2004) and that PSM increases public employee perceptions of the organization's mission valence (Pandey, Wright & Moynihan, forthcoming). Therefore we can conclude that while PSM can not guarantee that employees view public organization missions as worthy or valuable it should, at the

very least, increase the likelihood of that that they will. Thus, consistent with Rainey and Steinbauer's (1999) expectation that mission valence will increase when employees seen the organization's mission as worthy and interesting, we hypothesize:

Hypothesis 3. Employee public service motivation will increase employee perceptions of the organization's mission valence.

Mission Valence Consequences

While the primary purpose of this study is to identify factors that can enhance public employee perceptions of their organization's mission valence, the value of this contribution is limited if mission valence does not help the organization secure important human resource management outcomes. As noted above, recent research has begun to illustrate the importance of mission valence to such important outcomes as work motivation and organizational commitment. This study will attempt to validate mission valence's influence on an organization's ability retain and motivate its work force by investigating two additional employee attitudes and behavior, employee job satisfaction and absenteeism. The issue of employee absenteeism may be particularly important in public sector organizations because the rate of absenteeism is typically higher in the public sector than the private sector (CPS, 2006; Dibben, James, & Cunningham, 2001; Klein, 1986; Vandenheuvel, 1994).

Absenteeism is costly to the organization. In addition to its direct costs (i.e. overtime and planned overstaffing), absenteeism has been shown to effect individual and organizational performance by reducing work quality and individual effort (Tharnou, 1993; Viswesvaran, 2002). There is evidence, however, that some of these costs are unnecessary. While employee absenteeism is commonly associated with illness, recent

national surveys find that 31% of employees admit that they have used sick leave when they were not sick (Lach, 1999). In fact, it is estimated that personal illness only accounts for 35% of the unscheduled absences while 41% can be accounted for by a combination of personal needs, stress or entitlement mentality (CCH, 2006). Given the prevalence of absenteeism unrelated to illness, employee attendance is really a function of both an employee's ability and motivation to attend. It is this latter category that suggests that an organization may be partly responsible for these costs because absenteeism is often used by employees as a strategy to avoid a stressful work environment (Rossie & Miller, 1984) or even as "a way to get back at the organization for a poor work environment, low pay, or other attributes of the job with which employees are dissatisfied" (Rhodes & Steers, 1990, 34). Organizations can reduce absenteeism by creating conditions that help employees be more satisfied with their jobs.

Rather than having a direct effect on employee absenteeism, we expect that mission valence's effect is mediated by employee job satisfaction. Consistent with previous findings that social workers reported greater dissatisfaction with their job when they felt "that they were not serving the public and public service values that they felt were important" (Vinzant, 1998, p. 359), we expect that employees are more likely they are to be satisfied with their job when they value their organization's mission and objectives. Job satisfaction, in turn, has been found to reduce employee absenteeism (Farrell & Stamm, 1988; Hackett, 1989) even in studies of public employees (Garcia, 1987; Lambert, Edwards, Camp & Saylor, 2005; Sagie, 1997).

Hypothesis 4. Employee perceptions of the organization's mission valence will have a direct, positive effect on job satisfaction.

Hypothesis 5. Employee perceptions of the organization's mission valence will have an indirect, positive effect on absenteeism through its influence on job satisfaction.

Data and Method

The data used in this study came from a study of employees working for state personnel agency in the northeastern part of the United States. The survey was conducted during the spring of 2006. All employees were given an eight-page questionnaire to complete and return (via drop boxes) to an outside team. After two weeks, 173 usable questionnaires were returned for a 46 percent response rate. A brief demographic overview of the entire agency workforce and survey respondents is provided in Table 1. Although the resulting sample mirrored agency demographics in many ways, white, male, and college educated employees were slightly more likely to respond to the survey.

Wherever possible, the study variables were measured using multiple survey items taken from previously used measures. For example, mission valence was measured through four items, three of which were adapted from a previous measure of mission valence (Wright, 2007) that reflect the degree to which employees feel that the organization provides a valuable public service while a fourth item reflecting the degree to which an employee was excited by this mission (???, 2006). To measure PSM, we used five items from Perry's 40 item scale of PSM (1996) commonly used as a short measure of PSM in previous studies (Alonso & Lewis 2001; Brewer & Selden 2000; Kim 2005; Wright forthcoming). These items capture the three dimensions—commitment to public interest, compassion and self-sacrifice—identified by Perry (1996) that represent the affective or normative motives most closely associated with the altruistic appeal of

public sector values. The existence of ambiguity experienced by employees was measured at the organizational level using a three-item scale devised by Rainey (1983). Employee job satisfaction was measured using three item measure of overall job satisfaction (Seashore et al, 1982). Employee perceptions of work impact was measured by three items developed for this study asking the degree to which the employee how their work contributes to the performance within their organization and meets the needs of those outside it. While responses for all questionnaire items for these five measures were recorded using a five-point Likert scale (ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree), the absenteeism was measured by an open ended question asking the respondent to self report the number of days sick leave they had taken over the last year.² Appendix 1 presents the questionnaire items associated with all study measures.

Table 2 provides the mean, standard deviation, and reliability of each study measure as well as the correlations between them. Reliability estimates (Cronbach's coefficient alpha) ranged from 0.73 to 0.88 (Table 2) and support the use of these measures, with all five multiple item measures achieving the 0.70 level suggested by Nunnally and Bernstein (1994). When looking at the descriptive statistics, respondents tended to report relatively high levels of perceived work impact, job satisfaction, public service motivation, mission valence and organizational goal clarity. The bivariate relationships provide evidence of the study measures' discriminant validity. In addition to a low average bivariate correlation (0.29), the largest bivariate correlation--between mission valence and job satisfaction--was 0.65, suggested that no measure shared much more than four-tenths of its variance with any other measure.

Results

To test the mediation hypothesis, a series of covariance structure analyses of the data were conducted using LISREL version 8.71. This type of analysis consists of two parts which not only subsumes but improves on more common techniques such as confirmatory factor analysis, path analysis and regression (Hayduk, 1987; Jöreskog & Sörbom, 1992). In the first stage, the model performs a confirmatory factor analysis to construct the latent variables from their respective questionnaire items and assess the validity and reliability of the study measures.

In support of the discriminant validity of the measures used, a confirmatory factor analysis testing the hypothesized measurement model provided a good fit to the data ($\chi^2(138)=188.99$, GFI = 0.90, CFI = 0.98, Standardized RMR = 0.06, RMSEA = 0.04, CFI = 0.73). In this latter model, all of the scale items were found to have statistically significant factor loadings ($p < 0.05$) for their respective latent constructs (lambda values ranged from 0.43 – 0.89).

In the second stage, structural equation model subsumes conventional regression and path analysis models to test the hypothesized relationships among the latent variables. This stage tests the hypothesized relationships by estimating the overall fit of the model as well as the individual parameter estimates. The overall model fit of the hypothesized structural model was tested using fit indices recommended by Jaccard and Wan (1996). The majority of these indices suggested that the theoretical model accurately captured the pattern of relationships found in the data. The comparative fit index (CFI) was .98 and the goodness-of-fit index (GFI) was .90, both indices achieving the .90 value used to suggest good model fit. The root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) was .04 lower than the threshold (.08) generally considered necessary for a satisfactory

model fit. Also consistent with a good model fit, the P-Value for Test of Close Fit was 0.78. Only the standardized RMR (0.06) and maximum likelihood chi-square ($\chi^2(145)=197.06, p < .05$) 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 1 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 evidence to support the accuracy of the theoretical model. Consistent with hypotheses 1-3, these findings confirm the importance of organizational goal clarity, perceived work impact and public service motivation in enhancing the mission valence employees' associate with their organization. When taken together, these variables explain just over half (59 percent) of the variance in reported mission valence.³ To further test the hypothesized mediated relationship, an alternative model was then run positing a direct relationship between PSM and job satisfaction. This model did not significantly improve the overall model fit ($\chi_d^2(1)=0.004, p > 0.05$) and the path coefficient representing a direct relationship between PSM and job satisfaction was not statistically significant ($p > 0.05$). Additionally, this analysis supports hypotheses 4-5, that mission valence has a substantial direct effect on employee job satisfaction and, through this relationship, an indirect effect on employee absenteeism. LISREL's estimate of PSM's indirect effect of job satisfaction was statistically significant ($\beta = -0.13, p <$

0.05). Although only a small percentage of the variance in employee absenteeism is explained by this model, this effect size is consistent with previous findings.⁴

Conclusion

The challenges of translating organizational goals into goal-relevant behaviors at the sub-unit and individual-level have been known and talked about for long by management theorists (Barnard, 1938; Simon, 1946). In addition, political scientists and public administration scholars have identified, for a long time as well, the unique challenges public organizations face due to their close ties with the political environment (e.g., Bozeman 1987; Dahl and Lindblom 1953; Rainey, Backoff, & Levine, 1976; Pandey & Wright 2006; Wamsley & Zald, 1973). The “flip side” of the nature of goals pursued by public organizations – in terms of their ability to inspire and motivate at the individual-level – has not received as much attention. Indeed, as we point out earlier in the paper, the concept of mission valence is not very old (Rainey & Steinbauer, 1999). Thus, our goal in this paper has been to answer two important and inter-related questions. First, what aspects of organizational goals increase mission valence and second, what effect, if any, increased mission valence has on individual attitudes and behavior.

We find that goal clarity, public service motivation, and work impact have a positive influence on mission valence. Although organizations may be constrained in their ability to recruit based on the level of individual public service motivation, they certainly have the ability to influence the extent to which individuals view their organizational goals as clear and also their personal efforts having a positive impact. Pandey and Rainey (2006), for example, show that effective internal communication is the single most powerful antecedent of goal clarity. Organizations can do much to

improve goal clarity at the job-level through job design and effective internal communication. Other research has shown ways in which employees can be made aware of the positive impact of their work (e.g. Grant, forthcoming). Our preliminary results and other findings in the literature, therefore, provide a reasonable basis for advancing an argument that public organizations can take steps to communicate and enhance the attractiveness of the goals they pursue. We also show in this paper that increased mission valence has a positive effect on job satisfaction, which in turn has a significant effect on reducing absenteeism.

Although we offer preliminary empirical support for our ideas, there is room for further validation work that uses multi-method and longitudinal designs. Such additional work will increase the confidence we can place in these preliminary findings. In closing, it is worth remembering that while much prior public management research has focused on the challenges posed by the nature of goals pursued by public organizations (e.g., Chun & Rainey 2005; Pandey and Rainey 2006; Rainey, 1993), our research suggests that the very same goals present substantial opportunities for inspiring and motivating employees.

¹ Note, however, that there are some potential disadvantages to defining the goals too narrowly (Maynard-Moody & McClintock, 1987) as well as some potential benefits to goal ambiguity (Noordegraaf & Abma, 2003).

² Although a self reported measure of absenteeism may result in systematic under reporting, a meta analysis of absenteeism studies found that that self reported absenteeism are strongly correlated with measures based on personnel records (John, 1994). More recent work has supported this latter finding without finding evidence of systematic under reporting in self reported absenteeism (Sagie, 1998).

³ Coefficients of determination for endogenous variables can be calculated from Figure 2 as one minus the error term for the latent variable (E).

⁴ Previous research has suggested that job satisfaction explains 4-6% of the variance in employee absenteeism (Hackett, 1989) with the strength of that relationship increasing when studies can distinguish between involuntary from voluntary absenteeism (Sagie, 1998) and measure absenteeism in terms of frequency rather than total time lost (Hackett, 1989). Neither of these latter conditions could be satisfied by this study.

References

- Alonso, P., & Lewis, G. B. (2001). Public service motivation and job performance - Evidence from the federal sector. *American Review of Public Administration*, 31(4), 363-380.
- Barnard, Chester I. (1938). *The functions of the executive*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Bozeman, B. (1987). *All Organizations are Public*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey Bass.
- Brewer, G.A & Selden, S.C. (2000). Why elephants gallop: Assessing and predicting organizational performance in federal agencies. *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory*, 10(4), 685-711.
- Brewer, Gene A. (2003). Building Social Capital: Civic Attitudes and Behavior of Public Servants. *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory*, 13 (1): 5-26.
- Buchanan, B. (1974). Building organizational commitment: The socialization of managers in work organizations. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 22, 533-546
- CCH Incorporated. (2006, October 26). *CCH unscheduled absence survey 2006*. Riverwood,
- Chun, Y. H. & Rainey, H. G. (2005). Goal Ambiguity in US Federal Agencies. *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory*. 15(1): 1-30.
- Crewson, P. E. (1997). Public-service motivation: Building empirical evidence of incidence and effect. *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory*, 4, 499-518.
- Dahl, R. A. & Lindblom, C. E. (1953). *Politics, Economics and Welfare*. New York: Harper & Brothers.
- Dibben, P., James, P., & Cunningham, I. (2001). Absence management in the public sector: An integrative model? *Public Money and Management*, 21(4), 55-60.

- Farrell, D. & Stamm, C. L. (1988). Meta-Analysis of the correlates of employee absence. *Human Relations*, 41(3): 211-227.
- Frank, S. A., & Lewis, G. B. (2004). Government employees: Working hard or hardly working? *American Review of Public Administration*, 34(1), 36-51.
- Gabris, G. T., & Simo, G. (1995). Public sector motivation as an independent variable affecting career decisions. *Public Personnel Management*, 24(1), 33-51.
- Garcia, R.L. (1987). Sick-time usage by management and professional employees in the public sector. *Review of Public Personnel Administration*, 7(3), 45-59.
- Grant, A. M. (forthcoming). Employees without a cause: The motivational effects of prosocial impact in public service. *International Public Management Journal*.
- Hackett, R. D. (1989). Work attitudes and employee absenteeism: A synthesis of the literature. *Journal of Occupational Psychology*, 62, 235-248.
- Hayduk, L.A. (1987). *Structural equation modeling with LISREL*. John Hopkins University Press, Baltimore.
- Houston, D. J. (2006). "Walking the walk" of public service motivation: Public employees and charitable gifts of time, blood, and money. *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory*, 16(1), 67-86.
- IL.
- James, L. R., Mulaik, S. A., & Brett, J. M. (1982). *Causal analysis: Assumptions, models, and data*. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.
- Johns, G. (1994). How often were you absent? A review of the use of self-reported absence data. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 79(4), 574-591.

- Jöreskog, K. G., & Sörbom, D. (1992). *LISREL VIII: Analysis of linear structural relations*, Scientific Software, Mooresville, IN.
- Kim, S. (2005). Individual-level factors and organizational performance in government organizations. *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory*, 15(2), 245-262.
- Klein, B. W. (1986). Missed work and lost hours May 1985. *Monthly Labor Review*, 109(11), 26-30.
- Lach, J. (1999). Is it the flu or are you faking it? *American Demographics*, 22(11), 10-11.
- Lambert, E.G., Edwards, C., Camp, S.D., & Saylor, W.G. (2005). Here today, gone tomorrow, back again the next day: Antecedents of correctional absenteeism. *Journal of Criminal Justice*, 33, 165-175.
- Maynard-Moody, S. & McClintock, C. (1987). Weeding an old garden: Toward a new understanding of organizational goals. *Administration & Society*, 19(1), 125-142.
- Noordegraaf, M. & Abma, T. (2003). Management by measurement? Public management practices amidst ambiguity. *Public Administration*, 81(4), 853-871.
- Nunnally, J. C. & Bernstein, I. H. (1994). *Psychometric theory* (3rd ed.), McGraw-Hill, NY.
- Palmer, J. W. (2006). Mission Valence: Developing and Testing a New Scale. Paper presented at the 64th Annual Meeting of the Academy of Management.
- Pandey, S. K. & Wright, B. E. (2006). Connecting the dots in public management: Political environment, organizational goal ambiguity and public manager's role ambiguity. *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory*, 16(4), 511-532.
- Pandey, S. K., Wright, B. E. & Moynihan, D. P. (forthcoming). Public Service Motivation and interorganizational citizenship behavior: Testing a preliminary model. *International Public Management Journal*.

- Pandey, S.K. & Rainey, H.G. (2006). Public managers' perceptions of organizational goal ambiguity: Analyzing alternative models. *International Public Management Journal*, 9(2), 85-112.
- Perry, J. L. (1996). Measuring public service motivation: An assessment of construct reliability and validity. *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory*, 7(1), 5-22.
- Perry, J. L., & Porter, L. W. (1982). Factors affecting the context for motivation in public organizations. *Academy of Management Review*, 7(1), 89--98.
- Perry, J. L., & Wise, L. R. (1990). The Motivational Bases of Public-Service. *Public Administration Review*, 50(3), 367-373.
- Posner, B. Z., & Schmidt, W. H. (1982). Determining managerial strategies in the public sector: What kinds of people enter the public and private sectors? An updated comparison of perceptions, stereotypes, and values *Human Resource Management*, 21(2).
- Rainey, H. G. & Steinbauer, P. (1999). Galloping elephants: Developing elements of a theory of effective government organizations. *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory* 9(1), 1-32.
- Rainey, H. G. (1982). Reward Preferences among Public and Private Managers: In Search of the Service Ethic. *American Review of Public Administration*, 16(4), 288-302.
- Rainey, H. G. (1983). Private agencies and private firms: Incentive structures, goals and individual roles. *Administration & Society*, 15(2), 207-242.
- Rainey, H. G. (1993). A Theory of Goal Ambiguity in Public Organizations. In James L. Perry (Ed.) *Research in Public Administration*, Vol. 2, 121-166.
- Rainey, H. G., Backoff, R. W., & Levine, C. L. (1976). Comparing Public and Private Organizations. *Public Administration Review* 36(2): 233-246.

- Rhodes, S. R. & Steers, R. M. (1990). *Managing employee absenteeism*. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley.
- Rosse, J. G. & Miller, H. E. (1984). An adaptive cycle interpretation of absence and withdrawal. In P. S. Goodman & R. S. Atkin (Eds.), *Absenteeism: New approaches to understanding, measuring, and managing employee absence* (pp. 194-228). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Sagie, A. (1998). Employee absenteeism, organizational commitment, and job satisfaction: Another look. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 52, 156-171.
- Seashore, S.E., Lawler, E.E., Mirvis, P. & Camman, C. (1982). *Observing and measuring organizational change: A guide to field practice*. New York: Wiley.
- Tharenou, P. (1993). A test of reciprocal causality for absenteeism. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 14, 269-290.
- U.S. Census Bureau Current Population Survey, 2006.
- Vandenheuevel, A. (1994). Public and private sector absence: Does it differ? *Journal of Industrial Relations*, 36(4), 530-545.
- Vinzant, J.C. (1998). Where values collide: Motivation and role conflict in child and adult protective services. *American Review of Public Administration*, 28(4), 347-366.
- Viswesvaran, C. (2002). Absenteeism and measures of job performance: A meta-analysis. *International Journal of Selection and Assessment*, 10(1/2), 12-17.
- Wamsley, G. A. & Zald, M. N. (1973). *The Political Economy of Public Organizations*. Washington, DC: Heath.
- Weiss, J. A. & K. Piderit, S.K.. (1999). The value of mission statements in public agencies. *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory* 9(2), 193-223.

- Weiss, Janet A. 1996. Public management and psychology, in D. Kettl & B. Milward (Eds.), *The State of Public Management*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Wright, B. E. (2004). The role of work context in work motivation: A public sector application of goal and social cognitive theories. *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory*, 14(1), 59-78.
- Wright, B. E. (2007a). Methodological Challenges associated with Public Service Motivation Research. Paper presented at the 65th Annual Meeting of the Academy of Management.
- Wright, B. E. (2007b). Public Service and Motivation: Does Mission Matter? *Public Administration Review*, 67(1), 54-64.

Table 1. Characteristics of Survey Respondents and Agency Workforce

	Respondents	Agency
Organizational Role		
Administrator	15%	17%
Technician	7%	1%
Office/Clerical	14%	11%
Professional	58%	58%
Para-professional	6%	10%
Service/Maintenance	0%	2%
Gender		
Female	66%	74%
Race		
Caucasian	78%	63%
African American	14%	30%
Other	8%	7%
Education		
High school diploma or GED	15%	40%
Some college	22%	7%
Bachelor's Degree	33%	36%
Graduate Degree	30%	17%
Average Organizational Tenure (Years)	13	17.0
Average Age (Years)	45	48
Median Income	55,000	56,000

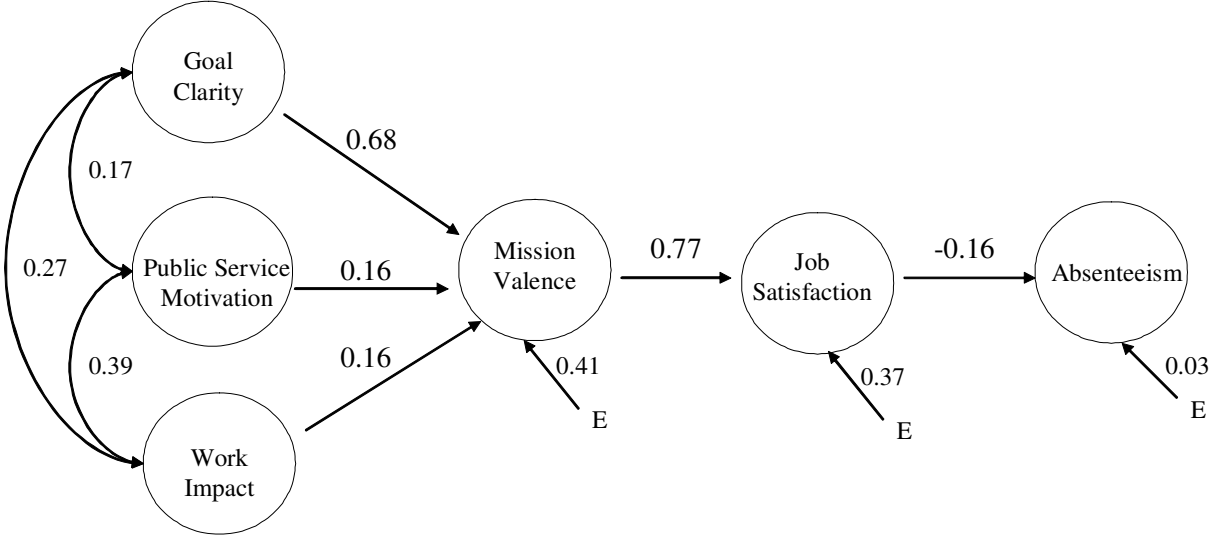
Table 2. Descriptive Statistics, Reliabilities and Correlations

Scale	Items in Scale	Mean	Standard Deviation	1	2	3	4	5	6
1 Absenteeism	1	8.58	9.53	na					
2 Job Satisfaction	3	11.83	2.84	-0.16*	(0.88)				
3 Mission Valence	4	14.69	3.14	-0.13	0.65*	(0.73)			
4 Public Service Motivation	5	18.75	3.37	0.01	0.27*	0.32*	(0.74)		
5 Percieved Work Impact	3	13.02	1.90	0.030	0.30*	0.29*	0.37*	(0.81)	
6 Organizational Goal Clarity	3	10.85	2.77	-0.22*	0.50*	0.59*	0.18*	0.26*	(0.86)

Cronbach's alpha in parentheses.

* $p < 0.05$

Figure 1. Mission Valence Model Results



The structural path estimates are reported as standardized regression weights. All path coefficients are statistically significant at $p < 0.05$.

Appendix 1

Public Service Motivation

- Meaningful public service is very important to me.
- I am often reminded by daily events about how dependent we are on one another.
- Making a difference in society means more to me than personal achievements.
- I am prepared to make sacrifices for the good of society.
- I am not afraid to go to bat for the rights of others even if it means I will be ridiculed.

Work Impact

- I can see how my work contributes to the performance of my work unit.
- I can see how my work contributes to the performance of my organization.
- I can see how my work contributes to meeting the needs of external clients & organizations.

Mission Valence

- This organization provides valuable public service.
- I believe that the priorities of this organization are quite important.
- The work of this organization is not very significant in the broader scheme of things*
- For me, the mission of this organization is exciting.

Organizational Goal Clarity

- It is easy to explain the goals of this organization to outsiders.
- This organization's mission is clear to everyone who works here.
- This organization has clearly defined goals

Job Satisfaction

- In general, I like working here.
- In general, I don't like my job. (R)
- All in all, I am satisfied with my job.

Absenteeism

- Approximately, how many day sick leave have you taken over the last year