THREE ESSAYS ON THE EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT CONSTRUCT: EXPLORING THE ROLE OF THE EXTERNAL ENVIRONMENT, AND ITS EFFICACY IN THE U.S. FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

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To my parents,

who instilled in me the love of learning

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THREE ESSAYS ON THE EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT CONSTRUCT: EXPLORING THE ROLE OF THE EXTERNAL ENVIRONMENT, AND ITS EFFICACY IN THE U.S. FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

Public administration scholars have long observed administrative reform as a perennial feature of U.S. Public Administration, and established public management research has demonstrated that public and private organizations differ with respect to the influence of the external organizational environment. However, there is little evidence testing the efficacy of administrative reform efforts on the one hand, and linking external influences to individual employee attitudes and behavior on the other hand. This dissertation examines a prominent reform effort currently underway in the U.S. federal government, i.e. Employee Engagement, and its relationship with the external organizational environment. Chapter 1 of this dissertation introduces the main theoretical background and motivation that informs the rest of the study. In Chapter 2, I examine the emergence of employee engagement as a prominent reform effort in the U.S. federal government, and empirically test the contention that scores on the U.S. Office of Personnel Management's Employee Engagement Index (EEI) relate to higher levels of performance. The findings suggest that, while the EEI taps into managerial engagement rather than psychological engagement, scores on this index are indeed related to organizational performance. In Chapter 3, I use social identity theory to investigate how employee images of the external environment influence their own levels of engagement, finding that organizational images do matter how employees feel about their workplace, but in opposite directions. In Chapter 4, I extend this line of thinking further and link perceptions of political support and organizational images with media representation of U.S. federal agencies. The findings of this

chapter suggest that U.S. federal employees do pay attention to how their organizations are represented in the external environment, and that it affects their levels of engagement. Lastly, Chapter 5 summarizes the findings, explicates the theoretical and practical contributions of the dissertation, and suggests avenues for future research.

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Chapter 1. Introduction

U.S. Public administration has always been in the process of re-inventing itself, searching for universal principles (Caldwell, 1976; Dahl, 1947; Meier, 2015), legitimacy (Rohr, 1986), and consistent epistemological frameworks (Riccucci, 2010) to make sense of the political and administrative world (Rutgers, 2010). This has been associated with clarion calls towards identifying the big questions of Public Administration, and crises such as the lack of a core body of knowledge, and a reckoning of how public administration ought to contribute towards the betterment of governance (Behn, 1996; Raadschelders, 2008; Ostrom, 1973). However, in spite of the seeming lack of clarity regarding its central questions and core knowledge, there are constants in U.S. Public Administration.

Some of these include the idea that the practice of public administration is always in a state of reform, albeit with differing underlying doctrines or rationales (Kaufman, 1959), as well as the negative rhetoric surrounding government employees and large bureaucracies (Yarwood, 1996). These rationales or drivers for change have shown to wax and wane with national sentiments and the political saliency of issues during a particular period in time (Wise, 2002), and don't seem to be guided simply by political philosophy (such as limited government) alone, but by developments in the larger social world. For instance, while many have attributed the New Public Management movement to impulses towards free markets and limited government, but others have suggested that the main driver of change was a new professionalism predicated upon organizations that are always changing and flexible (Davies & Thomas, 2002).

Regardless of the rationales underpinning reform efforts, public administration reform has become a recurrent feature of modern public administration (Kettl, 2005). There are clues as to why. Some have attributed it to the continually evolving nature of public service and public

institutions, the unique separation of powers principle (O'Toole, 1987), which has necessitated that constitutional values be retrofitted to existing structures of the state (Rosenbloom, 2000). Others have attributed constant reform the silence of the U.S. constitution on administrative matters (Rohr, 1986), or the 'stateless' origins of U.S. Public Administration. Both of these have necessarily required an inductive approach towards governing (Stillman, 1990; Stillman, 1997; Waldo, 1948).

It is within this context of administrative reform that this dissertation examines the development and use of employee engagement as a key motivational construct and human resource management construct in the U.S. federal government, and understanding its relationship with the external environment. The impetus towards governments adopting engagement as a reform effort can be explained in a number of ways. Firstly, much of the popular management and human resource practitioner community has been advocating engagement as a panacea to organizational problems (Lavigna, 2013; Macey, Schneider, Barbera, & Young, 2009). Thus, it is no surprise that the push towards engagement has spread to the public sector within the U.S. and across the world (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2016). Secondly, the push towards engagement perhaps may have little to do with engagement itself, but more to do with the nature of management solutions that emerge as popular fads, and then fade away (Welch, 2011). Observers of popular management may note the interest in Total Quality Management and Management by Objectives in management circles in the 1980's, and the increasing popularity of employee empowerment during the 1990's, which made its way into the Clinton administration's National Performance Review (Rainey, 2014). Some have couched the adoption of private sector management practices as evidence of the influence and persistence of the New Public Management movement.

The three empirical chapters (Chapters 2-4) in this dissertation examine engagement in relation to three undercurrents of U.S. Public Administration. Chapter 2 examines both the emergence of employee engagement and its promotion in the U.S. federal government, and tests whether the U.S. Office of Personnel Management's Employee Engagement Index—an important governmentwide initiative—leads to organizational performance, as claimed by its proponents (Donovan, Cobert, Archuleta, & McLaughlin, 2014). The findings suggest that even though the measures used to measure employee engagement do not represent the construct of psychological engagement, they do nevertheless contribute to higher organizational performance. Building on the theoretical ground set forth in Chapter 2, Chapters 3 and 4 address the relationship between engagement and the external environment from two different perspective. Chapter 3 uses organizational images as a lens to examine the influence of the external environment on employee engagement, while Chapter 4 uses media representation, public approval, and congressional attention to examine their influence on engagement.

The consideration of the external environment and its relationship with individual employee attitudes and behavior has been an important but overlooked aspect of public administration research. Among the many intellectual crises that public administration research has faced, the contention that public and private organizations are essentially alike deserves special attention. In particular, this crisis spawned a large enterprise of research that examined public-private differences, with the aim of establishing the distinctiveness of public organizations necessitating a discipline dedicated to the study of public organizations (Boyne, 2002; Perry & Rainey, 1988; Rainey & Bozeman, 2000).

The culmination of this research found that—while public and private organizations sometimes do have similar missions—the political and social structures and rules under which

they operate make the task of managing public organizations very different compared to private businesses (Bozeman & Bretschneider, 1994). Thus, scholars have held that public and private organizations are alike in all unimportant aspects. Among the important differences are the constitutional and professional values that public employees adhere to (Rohr, 1989; Van Der Wal, De Graaf, & Lasthuizen, 2008) and differences in levels of organizational "publicness", which influences how much the external environment and political authority affect how public organizations operate and perform (Bozeman & Bretschneider, 1994). In addition, some have argued that public organizations and employees face unique challenges related to public trust, as exemplified by low levels of public support and legitimacy (Pew Research Center, 2015; Stanford, 2014), and are subject to frequent bureaucrat bashing and anti-bureaucratic fervor (Garrett, Thurber, Fritschler, & Rosenbloom, 2006).

While many have acknowledged the presence of these environmental factors, with some even suggesting that disdain towards large government bureaucracy and bureaucrat-bashing is etched into the very fabric of the U.S. (Kaufman, 1981; Yarwood, 1996), there is little theoretical or empirical research that examines how these factors influence the attitudes and behavior of individual employees. This is especially important given the resources and attention devoted towards improving employee morale, as exemplified by the push for employee engagement (Chapter 2).

Based on these theoretical underpinnings, in Chapter 3 I use social identity theory to develop a model of organizational images and employee engagement. Specifically, I argue that employee perceptions of how they are viewed by those outside the organization, i.e. construed external image, affects their own image of the organization, i.e. perceived organizational identity, and their level of job identification (Dutton, Dukerich, & Harquail, 1994). Thus, the

chapter presents a model where job identification mediates the relationships between two types of organizational images and employee engagement. Its findings suggest that public employees do pay attention to how they are perceived by the general public, and that these perceptions in turn influence their levels of motivation. Somewhat surprisingly, however, the results of analyses suggest that construed external images, or the external image, negatively affects employee engagement, such that employees are more motivated when their organization's external public perception is negative. The chapter further explains the meaning of these results.

Lastly, while Chapter 3 examines organizational images as a proxy for the influence of the external environment, in Chapter 4, I extend the analysis further by more fully examining the external environment. In particular, Chapter 4 incorporates research from the communications field and examines the relationship between news representation and the external environment. The central argument of this chapter is that media representation is a critical way through which organizational members see themselves in relation to their organizations. In addition to media representation, the theoretical model uses political attention and public approval ratings as mechanisms through which the external environment may influence employee engagement. Importantly, while communications scholars have observed that the media environment of public organizations differs from that of private organizations (Lee, 1999; Liu, Horsley, & Levenshus, 2010), public administration scholars have not yet considered how these differences affect the performance and efficacy of public organizations.

In addition, while there is growing research on the related construct of bureaucratic reputations and what they may mean for autonomy, public trust, and organizational performance (Carpenter, 2010 ; Lee & Van Ryzin, 2018; Teodoro & An, 2018), to date scholars have not fully accounted for the role of media and press in this process. This missing link becomes especially

important given recent trends suggesting that public organizations are more frequently relying on the media sources as sources of support and legitimacy (Thorbjørnsrud, Figenschou, & Ihlen, 2014), or what some have dubbed as "Mediatization of Public Services" (Schillemans, 2012, p. 1). The findings of this chapter show that while media representation is positively related to employee engagement, public approval does not have such a relationship. In addition, while perceptions of public support do positively influence engagement levels, congressional attention negatively moderates this relationship. These findings represent an initial attempt to understand how news media may influence employee motivation, but also sets forth an agenda for other mechanisms through which external factors may influence employee engagement. Importantly, the chapter is grounded in the changing nature of public organizations and public service delivery, wherein widespread public support or its lack thereof may have immediate consequences for organizational and individual performance and motivation.

Chapter 2. Employee Engagement as Administrative Reform: Testing the Efficacy of OPM's Employee Engagement Initiative

Abstract

Researchers have long recognized administrative reform as a constant feature of American public administration. The Office of Personnel Management's (OPM) employee engagement initiative has become one of the most prominent administrative reforms underway in the federal government. Like many reforms, the efficacy and veracity of claims about this reform have gone untested. This article fills this gap by testing the impact of OPM's employee engagement initiative on agency performance. After establishing the psychometric validity of OPM's Employment Engagement Index (EEI), we use a six-year panel dataset of federal agencies and two-way fixed effects regression to test the efficacy of this prominent reform. Our analysis shows that efforts to encourage employee engagement generally have the desired impact on performance, but that these effects vary based on the components that make up the index and the level at which these efforts are expended.

Introduction

Kettl (2005) argues that if there is a constant in today's globalizing world, it is the rapid pace of government reform. Researchers have long recognized reform and reorganization as a central theme of American public administration. Stillman (1990; 1997) argues that the stateless origins of public administration in the U.S. and elements of its constitutional design, including its relative silence on administrative matters, have necessitated an inductive and experimental approach to public administration (see Waldo, 1948). Over the course of the nation's history, administrative practices and structures have risen, and sometimes fallen, in response to the needs of the state and society. In this spirit, the U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM) recently began championing a government-wide initiative to engender organizational conditions that foster employee engagement. By encouraging organizational leaders to create a positive organizational climate that engages employees, OPM believes federal agencies can improve performance, increase job satisfaction and reduce voluntary turnover (Office of Personnel Management, 2015a).

It is important to consider OPM's employee engagement initiative and explore its efficacy for several reasons. First, this initiative has moved front and center of OPM's efforts to enhance the capacity and performance of the federal bureaucracy and is now among the most prominent administrative reforms underway in the federal government. Since 2010, OPM has included the Employee Engagement Index (EEI) in its highly publicized Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey (FEVS) and emphasizes the importance of improving agency scores on this index. In addition, OPM and other large agencies offer training programs and guidance on how to use the EEI to create an engaged federal workforce (Villalobos, 2017; The Best and Worst Places to Work in the Federal Government, 2017). Agency scores on the index have made for

popular press, and have also become key topics of consideration at both House and Senate hearings (e.g. *The Best and Worst Places to Work in the Federal Government*, 2017; *The Worst Places to Work in the Federal Government*, 2015; *Understanding the Millennial Perspective in Deciding to Pursue and Remain in Federal Employment*, 2016), pointing to the significance of this initiative. Indeed, considering the relative lack of performance data on federal agencies since the discontinuation of Program Assessment Rating Tool (PART), OPM's EEI has emerged as a proxy for the effectiveness of federal agencies.

Second, efforts to promote employee engagement are starting to proliferate throughout the world. The Canadian Public Service, Australian Public Service and the United Kingdom Civil Service, among others, are undertaking their own employee engagement initiatives aimed at creating organizational conditions that generate high levels of employee engagement (Lavigna, 2013). Employee engagement initiatives are an emerging feature of New Public Management Reforms in this advanced stage of their development, taking the place of earlier efforts to promote approaches like employee empowerment and Total Quality Management (Pollitt & Bouckaert, 2011; Hood & Peters, 2004).

Finally, strong claims have been made about the benefits of promoting employee engagement for the federal bureaucracy. Officials from both OPM and the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) have argued that employee engagement serves as a leading driver of performance and should be a focus for federal employees, from senior managers down to frontline workers (Donovan et al., 2014). Additionally, OPM's engagement initiative has become a vehicle for bolstering recruitment efforts and retaining scarce human capital (Goldenkoff, 2016). Not surprisingly, we are witnessing a flourishing cottage industry of consultants and practitioners promising engagement as a panacea for the federal bureaucracy

(Lavigna, 2013). Despite these lofty claims, the impact of OPM's employee engagement initiative has not been empirically studied. This is typical of administrative reforms throughout the world, where initiatives are championed and implemented through considerable effort, while tests of their efficacy or value are given little to no attention (Kettl, 2005). Public administration scholars should not cede ground to reformers, consultants and others with a vested interest in employee engagement initiatives, but rather be able to provide empirical evidence of the efficacy of such initiatives in the hopes that it will inform the ongoing dialogue surrounding employee engagement as public sector reform.

This study takes up the challenge by analyzing the impact of OPM's efforts to promote employee engagement on federal agency performance. Using panel data methods, we explore the relationship between scores on OPM's EEI and perceptions of organizational performance. This article begins with a brief review of the employee engagement concept and then proceeds to describe OPM's employee engagement initiative, signaling its importance for both public administration theory and practice. We then describe our data, measures and model estimation approach. Finally, we present the findings from our empirical analysis and discuss their theoretical and practical implications.

Review of the Employee Engagement Literature

The literature on employee engagement poses a somewhat confusing landscape, with significant differences among researchers in their theoretical perspectives, conceptual definitions and measurement approaches. Many of those who write on the topic of employee engagement trace the concept's origins to Kahn's (1990) notion of personal engagement. Kahn defines personal engagement "as the harnessing of organization members' selves during role

performance; in engagement, people employ and express themselves physically, cognitively, and emotionally during role performances" (Kahn, 1990, p. 694). He identifies three psychological conditions – or underlying components of personal engagement – that lead employees to fully express themselves in their work role. These include safety, meaningfulness, and availability (Kahn, 1990). The absence of these three psychological conditions would lead to personal disengagement. Individuals thus experience engagement when they feel safe expressing themselves, find meaningfulness in the work itself, and have available emotional, physical, and cognitive energies to devote toward task performance (Kahn, 1990, p. 703). Somewhat left unsettled is the nature of engagement itself, namely, whether it is a stable behavior or trait or one that varies on a day-to-day basis.

Building on Kahn's notion of engagement as a psychological state, one prominent perspective conceives of employee engagement as the antipode of job burnout (Schaufeli, Salanova, González-Romá, & Bakker 2002). This perspective emerged in response to the growing positive organizational psychology movement (Cole, Walter, Bedeian, & O'Boyle, 2012), which was critical of psychology's exclusive focus on human pathologies (see Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000) and sought to promote the study of positive aspects of human nature (Maslach, Schaufeli, & Leiter, 2001). For Schaufeli et al. (2002), work engagement is not just the opposite of burnout, but rather "a positive, fulfilling, work-related state of mind that is characterized by vigor, dedication, and absorption" (p. 74). Vigor is characterized by "high levels of energy and mental resilience while working, the willingness to invest effort in one's work, and persistence even in the face of difficulty" (Schaufeli et al., 2002, p. 74). Dedication, like job involvement, is characterized by "a sense of significance, enthusiasm, inspiration, pride, and challenge" (Schaufeli et al., 2002, p. 74). Finally, absorption, like flow, is characterized by

Schaufeli et al. as "being fully concentrated and deeply engrossed in one's work, whereby time passes quickly and one has difficulties with detaching oneself from work" (2002, p. 74).

In response to concerns about construct overlap between engagement and burnout, Cole et al. (2012) undertook a meta-analysis to examine correlations between burnout, engagement and their antecedents and outcomes and found that there are similar patterns of correlations between the antecedents of burnout and engagement and their outcomes, albeit in opposite directions. While this supports the argument for the redundancy of engagement, Cole et al. (2012) also observe that engagement dimensions account for unique incremental variance – above burnout dimensions – in predicting job satisfaction and organizational commitment, suggesting engagement and burnout are distinct, yet somewhat overlapping constructs.

A third perspective centers on the use of the Gallup Workplace Audit (GWA) to measure employee engagement. According to Harter et al. (2002), this scale reflects two dimensions: employee attitudes (e.g., satisfaction, loyalty, pride and intent to stay with the organization) and factors under the control of managers that are the presumed antecedents of employee attitudes (e.g., providing necessary materials and equipment, offering recognition and praise, promoting employee development and providing feedback). Diverging from Kahn (1990) and Schaufeli et al.'s (2002) conceptualization of employee engagement as a psychological state, this approach combines employee attitudes and affect together with their managerial antecedents. Harter et al. (2002) justify their approach by arguing that the potential utility of these measures lies in the motivation they elicit on the part of managers and employees to change and improve working conditions (Harter et al., 2002). Importantly, the authors find significant correlations between employee engagement and job satisfaction and a wide variety of organizational outcomes such as profit, productivity, turnover, safety and customer satisfaction.

This approach to employee engagement, along with the use of the GWA scale, has raised concerns about the "jangle fallacy" (Shuck, Nimon, & Zigarmi, 2017, p. 80) i.e., whether the high inter-correlations between employee engagement and other work-related attitudes such as organizational commitment, job satisfaction and job involvement represents a unique concept or simply a higher-order latent attitudinal factor. Shuck et al. (2017) found that even after accounting for these job attitudes, there was substantial unexplained variance in employee engagement, suggesting it occupies unique conceptual space.

Lastly, a relatively nascent perspective views employee engagement primarily as a set of actionable human resource management practices (Bailey, Madden, Alfes, & Fletcher, 2017). This represents a significant departure from Kahn (1990) and Schaufeli et al. (2002), who treat employee engagement as a psychological state, toward a notion of employee engagement as a managerial approach. Under this banner, scholars have explored the kinds of leadership practices and behavior that enhance levels of psychological engagement, such as transformational leadership (e.g. Tims, Bakker, & Xanthopoulou, 2011), job design characteristics (e.g. Tims & Bakker, 2014) and practices to increase job-person fit (Crawford, Rich, Buckman, & Bergeron, 2014). While not working directly from Kahn's (1990) initial identification of engagement antecedents as meaningfulness, availability, and safety, this stream of literature largely reflects the influence of Kahn's (1990) antecedents on levels of engagement (Crawford et al., 2014). In particular, leaders can enhance engagement by adopting more supportive supervisory practices to foster employee development, creating more meaningfulness by ensuring higher perceived person-job fit, and offering employees voice to fully express themselves in the job role (Rees, Alfes, & Gatenby, 2013). The next section describes how OPM's employee engagement initiative falls into this last category of antecedents-to-engagement research.

Employee Engagement as Administrative Reform

Administrative reforms in United States during the first half of the 20th century, culminating in the Hoover Commission of 1947, sought to change the organizational structure of federal agencies and reorganize the federal bureaucracy. Since then, major reform initiatives, most notably Reagan's reform agenda, Clinton's National Performance Review (NPR) and Bush's Presidential Management Agenda (PMA), have focused more on changing internal management practices and the behavior and attitudes of public managers and employees. Thus, the NPR emphasized empowering employees and encouraging entrepreneurial behavior (Gore, 1993), among other factors, while the Bush Administration's PMA emphasized strategic human capital management as well as an added focus on performance measurement through PART scores. While the Obama Administration discontinued the PART scores, the People and Culture goals of its PMA Cross Agency Priorities (CAP) encouraged federal agencies to increase employee engagement, strengthen the senior executive service and make it easier to hire and retain talent in the federal workforce (Donovan & Cobert, 2016; Donovan et al., 2014; Performance Improvement Council, 2017). This has been coupled with the contention that federal workers themselves are not to blame for poor agency performance, but that the culprit is the system of rules they operate under, something acknowledged by even the Chairman of the House Freedom Caucus and Chair of the House Committee on Government Operations (*The Best and Worst Places to Work in the Federal Government*, 2017; Meadows, 2015). Interest in promoting employee engagement in the federal bureaucracy may be traced to a 2008 report published by the Merit Systems Protection Board's (MSPB) Office of Policy and Evaluation, which developed a six-dimensional model of employee engagement that inspired efforts to determine if changes in levels of engagement led to differences in agency outcomes such as

PART scores and turnover intention (Merit Systems Protection Board, 2008). According to MSPB, the need for engagement became apparent when directives such as the NPR and PMA, as well as shrinking budgets, forced federal employees to do more with less. In particular, MSPB defined engagement as "…a heightened connection between employees and their work, their organization, or the people they work for or with" (Merit Systems Protection Board, 2008, p. i) and measured it using an employee engagement scale of sixteen items in the Merit Principles Survey. MSPB has touted higher levels of employee engagement as a path to improved employee well-being and organizational performance (Donovan et al., 2014).

Following hard on MSPB's heels, OPM created the Employee Engagement Index (EEI) in 2010 to measure and track the antecedents of engagement, managerial and leadership practices and behavior aimed at creating a positive organizational climate conducive to high levels of employee engagement (Office of Personnel Management, 2015a; 2015b). The EEI has three dimensions or "sub-factors": leaders lead, supervisors, and intrinsic work experiences. Each sub-factor is measured using a set of five indicators from the Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey (FEVS) (see Appendix 1), together forming the EEI (Office of Personnel Management, 2015a; 2015b). Even though OPM had previously followed a lengthy process of defining employee engagement as a psychological state, or an "employee's sense of purpose that is evident in their display of dedication, persistence, and effort in their work or overall attachment to their organization and its mission" (Office of Personnel Management, 2015a, p. 6), they chose to focus instead on observable behavior and conditions in the work environment that are easier to translate into managerial action assumed to produce high levels of employee engagement (Office of Personnel Management, 2015a; 2015b). Thus, OPM's EEI falls largely within the approach

that identifies employee engagement as practices and behavior on the part of supervisors and employees.

OPM readily admits to the limitation of their approach, namely, that the leadership and supervisory behavior they are tracking and promoting across the federal workforce may not actually cause psychological engagement (Office of Personnel Management, 2015a). Why they chose not to measure psychological engagement as part of their reform initiative but rather its presumed antecedents may perhaps be due to limitations of the survey instrument used and difficulties involved in adapting it for different research purposes. In exploring the history of the FEVS, Fernandez, Resh, Moldogaziev, & Oberfield (2015) suggest that path dependence may also be the answer, since most of the items on the FEVS were borrowed from earlier federal employee surveys undertaken in the 1980s and subsequently codified into federal regulations. For a survey instrument that has been in use since 2002, the degree of consistency across rounds of the FEVS is striking and a sign of OPM's reluctance to modify the instrument, even in ways that could potentially enhance its utility.

Since 2010, when OPM began tracking scores on the EEI, to 2014, the government-wide average score on the index actually dropped from 66% to 63% (Office of Personnel Management, 2015b). Late in 2014, OPM issued a memorandum to federal agencies stressing the need to institutionalize ongoing efforts to foster an organizational culture of employee engagement and establishing the goal of improving the government-wide EEI average score from 63% to 67% by 2016 (Donovan et al., 2014). To enable the federal bureaucracy to achieve this goal, the memorandum required every agency to: identify one senior official who is responsible for improving employee engagement and liaising with OPM officials and other stakeholders involved in OPM's initiative; establish its own target for improvement on the EEI and include it

as part of its Government Performance and Results Act (GRPA) Annual Performance Plan; conduct quarterly reviews to assess progress in promoting a culture of employee engagement; and incorporate measurable expectations in the performance plans of Senior Executive Service members (Donovan et al., 2014). OPM envisions a collaborative and continuous improvement process of planning, implementing and reviewing progress toward achieving higher scores on the EEI. The 2015 memo urges agencies to adopt a series of strategies to promote employee engagement, including incorporating engagement in performance management processes, producing workforce development plans, and getting buy-in from labor unions (Donovan et al., 2014). However, OPM recognizes and even encourages managers to develop their own approaches to achieving higher scores on the EEI, in consultation with their employees and organized labor representatives. Finally, OPM now provides online resources for agencies to track and improve their EEI scores and has created a repository of practices deemed to be effective at promoting employee engagement (Hochmuth, 2016).

OPM expects an increase in the EEI to result in higher performance. Research on the antecedents of psychological engagement and their link to performance is limited. However, research evidence indicates that the leadership and supervisory behaviors reflected in the EEI, particularly behavior aimed at clarifying roles and responsibilities, providing emotional support to followers, and offering opportunities for learning and growth, can improve psychological engagement (Macey & Schneider, 2008; Rich, LePine, & Crawford, 2010; Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004), and that psychological engagement, in turn, can lead to higher performance. Importantly, the findings from meta-analyses indicate that such behavior on the part of leaders and supervisors can also improve job satisfaction (Brown & Peterson, 1993) and organizational commitment (Mathieu & Zajac, 1990), two work-related attitudes that have also been found to be

positively related to performance (Judge, Thoresen, Bono, & Patton, 2001; Meyer, Stanley, Herscovitch, & Topolnytsky, 2002; Riketta, 2002). In short, OPM's employee engagement initiative may have the desired positive effect on performance through various channels, only one of which may be psychological engagement.

Methods

The discussion now turns to the data, variables and estimation approach used in the analysis.

Data

To explore the impact of OPM's employee engagement initiative on performance, we constructed a unique panel dataset from responses to the Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey (FEVS). Since it provides a valuable snapshot of the job attitudes of federal workers, both public administration researchers and federal agencies have used the FEVS to assess the state of the federal workforce (Fernandez et al., 2015). Previously known as the Federal Human Capital Survey, FEVS has grown both in size and scope. For instance, when it was first launched in 2002, the survey was administered every other year to a select sample of 29 agencies and received about 100,000 responses (Fernandez et al., 2015). By comparison, the 2015 survey covered 82 federal agencies, and received 421,748 responses. Since the FEVS does not provide individual-level identifying information, we chose the agency as the level of analysis. A panel was constructed by combining responses to the FEVS between 2010 and 2015, representing six years of agency-level data. This produced a strongly balanced panel with 213 observations. Some of these were dropped due to missing data, resulting in 186 observations that are used in the subsequent regression analysis.

Although there is evidence indicating that concerns about common-method bias may be exaggerated in public administration research, in comparison to fields such as management and applied psychology (George & Pandey, 2017), we use different sources to measure our dependent and independent variables. Specifically, we use supervisory responses to construct the dependent variables and non-supervisory responses to construct the independent variables. This may limit the extent to which intercorrelations between the variables can be inflated when the measurement method is the same (Kline, 2016). In addition to reducing possible error, using supervisory responses for the perceived performance dependent variables provides more accurate assessments since supervisors may have more information about the overall functioning of their work unit and the larger organizational context.

Dependent Variables

The main dependent variables, *perceived work unit performance* and *perceived organizational performance*, were constructed using the arithmetic means of supervisory responses to the FEVS questions, "How would you rate the overall quality of work done by your work unit?" and "My agency is successful at accomplishing its mission", for each agency-year. Responses to these items were based on a 1-5 Likert scale, and represent measures of perceived performance of the work unit and of the organization. Descriptive statistics for these variables are shown in Table 1 and a correlation matrix appears in Table 2.

Table 2.1: Descriptive Statistics

Dependent Variables	**Obs**	**Mean**	**Std. Dev.**	**Min**	**Max**
Perceived work unit performance	186	4.424	0.126	4.127	4.845
Perceived organizational performance	186	4.046	0.211	3.473	4.648
Main Independent Variables					
Employee engagement antecedents (standardized factor)	186	0	1	-2.612	2.682

Employee engagement antecedents (scale)	186	3.660	0.140	3.300	4.033
Intrinsic work experience (standardized factor)	186	0	1	-3.061	2.588
Intrinsic work experience (scale)	186	3.711	0.120	3.351	4.014
Supervisors (standardized factor)	186	0	1	-3.814	2.424
Supervisors (scale)	186	3.873	0.140	3.370	4.220
Leaders lead (standardized factor)	186	0	1	-2.583	2.688
Leaders lead (scale)	186	3.400	0.190	2.905	3.900
Supervisor and leader behavior (standardized factor)	186	0	1	-2.761	2.600
Supervisor and leader behavior (scale)	186	3.634	0.157	3.120	4.044
Control Variables					
Information	186	3.710	0.152	3.307	4.097
Discretionary effort	186	4.581	0.062	4.186	4.738
Proactive behavior	186	4.331	0.068	3.973	4.501
Resources	186	3.189	0.234	2.555	3.796
Workload	186	3.396	0.193	2.883	3.857
Management communication	186	3.296	0.198	2.804	3.813
Management collaboration	186	3.401	0.197	2.927	3.889
Job satisfaction	186	3.677	0.136	3.262	4.059
Creativity rewarded	186	3.016	0.230	2.404	3.605
Proportion of political appointees	185	0.005	0.009	0	0.077
Size (logged)	185	9.549	1.869	6.270	12.771
Proportion of female high school graduates	181	0.108	0.054	0.022	0.250
Proportion of individual transfers out	181	0.012	0.010	0.002	0.113

Independent Variables

Our main independent variable, *employee engagement antecedents*, is measured using the Employee Engagement Index (EEI), which for the most part reflects managerial and leadership behavior aimed at creating an organizational climate conducive to high levels of employee engagement (Office of Personnel Management, 2015a).

OPM openly acknowledges that the EEI does not capture psychological engagement as Kahn (1990), Schaufeli et al. (2002) and others have defined it, but rather antecedents of psychological engagement (Office of Personnel Management, 2015a). In terms of test content, the EEI has much greater correspondence with the widely-used Gallup Workplace Audit (GWA)

measure of employee engagement (see Harter et al., 2002), which combines indicators of employee attitudes with managerial practices and behavior that predict those attitudes.

OPM describes the EEI as composed of three sub-factors, each representing a different dimension of the antecedents of engagement: leaders lead, supervisory behavior and intrinsic work experiences. The first two sub-factors concern managerial practice and behavior, while the latter reflects employees' attitudes toward their job and workplace. The items used to measure these sub-factors appear in Appendix 1. Since the items used to construct EEI indices were categorical in nature, we used STATA 15 to generate a polychoric factor from the 15 items as a measure of overall *employee engagement antecedents*. However, since the EEI is characterized as having a three-dimensional structure, we also investigated the psychometric properties of the EEI and its sub-scales. First, we assessed internal reliability using Cronbach's alpha tests on the three sub-scales and the overall EEI scale. The leaders lead, supervisory behavior and intrinsic work experience sub-scales have alphas of 0.86, 0.91 and 0.89, respectively, while the alpha for the EEI is 0.94. These scores indicate high levels of measurement reliability.

We then analyzed the internal structure of the EEI using confirmatory factor analysis (CFA). Specifically, we wanted to determine if the items are related to the hypothesized factor, if the three underlying factors converge on a higher-order factor, and if the higher-order factor displays a true three-dimensional structure. Due to the ordinal nature of the underlying indicators, the model was estimated in Mplus 7.4 using the mean and variance adjusted weighted least squares (WLSMV) estimator. This relaxes distributional assumptions by assuming that each categorical variable is the manifestation of an underlying continuous normally distributed variable (Kaplan, 2009), making it less computationally demanding than other estimation methods for categorical outcomes, such as maximum likelihood with the probit or logit option,

Table 2.2: Correlation Matrix

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1	1							
2	0.726	1						
3	0.880	0.822	1					
4	0.854	0.944	0.962	1				
5	0.449	0.491	0.434	0.484	1			
6	0.746	0.582	0.723	0.687	0.645	1		
7	0.887	0.653	0.840	0.792	0.331	0.721	1	
8	0.395	0.449	0.391	0.415	0.379	0.380	0.289	1
9	0.420	0.333	0.323	0.336	0.089	0.223	0.283	0.717
10	0.693	0.481	0.710	0.645	0.205	0.512	0.709	0.062
11	0.449	0.370	0.559	0.505	0.146	0.324	0.573	-0.056
12	0.886	0.813	0.943	0.931	0.373	0.680	0.805	0.303
13	0.882	0.842	0.923	0.931	0.440	0.694	0.774	0.389
14	0.852	0.785	0.879	0.880	0.456	0.613	0.737	0.415
15	0.923	0.721	0.898	0.860	0.392	0.674	0.854	0.405
16	-0.151	-0.053	-0.120	-0.099	-0.152	-0.092	-0.181	0.054
17	0.033	-0.201	-0.088	-0.143	-0.300	-0.010	-0.025	-0.113
18	-0.165	-0.218	-0.113	-0.157	-0.331	-0.250	-0.137	-0.415
19	0.014	0.007	0.015	0.010	0.257	0.117	-0.147	0.147

9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19
1										
0.024	1									
-0.146	0.637	1								
0.322	0.697	0.516	1							
0.381	0.657	0.456	0.973	1						
0.429	0.643	0.409	0.886	0.931	1					
0.350	0.717	0.537	0.871	0.855	0.841	1				
0.044	-0.182	-0.109	-0.130	-0.119	-0.144	-0.069	1			
0.195	-0.112	-0.022	-0.022	-0.047	-0.090	-0.037	0.228	1		
-0.298	0.095	0.012	-0.094	-0.217	-0.255	-0.125	0.101	-0.035	1	
-0.007	0.074	-0.235	-0.063	0.019	0.114	-0.084	-0.131	-0.204	-0.021	1

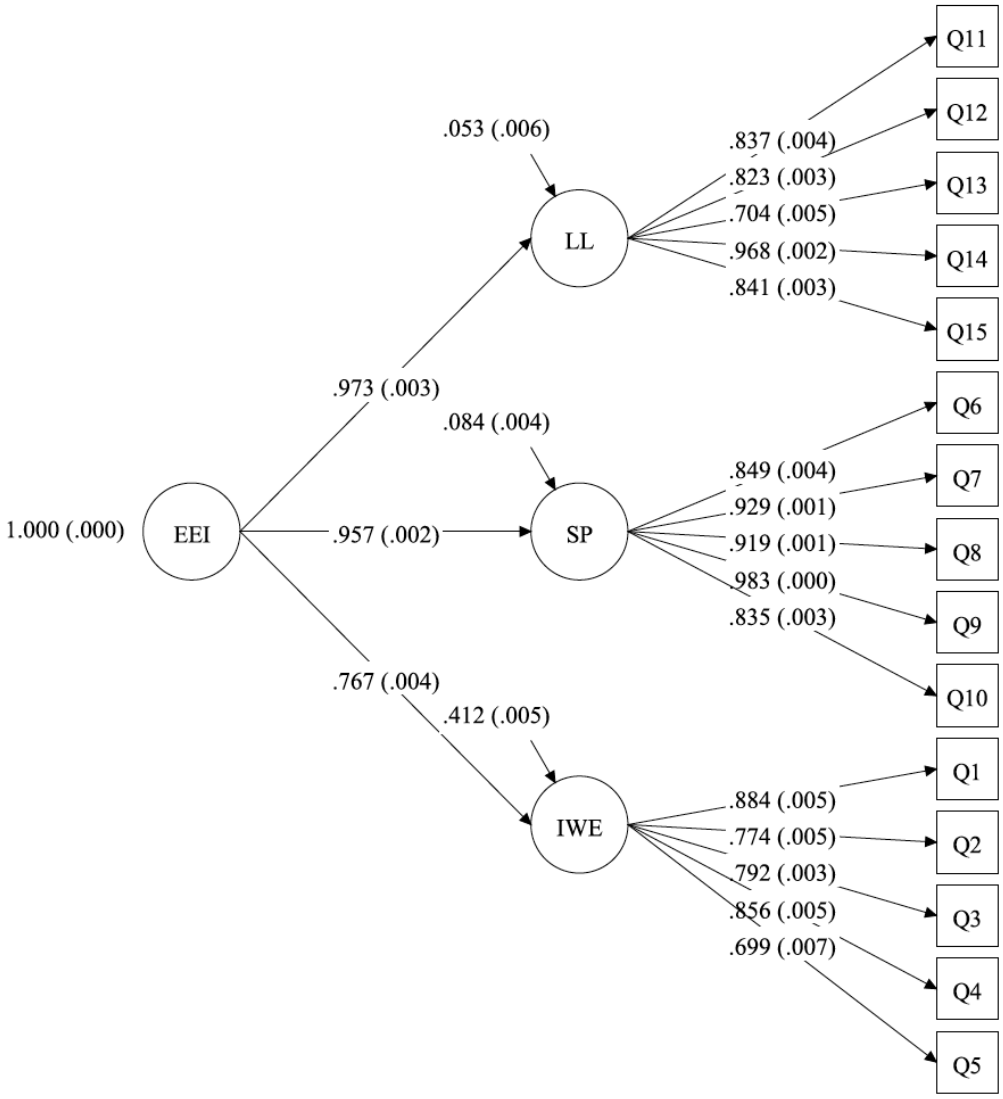
1. Intrinsic Work Experience
2. Supervisors
3. Leaders Lead
4. Supervisor and leader behavior
5. Work unit performance
6. Organizational Performance
7. Information
8. Discretionary Effort
9. Proactive Behavior
10. Resources
11. Workload
12. Managerial Communication
13. Managerial Collaboration
14. Job Satisfaction
15. Creativity
16. Political Appointees
17. Size
18. Proportion of Female High School Graduates
19. Proportion of Individual Transfers Out

which struggle with large sample sizes or complex factor structures (Muthén & Muthén, 2015). Since the structure of the dataset had individuals nested within agencies, the cluster option was used in Mplus 7.4.

The CFA proceeded by specifying the three-dimensional structure of OPM's definition of employee engagement antecedents and testing it using 2015 FEVS data. The CFA results are shown in Table 3, while the measurement model is shown in Figure 1. First, as expected, all fifteen indicators are positively correlated with their corresponding dimensions and statistically significant. Also, the three factors are positively correlated with the higher-order factor and statistically significant. The Chi-square test for fit indicates that the model is a poor fit for the data (χ^2=40,124, p<0.001). However, since this statistic is highly sensitive to sample size, which was quite large for this dataset (n= 421,747), other measures of fit were considered (Kline, 2016). The RMSEA value of 0.033 suggests reasonable fit, and a CFI value of 0.914 implies that the fit of this model is 91.4% better compared to the independence or null model.

Next, we use the method developed by Fornell and Larcker (1981) to assess the internal structure of the EEI, using evidence of convergent and discriminant validity. The results shown in Table 3 indicate that all three CFA factors have satisfactory convergent validity with respect to the higher-order factor, with average variance explained (AVE) statistics for the *leaders lead*, *supervisors*, and *intrinsic work experience* factors of 0.70, 0.81 and 0.64, respectively, all being above the AVE standard of 0.50 for convergent validity.

Figure 2.1: Measurement Model of Antecedents of Employee Engagement



With regards to discriminant validity, the *intrinsic work experience* factor meets the threshold of discriminant validity since the square root of its AVE (0.80) is larger than its correlations with both the *supervisors* (0.73) and *leaders lead* (0.74) factors. However, discriminant validity of the *leaders lead* and *supervisors* factors could not be established. That is, these two factors are not sufficiently distinct from one another since their intercorrelations value is 0.93, while the square root of the *supervisors* factor is 0.9 and that of the *leaders lead* factor is 0.83. In light of this, we constructed the following independent variables, in addition to *employee engagement antecedents*: *intrinsic work experience*, *leaders lead,* and *supervisors*, measured

using the items from the corresponding sub-factors from the EEI, and *supervisor & leadership behavior* by combining the 10 items used to measure the second and third sub-factors.

Table 2.3: Confirmatory Factor Analysis Results, Fornell and Larcker (1981) Test

Factors	AVE	SQRT(AVE)	Correlations with other factors
Intrinsic work experience	0.646	0.804	0.746 (Leaders lead), 0.734 (Supervisor behavior)
Supervisors	0.818	0.905	0.931 (Leaders lead), 0.734 (Intrinsic work experience)
Leaders lead	0.704	0.839	0.931 (Supervisor behavior), 0.746 (Intrinsic work experience)

Control Variables

In order to isolate the effects of OPM's employee engagement initiative on perceived organizational and work unit performance, we controlled for variables that have been linked to employee engagement as well as performance. These generally include aspects of the workplace environment that support employee development and signal trust in supervisors, such as supervisory support (Rees et al., 2013), adequate job resources (Tims & Bakker, 2014), and managerial efforts to support communication and collaboration among agency employees. We also controlled for person-level correlates such as job satisfaction and extra-role and discretionary behaviors (Rich et al., 2010). Data for these control variables were gathered from the FEVS. Lastly, we controlled for the number of political appointees and the size of agencies, operationalized as the number of employees per agency. Data for these last two variables were gathered from OPM's FedScope database. A full listing of control variables is shown in Appendix 2.

Model

To test the proposed hypotheses, we used STATA 15 to conduct multiple regression with agency fixed-effects and year fixed-effects. Using agency fixed-effects is particularly advantageous since it allows us to control for time-invariant differences among agencies over the six years of the observation period (Murnane & Willett, 2011). These time invariant differences may represent non-trivial sources of difference between agencies over the six-year period of the panel dataset, and thus, using pooled ordinary least squares (OLS) regression may have violated the independence of observations assumptions needed for unbiased OLS estimators, leading to inflated error rates (Wooldridge, 2013). Further, using year fixed-effects allows us to control for average year trends.

Results

Table 4 shows the results of the regression analyses, including the within R-square and overall R-square. Models 1-3 use *perceived work unit performance* as the dependent variable, while Models 4-6 use *perceived organizational performance* as the dependent variable. Models 1 and 4 use the entire EEI representing *employee engagement antecedents* as the key independent variable. Models 2 and 5 have *intrinsic work experience* and *leader and supervisor behavior* as the independent variables representing the first and a combination of the second and third EEI sub-factors, respectively. Lastly, Models 3 and 6 have *intrinsic work experience*, *supervisors*, and *leaders lead* representing all three EEI sub-factors. The general results show that *employee engagement antecedents* is both statistically significant (positive, $p < 0.05$) and substantively significant in predicting both *perceived work unit performance* and *perceived organizational performance*. In particular, a one standard deviation increase in *employee engagement*

antecedents is associated with a 0.43 increase in *perceived work unit performance* and a 0.96 increase in *perceived organizational performance*. Among the control variables, *creativity rewarded* is statistically significant and positively associated with both dependent variables.

Results for Models 2, 3, 5, and 6, which estimate the effects of the underlying dimensions of *employee engagement antecedents*, offer mixed evidence. Neither *intrinsic work experience* nor *supervisor and leader behavior* is statistically significant in Model 2. When all three EEI sub-factors are used to predict *perceived work unit performance* in Model 3, only *supervisor behavior* is statistically significant (positive, $p < 0.05$). In Model 5, where *intrinsic work experience* and *supervisor and leader behavior* are used to predict *perceived organizational performance*, only *supervisor and leader behavior*, which combines two EEI sub-factors, is statistically significant (positive, $p < 0.05$). Finally, in Model 6, where all three EEI sub-factors are used as independent variables, only *leaders lead* is related to *perceived organizational performance* (positive, $p < 0.01$).

Generally, models predicting *perceived work-unit performance* (Models 1-3) had higher within R-square values, ranging between 0.52 and 0.53, while models predicting *perceived organizational performance* (Models 4-6) had within R-square values ranging between 0.42 and 0.43.

Table 2.4: Regression Results

	Perceived Work Unit Performance			Perceived Organizational Performance		
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6
Employee engagement antecedents	0.0676^{+}			0.188***		
	(0.0361)			(0.0490)		
Intrinsic work experience		0.0313	0.0272		0.0264	0.0314
		(0.0312)	(0.0310)		(0.0426)	(0.0435)
Supervisor and leader behavior		0.0490			0.151***	
		(0.0310)			(0.0424)	
Supervisors			0.0549*			0.0627^{+}
			(0.0242)			(0.0340)
Leaders lead			-0.0332			0.0784^{+}
			(0.0292)			(0.0410)
Information	-0.157	-0.194	-0.153	0.211	0.238	0.196
	(0.157)	(0.171)	(0.172)	(0.214)	(0.234)	(0.240)
Discretionary effort	0.256	0.225	0.147	0.243	0.218	0.182
	(0.213)	(0.216)	(0.216)	(0.290)	(0.295)	(0.302)
Proactive behavior	-0.167	-0.204	-0.122	-0.369	-0.313	-0.293
	(0.230)	(0.241)	(0.241)	(0.313)	(0.330)	(0.337)
Resources	0.0907	0.0878	0.0935	-0.00894	0.00341	0.00275

	(0.0942)	(0.0956)	(0.0956)	(0.128)	(0.131)	(0.134)
Workload	-0.0753	-0.0671	-0.0379	-0.0489	-0.0470	-0.0440
	(0.0986)	(0.0995)	(0.0995)	(0.134)	(0.136)	(0.139)
Manager communication	-0.418^{+}	-0.433^{+}	-0.225	0.249	0.314	0.333
	(0.240)	(0.242)	(0.254)	(0.326)	(0.331)	(0.355)
Manager collaboration	0.105	0.107	-0.0411	-0.571^{+}	-0.651*	-0.650^{+}
	(0.234)	(0.237)	(0.246)	(0.318)	(0.325)	(0.345)
Job satisfaction	-0.348^{+}	-0.374^{+}	-0.260	-0.522^{+}	-0.453	-0.422
	(0.198)	(0.205)	(0.207)	(0.269)	(0.281)	(0.289)
Creativity rewarded	0.481***	0.487***	0.470***	0.283^{+}	0.294^{+}	0.331*
	(0.117)	(0.117)	(0.117)	(0.159)	(0.160)	(0.163)
Size(logged)	-0.0234	-0.0225	0.0202	0.539***	0.547***	0.540***
	(0.0969)	(0.0974)	(0.0995)	(0.132)	(0.133)	(0.139)
Proportion of female high school graduates	-2.157*	-2.237*	-2.245*	-1.605	-1.591	-1.681
	(1.008)	(1.017)	(1.009)	(1.371)	(1.391)	(1.413)
Proportion of individual transfers out	-0.420	-0.432	0.0627	0.496	0.383	0.385
	(1.032)	(1.040)	(1.052)	(1.403)	(1.422)	(1.473)
Proportion of Political appointees	4.275	4.264	3.110	-9.995	-10.54	-9.745
	(4.705)	(4.725)	(4.730)	(6.399)	(6.460)	(6.624)

2011.year	-0.0370*	-0.0356*	-0.0293*	0.0117	0.0116	0.0124
	(0.0144)	(0.0146)	(0.0148)	(0.0196)	(0.0199)	(0.0207)
2012.year	0.0513**	0.0491**	0.0498**	0.0532*	0.0529*	0.0583*
	(0.0169)	(0.0172)	(0.0170)	(0.0230)	(0.0236)	(0.0239)
2013.year	0.0552*	0.0510*	0.0504*	0.0356	0.0381	0.0450
	(0.0235)	(0.0245)	(0.0243)	(0.0320)	(0.0335)	(0.0340)
2014.year	0.0285	0.0219	0.00727	0.0214	0.0184	0.0291
	(0.0227)	(0.0243)	(0.0257)	(0.0308)	(0.0332)	(0.0359)
Department of the Air Force	0.0504	0.0545	0.0308	-0.344*	-0.345*	-0.330*
	(0.105)	(0.106)	(0.106)	(0.143)	(0.144)	(0.148)
Department of Agriculture	0.0628	0.0688	0.0470	-0.148+	-0.152+	-0.139
	(0.0634)	(0.0646)	(0.0655)	(0.0863)	(0.0884)	(0.0917)
Agency for International Development	-0.302	-0.280	-0.142	1.251**	1.268**	1.249**
	(0.282)	(0.284)	(0.290)	(0.384)	(0.388)	(0.407)
Department of the Army	0.156	0.163	0.113	-0.548**	-0.559**	-0.539*
	(0.151)	(0.152)	(0.154)	(0.205)	(0.208)	(0.215)
Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation	-0.0549	-0.0484	0.109	2.378***	2.419***	2.402***
	(0.422)	(0.425)	(0.431)	(0.574)	(0.581)	(0.603)

Office of Management and Budget	-0.383	-0.389	-0.0780	3.472***	3.563***	3.471***
	(0.486)	(0.492)	(0.515)	(0.661)	(0.673)	(0.722)
Department of Commerce	0.0957	0.108	0.130+	0.268*	0.267*	0.285*
	(0.0761)	(0.0788)	(0.0779)	(0.104)	(0.108)	(0.109)
National Credit Union Administration	-0.0683	-0.0611	0.114	2.198***	2.231***	2.211***
	(0.396)	(0.398)	(0.405)	(0.539)	(0.544)	(0.567)
Department of Defense	0.204	0.221+	0.206	-0.119	-0.127	-0.106
	(0.124)	(0.128)	(0.127)	(0.168)	(0.174)	(0.178)
Department of Justice	0.197**	0.208**	0.190*	-0.0395	-0.0579	-0.0444
	(0.0728)	(0.0772)	(0.0775)	(0.0990)	(0.106)	(0.109)
Department of Labor	0.0982	0.110	0.183	1.025***	1.039***	1.037***
	(0.135)	(0.136)	(0.140)	(0.184)	(0.186)	(0.196)
Department of Energy	-0.0229	-0.0144	0.0418	0.898***	0.904***	0.895***
	(0.145)	(0.146)	(0.148)	(0.198)	(0.200)	(0.207)
Department of Education	-0.0379	-0.0193	0.139	1.904***	1.938***	1.917***
	(0.246)	(0.247)	(0.257)	(0.335)	(0.338)	(0.360)
Equal Employment Opportunity Commission	0.254	0.272	0.407	2.046***	2.061***	2.061***
	(0.326)	(0.327)	(0.333)	(0.443)	(0.448)	(0.466)

Environmental Protection Agency	-0.0106	-0.00594	0.0393	0.714***	0.721***	0.718***
	(0.133)	(0.133)	(0.134)	(0.181)	(0.182)	(0.188)
Federal Communications Commission	-0.0536	-0.0346	0.120	1.760***	1.766***	1.774***
	(0.349)	(0.351)	(0.356)	(0.475)	(0.480)	(0.499)
Court Services and Offender Supervision Agency	-0.00613	0.0168	0.188	2.199***	2.228***	2.234***
	(0.410)	(0.412)	(0.417)	(0.558)	(0.563)	(0.584)
Federal Trade Commission	0.118	0.128	0.359	2.485***	2.532***	2.505***
	(0.383)	(0.385)	(0.399)	(0.520)	(0.526)	(0.559)
General Services Administration	0.0309	0.0459	0.107	0.979***	0.992***	0.994***
	(0.176)	(0.177)	(0.179)	(0.239)	(0.242)	(0.250)
Department of Health and Human Services	0.0912*	0.0997*	0.112*	-0.0444	-0.0453	-0.0333
	(0.0453)	(0.0473)	(0.0467)	(0.0617)	(0.0646)	(0.0653)
Department of Homeland Security	0.125	0.143	0.0911	-0.422*	-0.439*	-0.415*
	(0.125)	(0.130)	(0.133)	(0.170)	(0.178)	(0.186)
Department of Housing and Urban Development	0.277	0.303	0.412+	1.340***	1.354***	1.351***
	(0.215)	(0.218)	(0.224)	(0.293)	(0.298)	(0.314)

Broadcasting Board of Governors	-0.110	-0.0971	0.0497	1.915***	1.936***	1.921***
	(0.360)	(0.362)	(0.370)	(0.489)	(0.495)	(0.518)
Department of the Interior	0	0	0	0	0	0
	(.)	(.)	(.)	(.)	(.)	(.)
National Science Foundation	-0.0955	-0.0843	0.124	2.583***	2.623***	2.592***
	(0.357)	(0.359)	(0.373)	(0.486)	(0.491)	(0.522)
National Labor Relations Board	0.281	0.288	0.440	2.279***	2.290***	2.288***
	(0.368)	(0.369)	(0.374)	(0.501)	(0.505)	(0.523)
National Aeronautics and Space Administration	0.0272	0.0332	0.0948	0.593**	0.598**	0.596**
	(0.148)	(0.149)	(0.151)	(0.202)	(0.203)	(0.211)
National Archives and Records Administration	0.334	0.348	0.448	1.691***	1.698***	1.710***
	(0.327)	(0.328)	(0.330)	(0.445)	(0.449)	(0.462)
Nuclear Regulatory Commission	0.117	0.136	0.250	1.768***	1.785***	1.787***
	(0.288)	(0.289)	(0.292)	(0.391)	(0.395)	(0.409)
Department of the Navy	0.0718	0.0749	0.0385	-0.493**	-0.501**	-0.484**
	(0.113)	(0.114)	(0.115)	(0.153)	(0.156)	(0.161)
Office of Personnel Management	0.227	0.243	0.351	1.491***	1.509***	1.515***
	(0.250)	(0.251)	(0.255)	(0.340)	(0.344)	(0.357)
Railroad Retirement Board	0.190	0.192	0.397	2.714***	2.736***	2.728***
	(0.423)	(0.424)	(0.434)	(0.575)	(0.580)	(0.608)

Small Business Administration	0.258	0.275	0.412	1.688***	1.710***	1.702***
	(0.265)	(0.266)	(0.274)	(0.360)	(0.364)	(0.384)
Securities and Exchange Commission	0.0356	0.0481	0.160	1.667***	1.674***	1.666***
	(0.273)	(0.274)	(0.278)	(0.371)	(0.374)	(0.389)
National Gallery of Art	0.483	0.497	0.727	2.634***	2.686***	2.690***
	(0.477)	(0.480)	(0.493)	(0.649)	(0.656)	(0.691)
Department of State	0.108	0.133	0.232	1.101***	1.110***	1.114***
	(0.170)	(0.173)	(0.178)	(0.231)	(0.237)	(0.249)
Social Security Administration	0.174+	0.196+	0.219*	0.307*	0.302*	0.320*
	(0.0990)	(0.105)	(0.104)	(0.135)	(0.143)	(0.146)
Department of Transportation	0.0560	0.0649	0.0571	0.274***	0.273***	0.278***
	(0.0461)	(0.0480)	(0.0479)	(0.0627)	(0.0657)	(0.0670)
Department of the Treasury	0.464*	0.483*	0.439*	0.103	0.0885	0.121
	(0.185)	(0.189)	(0.189)	(0.252)	(0.258)	(0.265)
Department of Veterans Affairs	0.0862	0.0886	0.0226	-0.828***	-0.838***	-0.826***
	(0.150)	(0.151)	(0.154)	(0.204)	(0.207)	(0.216)
_cons	5.703***	6.234**	4.940*	0.187	-0.400	-0.399
	(1.668)	(1.921)	(1.980)	(2.269)	(2.626)	(2.773)
N	181	181	181	181	181	181
adj. R^2	0.878	0.878	0.880	0.919	0.917	0.915

Standard errors in parentheses, $^{+}p < 0.1$, $^{*}p < 0.05$, $^{**}p < 0.01$, $^{***}p < 0.001$

Discussion

At the outset of this article we argued that, barring a few exceptions, researchers have largely overlooked employee engagement and its effects in the public sector. We then articulated why OPM's Employee Engagement Index (EEI) constitutes a distinct human resource management reform and noted that, like most administrative reforms that are celebrated, little effort is being spent in trying to determine their efficacy.

As indicated above and as OPM acknowledges, their notion of antecedents of work engagement represents a series of supervisory and leadership behavior and intrinsic work experiences that should lead to employee engagement as a psychological state, but it does not represent psychological engagement itself. Thus, empirical results using OPM's EEI do not correspond well to and should not be compared with existing scholarly evidence regarding employee engagement as a psychological state.

Our analysis reveals signs of the EEI being a valid measure of antecedents of work engagement as conceptualized by OPM. The indicators in the EEI fairly represent the domain of OPM's notion of antecedents of work engagement and the three sub-scales and overall factor created from these indicators exhibit high levels of measurement reliability. Further, when it comes to the internal structure of the test, confirmatory factor analysis results indicate that the three sub-scales in the EEI converge on a higher-order construct, thereby lending support to the use of the EEI as an overall measure of antecedents of employee engagement. However, the results also suggest that the higher-order construct has two rather than the three dimensions specified by OPM in its definition of antecedents of work engagement. Only the measurement of intrinsic work experience has discriminant validity over those of supervisory behavior and

leaders lead, the latter two of which converge strongly onto each other. This seems intuitive since intrinsic work experience captures the employees' feelings in the workplace, person-job fit, and even according to OPM, is the closest to having concurrent conceptual space with the well-validated Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (Office of Personnel Management, 2015a). On the other hand, the focal target in the other two sub-scales are the individual's supervisor and senior agency leader, thus making them distinct from more proximal measures of the employee's work experience.

In testing the efficacy of OPM's employee engagement initiative using the EEI and a unique six-year panel dataset of federal agencies, we found that the overall EEI scale is indeed positively and statistically related to both measures of perceived performance. Our general results show that OPM's efforts to foster conditions necessary to engage employees does have some efficacy, viz. the EEI is associated with higher levels of perceived work unit and perceived organizational performance.

The EEI is a composite measure of employee attitudes toward work and managerial behavior at two levels, the immediate supervisory level and the senior leadership level. We find that the EEI sub-factor representing intrinsic work experiences is unrelated to measures of perceived performance at both the work unit and organizational levels. When it comes to the managerial behavior portion of the EEI, however, the results show that performance is affected at the same level at which managers are trying to promote engagement. Specifically, when the EEI is disaggregated into its sub-factors, the managerial antecedents of employee engagement at the work unit level, as measured by *supervisors*, is positively related to performance at the corresponding level, as captured by *perceived work unit performance*. In addition, senior leadership behavior represented by *leaders lead* is positively related to perceptions of

performance at the organizational level, *perceived organizational performance*. In short, supervisory behavior appears to impact proximal measures of performance, while the behavior of senior leaders shapes the general work environment within an organization and has a greater bearing on the performance of the organization as a whole. This interpretation is consistent with the pattern of results from models predicting perceived work unit performance (Models 1-3) and organizational performance (Models 4-6).

Our inability to measure psychological engagement prevents us from examining if it is the primary mediator connecting the EEI to higher levels of perceived performance. We noted that efforts on the part of leaders and supervisors to promote employee engagement, as captured by the EEI, may also lead to higher performance through their influence on other work-related attitudes and behavior. Indeed, we find that the EEI is positively correlated with FEVS indicators measuring overall job satisfaction ("Considering everything, how satisfied are you with your job?", 0.90), job meaningfulness ("My work gives me a feeling of personal accomplishment", 0.73) and search behavior ("I am constantly looking for ways to do my job better", 0.83). Thus, OPM's employee engagement initiative appears to be effective at improving performance, but the manner in which this happens may involve a range of underlying pathways, only one of which may be through higher levels of psychological engagement.

Conclusion

We began by calling attention to employee engagement, an emerging management phenomenon that has caught the interest of practitioners but one that has not been adequately addressed by public administration researchers. We then set out to describe employee engagement as a type of administrative reform underway both domestically as well as

internationally. We described how antecedents of employee engagement are being championed throughout the U.S. federal government, particularly by OPM as precursors to lower satisfaction and turnover and higher performance. As an example of administrative reform, OPM's employee engagement initiative is part of a series of continual efforts to improve some aspect of the bureaucracy. For instance, the diffusion of employee engagement into the federal government's human resource management practices can be compared to the reinventing government movement of the 1990s, and subsequent efforts of the Clinton Administration's National Performance Review (NPR). In particular, the NPR highlighted the need to empower federal employees through training and development and decentralizing decision-making, among other practices (Rainey, 2014). Thus, employee engagement can be seen as a business management or fashion-setting trend (Welch, 2011) that has taken a foothold in the federal government. Further highlighting the policy-relevance of this study, employee engagement has emerged as a way to judge winners and losers among federal agencies (e.g. *The Best and Worst Places to Work in the Federal Government*, 2017; Partnership for Public Service, 2016), and as a signal of legitimacy and compliance with the external environment (Meyer & Rowan, 1977). These signals of legitimacy serve as important recruitment and retention tools as federal managers attempt to differentiate themselves from other federal agencies and attract a young generation of public service workers in an increasingly hostile and partisan external environment (Partnership for Public Service, 2012).

Our findings represent an initial test of the impact of OPM's efforts to promote employee engagement. We should tread carefully, therefore, when making causal attributions. The general results of the regression models show that OPM's employee engagement initiative as captured by the Employee Engagement Index (EEI) is indeed positively related to both perceived work unit

performance and perceived organizational performance. This is important in so far as it shows that despite the lack of correspondence between OPM's conceptualization of employee engagement and others found in the literature, the set of practices, behaviors and employee attitudes that OPM is tracking and promoting throughout the federal bureaucracy seems to be having the desired effect. Indeed, the notion of employee engagement in the federal government appears to involve more than just psychological engagement or its antecedents captured by the EEI, and has included enabling apparatus such as developing individualized development plans for employees, setting up Employee Advisory Councils at the U.S. Department of Agriculture (Jeanquart, 2017; The Best and Worst Places to Work in the Federal Government, 2017) and establishing Employee Engagement Steering Committees at the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (The Best and Worst Places to Work in the Federal Government, 2017), to name a few examples. This perhaps signals that in the federal government context, the idea of engagement may suffer from construct proliferation. In this context, our results should offer clarity to practitioners and speak towards the positive efficacy of the working conditions OPM is targeting with its EEI.

The use of two-way fixed effects and longitudinal data ensure that time-invariant differences across agencies and secular trends are controlled for. Further, the use of panel data methods responds to Christian, Garza, and Slaughter's (2011) call for more robust tests of employee engagement using longitudinal research designs. In spite of this, however, there are some limitations to our findings. Firstly, although we used different raters to construct the independent and dependent variables, there may be unaccounted bias due to variance that is common to the survey instrument itself, particularly regarding the independent and control variables, which were measured using scores from the same respondents. Secondly, since our

unit of analysis was the agency-year, we had to rely on agency-level averages, and thus were not able to fully leverage variation among employees within agencies. A future analysis may test whether the results found in this study are similar to those when the unit of analysis is the individual within the agency. Further, given the differential associations between EEI sub-factors and indicators of perceived performance, a more granular analysis could involve using multilevel modeling to capture the unique variance of work units within agencies, thus providing a fuller partitioning of variance.

Chapter 2 Appendix

Measurement of Antecedents of Employee Engagement

Intrinsic work experience

Q1. My talents are used well in the workplace.

Q2. I know how my work relates to the agency's goals and priorities.

Q3. I know what is expected of me on the job.

Q4. I feel encouraged to come up with new and better ways of doing things.

Q5. My work gives me a feeling of personal accomplishment.

Supervisors

Q6. I have trust and confidence in my supervisor.

Q7. Supervisors/team leaders in my work unit support employee development.

Q8. My supervisor/team leader listens to what I have to say.

Q9. My supervisor/team leader treats me with respect.

Q10. Overall, how good a job do you feel is being done by the manager directly above your immediate supervisor/team leader?

Leaders lead

Q11. Managers communicate the goals and priorities of the organization.

Q12. I have a high level of respect for my organization's senior leaders.

Q13. Overall, how good a job do you feel is being done by your immediate supervisor/team leader?

Q14. In my organization, leaders generate high levels of motivation and commitment in the workforce.

Q15. My organization's leaders maintain high standards of honesty and integrity.

Supervisor and leader behavior: Q6 through Q15.

Measurement of Control Variables

Discretionary effort: When needed I am willing to put in the extra effort to get a job done.

Information: I have enough information to do my job well.

Proactive behavior: I am constantly looking for ways to do my job better.

Resources: I have sufficient resources (for example, people, materials, budget) to get my job done.

Workload: My workload is reasonable.

Management communication: Managers promote communication among different work units (for example, about projects, goals, needed resources).

Management collaboration: Managers support collaboration across work units to accomplish work objectives.

Job satisfaction: Considering everything, how satisfied are you with your job?

Creativity rewarded: Creativity and innovation are rewarded

Chapter 3. Employee Engagement among Federal Employees: Examining the Role of Organizational Images

Abstract

Employee engagement has recently emerged as a management tool that has spawned active interest among researchers, human resource management practitioners, and policy makers. While engagement has been linked to job attitudes such as job satisfaction and turnover intention, public management scholars have not yet examined the role of organizational images. We examine how two different organizational images (external, and internal) influence employee engagement, and find that employee engagement is indeed influenced by these images, but in opposite directions, in addition to being mediated by job identification. We conclude with a discussion of the theoretical and practical implications of these findings.

Introduction

During the past decade or so, engagement—defined as employees being able to bring forth their physical, cognitive and emotional energies towards task performance (Kahn, 1990)—has emerged as a key management priority for public sector organizations. In the U.S. federal government, multiple agencies have expended effort towards defining and measuring the concept (Merit Systems Protection Board, 2008, Office of Personnel Management, 2015), and used it as a way to increase organizational performance, retain employees, and aid in recruitment efforts (Donovan et al., 2014). In addition, the idea of employee engagement has spawned a large international industry of popular press, consultants, and practitioner publications that encourage managers to find new ways to engage their employees as a way to increase organizational performance (Lavigna, 2013; Partnership for Public Service, 2018). However, research on employee engagement has not kept pace with the proliferation of prescriptions and proverbs concerning engagement, thereby creating a lack of empirical knowledge about the validity and significance of the engagement construct, especially in the public sector context (Hameduddin and Fernandez, 2019).

It is important to consider this context because unlike their private counterparts, public organizations operate within a unique environment, serve multiple constituencies and seek multiple sources of legitimacy (Rainey, 2014), but at the same time they experience low levels of public support and experience generally negative portrayals at the hands of politicians and the media (Goodsell, 2003; Garrett et al., 2006; Hubbell, 1991; Pew Research Center, 2015; Stanford, 2014). Interestingly, however, considerable research has demonstrated that public employees are motivated by unique public service and altruistic motives that are grounded in public institutions (Perry & Wise, 1990). These in turn have been associated with higher job

performance, organizational commitment, and job motivation (Harari, Herst, Parola, & Carmona, 2017; Vigoda-Gadot, Eldor, & Schohat, 2013). While these motives are not in question, social psychology research suggests another set of motives. In particular, scholars have argued that individuals develop their identities of organizational membership based on both their self-concepts, and by how they are perceived by organizational outsiders (Tajfel & Turner, 1979; Dutton et al., 1994), which in turn influence their motivations, attitudes, and behaviors (Rho, Yun, & Lee, 2015; Riketta, 2005).

What is unclear however, is the extent to which public employees internalize external representations and images, and what role their own perceptions of the organization play in this process. In this context, this paper seeks to understand how organizational images influence employee engagement. We specifically focus on two organizational images: construed external image (CEI), or how organizational members feel their organization is perceived by outsiders, and perceived organizational identity (POI), which refers to beliefs about the enduring and lasting characteristics of their organizations (Dukerich, Golden, & Shortell, 2002; Dutton et al. 1994). Extant theorizing in the business management context has predominantly emphasized the positive association between organizational images and employee work attitudes, but we take a comprehensive approach and consider both positive and negative associations that are grounded on disparate literatures in social psychology and public administration.

From a practical perspective, both scenarios are plausible. Firstly, public managers aware of the influence of these images may use buffers to reduce the influence of negative public images, such that public employees identify with the values of their organization instead of those espoused by outsiders. Second, because of the unique environment of public organizations and

the values of public employees, negative representations may make public employees more motivated to improve their performance and their organization's standing and reputation.

In the following section, we review the literature on employee engagement, organizational images, and identification, and present our hypotheses. We then discuss our methodology and results of the analysis. The paper concludes with a discussion of our findings and their implications for public management theory and practice.

Employee Engagement and Organizational Images in the U.S. Federal Context

The concept of employee engagement can be traced to Kahn's (1990) idea of employees being able to fully express themselves during in-role performance, in the presence of antecedents such as psychological safety, meaningfulness, and availability. Since Kahn's (1990) publication, a number of different perspectives and conceptualizations of engagement have emerged (Shuck, 2011), including treating engagement as the theoretical antipode of job burnout (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2010), or as a combination of actionable managerial policies and job attitudes (Harter, Schmidt, & Hayes, 2002). Generally, engagement can be defined as employees devoting their physical, emotional, and cognitive energies towards role performance (Rich, LePine, & Crawford, 2010). When this happens, employees bring their full energies towards their work roles and persist in the face of failure, are mentally absorbed such that it may be difficult to detach from work, and are dedicated towards their work's goals (Schaufeli et al., 2002).

Considering employee engagement is theoretically important given its relationship to both job performance and organizational citizenship behavior (Hameduddin & Fernandez, 2019; Rich et al., 2010). Indeed, some have argued that engagement itself is more proximal to job performance compared to more distal measures such as job satisfaction, and organizational commitment (Rich et al., 2010; Christian, Garza, & Slaughter, 2011).

While research on engagement has increased during the past decade or so (Bailey et al., 2017), this is far eclipsed by the use of engagement within practitioner circles. The concept itself has blossomed into a large-scale industry, with multiple practitioners operationalizing and touting the benefits of an engaged workforce (Lavigna, 2013). This effort has become furthermore salient as efforts to revitalize the federal bureaucracy have culminated in the U.S. Office of Personnel Management's Employee Engagement Initiative, which has sought to measure and link employee engagement with organizational performance (Hameduddin & Fernandez, 2019). In addition, efforts towards engagement have also proliferated among U.S. state and local governments (Governing Institute, 2013; Lavigna, 2018), but they much more prominent in the U.S. federal government. However, in spite of growing research and practitioner interest in engagement, barring a few exceptions, public administration scholars have not paid sufficient attention to this emergent construct. This paper specifically considers the direct impact of organizational images on public employee engagement, a relationship that has hitherto been unexamined.

While engagement refers to the harnessing of emotional, cognitive, and physical energies towards task performance (Rich et al., 2010), it is not only the task environment that influences their work effort. In fact, employee motivations may be informed by their perceptions of group membership and identification, as well as their own self-concepts. These in turn are influenced by the different sources of information employees use in developing attitudes (Bandura, 1977). It is important to consider these perceptions and images given the unique environment of public organizations. In particular, because of the unique public sector context, organizational images may even have negative associations with employee attitudes such as engagement.

In addition, this context is moreover important given the role the external environment plays in the effectiveness of public programs and public organizations. Scholars have noted that since public organizations are generally insulated economic markets (Wamsley & Zald, 1973), by their very nature they rely on political and public agents as sources of support (Rainey, 2014). Thus, as opposed to private organizations, public trust acts as a resource that shapes public employee attitudes and behavior (Pfeffer & Salancik, 1978; Stazyk & Goerdel, 2011). In addition, a lack of political support and public legitimacy may indeed negatively impact the functioning of public institutions (Meier & Bohte, 2007). Building on this and organizational theory research on organizational environments, others have attempted to "connect the dots" (Pandey & Wright, 2006, p. 511) in public management research by examining the influence of the external political environment on goal ambiguity (Pandey & Wright, 2006), commitment of public employees (Yang & Pandey, 2009), and organizational effectiveness (Stazyk & Goerdel, 2011), among others.

Among those environmental influences is whether there is widespread support for the mission of the organization, or whether the organization exists in a generally negative climate. On this front, scholars have noted that these negative influences are not a new phenomenon in American democracy but instead disdain for large governmental apparatus may well be etched into the founding of the modern administrative state, reaching its peak during the Progressive era (Stillman, 1990; Terry, 1997; Yarwood, 1996). This may be especially true for U.S. federal agencies when compared to state and local governments, given their visibility, size, and the role they play in regulating individual and corporate behavior (Meier & Bohte, 2007). In fact, evidence suggests that U.S. federal government employees are attentive towards the larger socio-political environment of their organizations (Garrett et al., 2006; Purcell, Shovein, Hebenstreit,

& Drexler, 2017). This finding is especially pertinent because the context of this study is U.S. federal employees and recent evidence has found that federal agencies do not enjoy much support in the public eye (Pew Research Center, 2015; Toedtman, 2016).

Employee Engagement, Organizational Images, and Job Identification

One theoretical frame to analyze external images and to what extent public employees internalize them as they develop attitudes and behavior is social identity theory. This theory offers a way to understand how individuals segment themselves from their environments, and how they define themselves based on their group membership and identification (March & Simon, 1958; Ashforth & Mael, 1989). March and Simon (1958) originally theorized that organizational identification is dependent upon the perceived prestige of group affiliation and status of group members, which are themselves informed by cultural attitudes towards group affiliation. More recent theorizing has focused on the role of the self-concept of organizational members and the public images of organizations in influencing the strength of organizational identification (Dutton et al., 1994). In addition to identifying with their organizations, employees may choose to direct their identification towards the workgroup, their job, or their occupation, which can be a way of developing a set of meanings that can help regulate behavior and align them with job or role expectations (Ma, 2019; Stryker & Serpe, 1982; Burke & Reitzes, 1991).

According to this perspective, organizational members use construed external image as a way to create and maintain positive social identities, and for the same reasons that tie self-concept to job identification: self-distinction, self-continuity, and self-enhancement (Dukerich et al., 2002). These organizational images not only influence the attractiveness of the organization to members, thus strengthening identification and other positive work-related behaviors, but can also affect policy-relevant outcomes such as attracting, selecting, and retaining employees (Rho

et al., 2015). In the presence of positive construed external image, employees may feel that they are complementing and maintaining positive social identities and group prestige, thus fulfilling their needs for psychological safety (Kahn, 1990). In the immediate task environment, these feelings may in turn make employees more available to devote cognitive, emotional, and physical energies towards task performance. Based on this, we formulate the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 1a. Construed external image will be positively associated with employee engagement

While the management and applied psychology literatures have theorized positive relationships between images or perceptions of group membership and employee attitudes and behavior such as organizational commitment, job satisfaction, job performance, and citizenship behavior, there is a paucity of work that examines these in the context of the distinct nature of public organizations. In an environment where public organizations face frequent negative portrayals in political circles and mass media (Kaufman, 1981) and are generally reflected poorly in public opinion polls (Pew Research Center, 2015), there is reason to suspect that construed external image may have a negative influence on employee engagement.

In particular, the unique context of public organizations lends to public employees being motivated by values uniquely grounded in public service and public institutions. The definition of Public Service Motivation (PSM) has changed over time in a way to describe altruistic motivational traits held by employees in organizations across different sectors, but the PSM literature in general suggests that employees attracted to public sector work possess certain motives in nature. These employees "place a high value on work that helps others and benefits society as a whole; involves self-sacrifice, and provides a sense of responsibility and integrity

(Rainey, 2014, p. 313).” The initial construct of PSM included four sub-dimensions of compassion, commitment to public interest, self-sacrifice, and civic duty, but recent studies validate three dimensions excluding the civic duty dimension (e.g., Coursey, Perry, Brudney, & Littlepage, 2008).

The key theoretical argument that links construed external image with higher levels of desirable employee attitudes and behaviors is that employees display these behaviors because it enhances their own self-interest (Wan-Huggins, Riordan, & Griffeth, 1998) and satisfies needs for self-esteem (Fuller, Marler, Hester, Frey, & Relyea, 2006), self-distinctiveness, self-enhancement, and self-continuity (Dutton et al., 1994). However, considerable research has shown that, when compared to private sector employees, public employees are more motivated by pro-social values (Lyons, Duxbury, & Higgins, 2006) and self-sacrifice (Perry, Hondeghem, & Wise, 2010), making them more actively committed and supportive of organizational reforms and changes (e.g., Davis & Stazyk, 2014; Wright, Christensen, & Isett, 2013). In addition, extensive research has confirmed the positive association between public service motivation and behavioral/organizational outcomes. For examples, employees with high PSM are more likely to have greater levels of organizational commitment (Crewson, 1997) prosocial behaviors like whistle-blowing (Brewer & Selden, 1998; Caillier, 2015; Caillier, 2016), and may even have higher levels of engagement (Vigoda-Gadot et al., 2013).

Thus, the findings suggest that when employees face negative construed external images, they may not simply take adverse actions against their agencies. Rather, they may commit to more prosocial behaviors to improve their organizational image and performance. This scenario seems very plausible. Prospective employees for a certain job or sector are already aware of organizational goals, culture, and reputation. The federal bureaucracy has been a target for

bureaucratic bashing over the past decades (Rainey, 2014; Goodsell, 2013), and federal employees are very familiar with this history. Ironically, however, numerous survey reports for federal employees present high levels of job and work satisfaction, as well as positive work attitudes, among federal employees (e.g., Merit Systems Protection Board 2007). More importantly, employees in general hold a recognition of their critical influence on organizational image and reputation perceived by outsiders (Helm, 2011). Given this context, public sector employees—particularly federal employees—who feel motivated to serve higher order of values over self-interest may be more likely to engage if they hold negative construed external images. Based on the preceding discussion, we propose the following hypothesis.

Hypothesis 1b. Construed external image will be negatively associated with employee engagement

In addition to construed external image, employees may also be attentive towards perceived organizational identity (POI), which refers to an individual's beliefs about the enduring and lasting characteristics of their organizations. According to social identity theory, organizational identity can tie into an individual's self-concept, and thus more attractive POI would enhance feelings of self-continuity, self-distinctiveness, and self-enhancement. In particular, when perceived organizational identity and self-concept are similar, they allow an individual to have internal consistency and opportunities for fuller self-expression (Dutton et al., 1994). In addition, employees may seek to distinguish themselves from others in interpersonal contexts (Tajfel & Turner, 1979), which is made easier when POI is consistent with an individual's self-concept (Festinger, 1957). In these situations, individuals may be able to more fully express themselves in their workplace, which is an important antecedent for engaging in task performance (Kahn, 1990). Lastly, when perceived organizational identity is attractive, it

can serve as a way to enhance individual self-esteem and core self-evaluations, allowing employees to see themselves in more positive light (Dutton et al., 1994; Fuller et al., 2006). Based on these reasons, we hypothesize the following:

Hypothesis 2. Perceived organizational identity will be positively associated with employee engagement

According to identity theory, identification serves the purpose of embedding individuals in a social and cultural lansdscape (Ashforth, Harrison, & Corley, 2008), and can be directed towards the job or the organization. In the organizational context, identification with a job, organization, occupation, or role can be a way of developing a set of meanings that can help regulate behavior and align them with job or role expectations (Ma, 2019; Stryker & Serpe, 1982; Burke & Reitzes, 1991). Thus, job identification can be defined as the extent to which individuals see themselves as part of their larger job identities (Hatak, Harms, & Fink, 2015), which can be manifested when there is congruence with personal values and motivations and those fulfilled by the job and task related behaviors. Thus, as opposed to organizational identification, job identification would be more proximally linked to the task environment and task related behaviors, which would influence employee engagement. This identification would be integrally linked to an individual's self-concept and values, and would thus be enhanced when identification with the job allows the individual to enhance their self-esteem, maintain consistency with their sense of self, and gain distinctiveness from others (Dukerich et al., 2002).

Because of these reasons, members with a strong sense of job identification may seek to further it through higher levels of commitment and engaging in extra-role behaviors (Dukerich et al., 2002). Indeed, a recent meta-analysis of job identification found that the construct was correlated with extra-role behaviors as well as a range of job attitudes across a number of studies

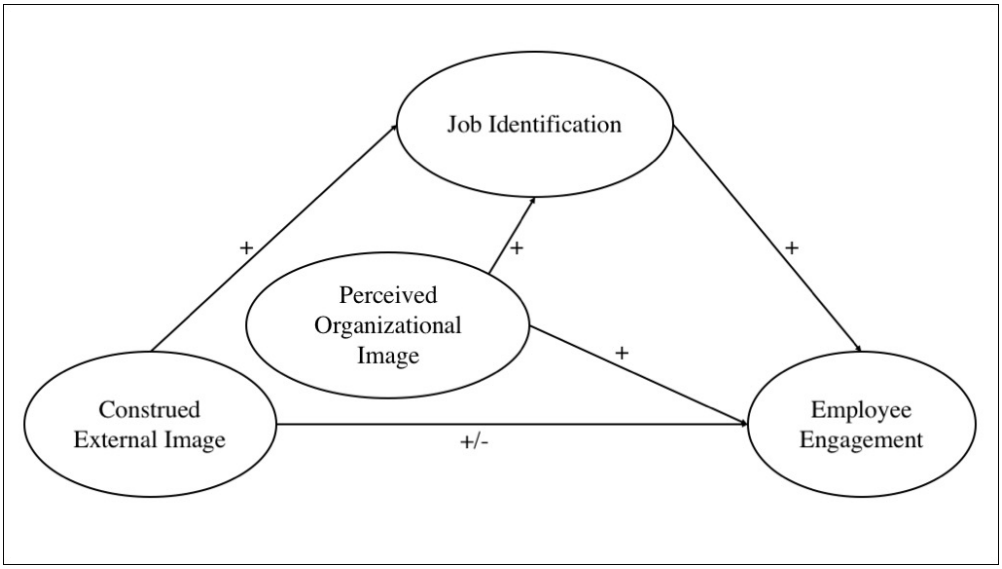
(Riketta, 2005). Further, identification can become a reinforcing mechanism through which an employee's work motivation and in-role performance is augmented, thus allowing employees to more fully bring their cognitive, physical, and emotional selves to the jobs (Karanika-Murray, Duncan, Pontes, & Griffiths, 2015). Among the only studies investigating job identification and employee engagement simultaneously, Karanika-Murray et al. (2015) find evidence of employee engagement acting as a mediator in the job identification-job satisfaction relationship. Therefore, this research predicts a positive relationship between job identification and employee engagement.

However, job indentification itself is influenced by both perceived organziational identity and construed external image (Dukerich et al., 2002; Dutton et al., 1994; Rho et al., 2015). Thus, when there is congruence between POI and job identification, it may in turn lead to greater levels of employee engagement. Likewise, positive CEI may lead to higher levels of job identification, which will result in more employee engagement. Or, for the same reasons identified for hypothesis 1B, negative CEI may actually lead to higher levels of job identification, which in turn would increase employee engagement. Similarly, employees certain in the knowledge that they are poorly perceived by the outside public, i.e. low on CEI, may still be able to effectively engage with their work if their level of job identification is high. In this case, individual member's beliefs about the organization's qualities may play an important part in engaging employees. Thus, job identification may be a partial mechanism through which the effect of negative external images may be counteracted. Based on these reasons, we predict the following:

Hypothesis 3. Job identification will mediate the relationships between construed external image and engagement, and perceived organizational identity and engagement.

Based on the preceding literature review and the hypotheses identified, we propose testing the following path model (Figure 1).

Figure 3.1: Path Model



(JI: Job Identification; CEI: Construed External Image; POI: Perceived Organizational Identity; EE: Employee Engagement)

Methods

Data

Data for this study were derived from results of the 2016 Merit Principles Survey (MPS), which was administered by the U.S. Merit Systems Protection Board between June 2016 and September 2016. The 2016 MPS had three different versions known as Path 1, Path 2, and Path L, which assessed different parts of the workplace experience. These surveys were administered to more than 13,000 federal employees (including both supervisors and line employees). Survey samples were selected based on the Office of Personnel Management's Central Personnel Data File using a stratified random sampling method, and included samples from 24 large U.S. federal agencies (Merit Systems Protection Board, 2016). To test the hypothesized relationships, we used Path 2 which offered responses corresponding to our key variables of interest, and had a

response rate of 38.7%. Due to missing observations on some variables, listwise deletion reduced the sample size to 9,554 observations. Table 1 shows the descriptive statistics for the variables used in the analysis.

Table 3.1: Descriptive Statistics

Latent Variable Measures	Obs	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
EE 1	9,554	3.89	0.95	1	5
EE 2	9,554	4.35	0.74	1	5
EE 3	9,554	4.02	0.95	1	5
EE 4	9,554	4.12	0.95	1	5
CEI 1	9,554	3.44	1.22	1	5
CEI 2	9,554	3.22	1.29	1	5
POI 1	9,554	3.90	1.00	1	5
POI 2	9,554	3.76	1.13	1	5
JI 1	9,554	3.68	1.08	1	5
JI 2	9,554	4.26	0.87	1	5
JI 3	9,554	4.13	0.88	1	5
JI 4	9,554	3.83	1.03	1	5
Control Variable Measures	Obs	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
Tenure	9,554	0.91	0.28	0	1
Supervisory status	9,554	0.45	0.49	0	1
Salaries	9,554	2.53	1.02	1	4
Minority status	9,554	0.32	0.46	0	1
Male	9,554	0.57	0.49	0	1

(JI: Job Identification; CEI: Construed External Image; POI: Perceived Organizational Identity; EE: Employee Engagement)

Variables

The key variables in this analysis include *Employee Engagement*, *Perceived Organizational Identity*, *Construed External Image*, and *Job Identification*. All four variables were treated as latent variables since they represent unobservable characteristics and were measured using multiple survey items. Respondents to the individual survey items capturing all four variables were asked to rate their agreement with each of these statements on a standard 1-5 Likert scale, where 1 represents strongly disagree, and 5 represents strongly agree.

Employee Engagement, the main outcome variable, was measured using four summated rating scales in the MPS. Three survey items reflect aspects of emotional, physical, and cognitive engagement dimensions as identified by Rich et al. (2010) and Schaufeli and Bakker (2004), and were captured using the following items: "My work gets me energized and excited" (1), "I put my full physical energy into doing my work tasks" (2), and "It is easy for me to become happily immersed in my work" (3). Lastly, an overall measure of engagement was capturing using the following item: "I feel engaged in my job" (4).

Job Identification was measured using four items that reflect the extent to which organizational members identify with their jobs and find alignment between the values and goals the job fulfills and their own values ("My work gives me a good opportunity to do things I am passionate about" (1), "My work supports a purpose, cause, or mission that is important to me" (2) "My work is consistent with my core values and beliefs" (3), and "My work is consistent with my personal sense of purpose or calling" (4)).

Perceived Organizational Identity (POI) represents what organizational members feel are the enduring and lasting qualities of their organization and was measured using items on employee satisfaction on the following two items: "My agency is successful at accomplishing its mission" (1), and "I would recommend my agency as a place to work." (2), which correspond well with previous research on perceived organizational identity (Rho et al. 2015).

Previous scholarship has measured *Construed External Image* (CEI), which reflects how organizational members believe outsiders view their organization (Dutton et al. 1994), using an item capturing whether their organization has prestige or support from the external community (Fuller et al. 2006). We measured this construct using employee satisfaction on the following

two items: “Public support for your organization’s mission and work” (1) and “Public perception of your organization’s performance” (2).

In addition to these, control variables included minority status, tenure, salaries, and sex. All these variables were dichotomous, except for salaries, which took on four distinct responses: 1 ($74,999 or less), 2 ($75,000-$99,000), 3 ($100,000-$149,999), or 4 ($150,000 or more). Table 2 shows the correlation matrix of the variables used in the analysis.

Model

To test our hypotheses, we use structural equation modeling (SEM). SEM is a suitable method since the focal variables under consideration are latent construct that are measured using observable indicators (Rho et al., 2015). Thus, using multivariate regression would not fully account for measurement variance, making SEM a more appropriate method (Kline 2016). Further, SEM is convenient since it carries out both measurement, i.e. confirmatory factor analysis, and structural modeling, i.e. regression, at the same time. The analysis used the default maximum likelihood estimation method, which assumes joint normality of all variables and uses listwise deletion of missing variables, and allows latent exogenous variables to covary (StataCorp., 2017). It is important to note that the terms exogenous and endogenous are part of the SEM framework which assumes a causal process between independent and dependent

Table 3.2: Correlation Matrix

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1	1							
2	0.477*	1						
3	0.742*	0.491*	1					
4	0.602*	0.395*	0.550*	1				
5	0.245*	0.162*	0.232*	0.241*	1			
6	0.240*	0.149*	0.224*	0.238*	0.834*	1		
7	0.403*	0.255*	0.370*	0.472*	0.385*	0.397*	1	
8	0.482*	0.257*	0.436*	0.573*	0.335*	0.348*	0.613*	1
9	0.635*	0.404*	0.563*	0.566*	0.224*	0.214*	0.378*	0.464*
10	0.510*	0.377*	0.464*	0.491*	0.203*	0.173*	0.380*	0.400*
11	0.537*	0.380*	0.493*	0.521*	0.218*	0.194*	0.417*	0.447*
12	0.587*	0.379*	0.529*	0.550*	0.211*	0.199*	0.360*	0.433*
13	0.009	0.003	-0.006	0.006	-0.023*	-0.027*	0.001	-0.014
14	0.138*	0.087*	0.108*	0.149*	0.041*	0.039*	0.115*	0.114*
15	0.146*	0.038*	0.107*	0.121*	0.059*	0.051*	0.095*	0.093*
16	0.033*	0.053*	0.037*	-0.022*	0.081*	0.069*	0.009	-0.012
17	0.007	-0.029*	-0.026*	0.013	0.013	0.025*	-0.013	0.021*

9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
1								
0.604*	1							
0.620*	0.656*	1						
0.726*	0.630*	0.691*	1					
-0.016	0.006	0.003	0.016	1				
0.145*	0.153*	0.149*	0.155*	0.108*	1			
0.133*	0.120*	0.142*	0.153*	0.122*	0.414*	1		
-0.014	-0.034*	-0.040*	-0.033*	-0.044*	-0.074*	-0.125*	1	
0.035*	0.020	0.030*	0.058*	0.016	0.082*	0.113*	-0.096*	1

*$p<0.05$

1. Employee Engagement 1
2. Employee Engagement 2
3. Employee Engagement 3
4. Employee Engagement 4
5. Construed External Image 1
6. Construed External Image 2
7. Perceived Organizational Identity 1
8. Perceived Organizational Identity 1
9. Job Identification 1
10. Job Identification 2
11. Job Identification 3
12. Job Identification 4
13. Tenure
14. Supervisory Status
15. Salaries
16. Minority Status
17. Male

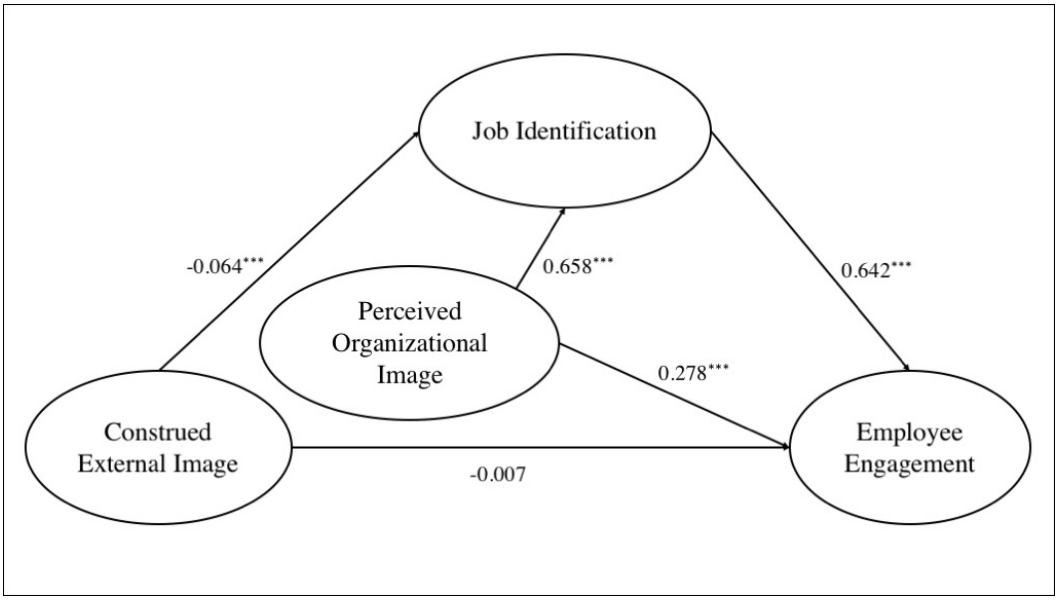
variables (Kline, 2016). However, since we are using cross-sectional data, our research design does not allow for causal claims to be made, even though we use the SEM terminology.

Results

Table 3 shows standardized results of the measurement and structural models (direct, indirect, and total effects), while figure 2 shows the path model and standardized direct effects of the structural model. The latter part of table 3 shows the results of the structural regression. The Maximum Likelihood (ML) estimator was used to derive estimates for the structural model. The chi-square test of global fit was rejected (χ^2, 88=2744.61), indicating a poor model fit, but this is not surprising since the chi-square test is highly sensitive to sample size (Kline, 2016), which was large for this sample (n=9,554). While there is considerable debate on the topic of fit indices (cf. Browne & Cudeck, 1993; Hu & Bentler, 1999; Kline, 2016; Marsh, Hau, & Wen, 2004), recent research has generally recommended against using simple rules of thumb and using approximate fit indices as goodness of fit statistics, and has instead recommended using multiple indices that at best indicate "badness of fit" or provide evidence of poor fit (Kline, 2016; Marsh, 2004).

In the estimated model, the structural model fit the data well (RMSEA=0.056, CFI=0.961, TLI=0.944, SRMR=0.027). In particular, the CFI and TLI values indicate that the model fit is 96.1% and 94.4% better compared a null or independence model. In addition, SRMR values greater than 0.10 and RMSEA values larger than 0.05 may provide evidence of poor fit (Kline 2016). Because the RMSEA value (0.056) is slightly larger than the generally recommended values, we estimated a series of alternate models, which are discussed at the end of this section.

Figure 3.2: Results of SEM Model, Direct Effects (Standardized Factor Loadings)



* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$ (χ^2,88=2744.61, RMSEA=0.056, CFI=0.961, TLI=0.944, and SRMR=0.027)

Firstly, regarding organizational images variables, the results show that the direct relationship between *Construed External Image* and *Employee Engagement* was not statistically significant, but the total and indirect relationship was negative and statistically significant. This provides evidence for hypothesis 1B, and we fail to confirm hypothesis 1A. In addition, the direct relationship between *Perceived Organizational Identity* (β=0.278, p < .001) and *Employee Engagement* was statistically significant and positive, thus supporting Hypothesis 2.

Secondly, we hypothesized a mediating or indirect role of *Job Identification* in the relationships between *Perceived Organizational Identity* and *Employee Engagement* and between *Construed External Image* and *Employee Engagement*. The results reveal statistically significant evidence on the positive relationship between *Perceived Organizational Identity* and *Job Identification* (β=0.658, p < .001) and the negative relationship between *Construed External Image* on *Job Identification* (β=-0.064, p < .001). The results further confirm the statistically significant and positive relationship between *Job Identification* and *Employee Engagement*

(β=0.642, p < .001). In particular, while *Job Identification* was a positive and statistically significant mediator (β=0.463, p<0.001) in *Perceived Organizational Identity-Employee Engagement* relationship, it had a negative (β=-0.030, p<0.001) influence in the *Construed External Image-Employee Engagement* relationship. In sum, these findings present a statistically significant evidence to support the hypothesized mediating effect of *Job Identification* (Hypothesis 3).

The results also show the total effects of the exogenous latent variables on the endogenous variables. The total effect is defined as the sum of the direct and indirect effects (through the *job identification* mediator) of the independent variables on the dependent variables (Kline 2016). In particular, *Perceived Organizational Identity* had the largest total effect on both *Job Identification* (β=0.782, p<0.001) and *Employee Engagement* (β=0.769, p<0.001). Consistent with previous findings, *Construed External Image* had negative total effects on both *Employee Engagement* (β=-0.036, p<0.001) and *Job Identification* (β=-0.051, p<0.001). Lastly, the total effect of *Job Identification* on *Employee Engagement* was positive and statistically significant (β=0.593, p<0.001).

The interpretation of structural regression coefficients is similar to those of a linear regression. In particular, the results show that a one standard deviation increase in *Perceived Organizational Identity* leads to a 0.78 standard deviation increase in *Job Identification*, while the same increase leads to a 0.76 standard deviation increase in *Employee Engagement*. In comparison, the total effect of *Construed External Image* on both *Job Identification* and *Employee Engagement* were much lower, -0.05 and -0.03, respectively. Lastly, a one standard deviation increase in *Job Identification* was associated with a 0.6 standard deviation increase in *Employee Engagement*.

Based on the results of the structural model, the influence of the *Job Identification* mediator can also be calculated (Statistical Consulting Group), which are shown in Table 4. According to the results, about 60% of the total effect of *Perceived Organizational Identity* on *Employee Engagement* was mediated by *Job Indentification*, while 83% of the total effect of *Construed External Image* on *Employee Engagement* was mediated by *Job Identification*. Additionally, the total effect was 2.76 times higher compared to the direct effect for the *Perceived Organizational Identity- Employee Engagement* relationship, and 5.14 times higher in the *Construed External Image-Employee Engagement* relationship.

Table 3.3: Results of Measurement and Structural Model (Direct, Indirect, and Total Effects)

Parameter	Standardized coefficient	S.E.
Measurement Model		
Employee Engagement (α=0.83)		
1	0.867***	0.003
2	0.562***	0.007
3	0.815***	0.004
4	0.726***	0.005
Perceived Organizational Identity (α=0.75)		
1	0.754***	0.006
2	0.812***	0.006
Construed External Image (α=0.90)		
1	0.902***	0.006
2	0.924***	0.006
Job Identification (α=0.87)		
1	0.830***	0.004
2	0.753***	0.005
3	0.798***	0.004
4	0.854***	0.003
Structural Model		
Direct Effects		
Perceived Organizational Identity → Job Identification	0.658***	0.011
Construed External Image → Job Identification	-0.064***	0.012
Perceived Organizational Identity → Employee Engagement	0.278***	0.014

Construed External Image → Employee Engagement	-0.007	0.009
Job Identification → Employee Engagement	0.642***	0.010
Indirect Effects		
Perceived Organizational Identity → Employee Engagement	0.463***	0.001
Construed External Image → Employee Engagement	-0.030***	0.006
Total Effects		
Perceived Organizational Identity → Job Identification	0.782***	0.018
Construed External Image → Job Identification	-0.051***	0.010
Job Identification → Employee Engagement	0.593***	0.011
Perceived Organizational Identity → Employee Engagement	0.769***	0.017
Construed External Image → Employee Engagement	-0.036***	0.009

* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$ (χ^2,88=2744.61, RMSEA=0.056, CFI=0.961, TLI=0.944, and SRMR=0.027)

In addition to conducting structural equation modeling on the proposed model, we also conducted tests of two alternate models to reduce the likelihood that the results of the theoretical model are akin to capitalizing on chance (MacCallum, Roznowski, & Necowitz, 1992). In the first alternate model, the only direct effect with the main dependent variable (employee engagement) was between job identification and employee engagement. In other words, there were no direct relationships between 1) construed external image and employee engagement, and 2) perceived organizational identity and employee engagement. In the second alternate model, we specified no direct relationship between perceived organizational identity and job identification. The fit statistics of the preferred model (χ^2,88=2744.61, AIC=329029.83, BIC=329474.04, CFI=0.961, TLI=0.944, SRMR=0.027, RMSEA=0.056) indicate that it was a better fit for the data compared to those of model 1 (χ^2,90=3231.06, AIC=329512.28, BIC=329942.17, CFI=0.954, TLI=0.935, SRMR=0.035, RMSEA=0.06), and model 2 (χ^2,89=5032.08, AIC=331315.30, BIC=331752.34, CFI=0.927, TLI=0.897, SRMR=0.086, RMSEA=0.076).

Table 3.4: Ratios and Proportions of Mediating Effect

Measure	POI-EE	CEI-EE

Proportion of Total Effect Mediated	0.463/0.769=0.602	-0.03/-0.036=0.833
Ratio of Indirect to Direct Effect	0.463/0.278=1.665	-0.03/-0.007=4.285
Ratio of Total to Direct Effect	0.769/0.278=2.766	-0.036/-0.007=5.14

Discussion

We began this paper by arguing that while engagement has become a prominent management reform in the U.S. federal government (Hameduddin & Fernandez, 2019), research on public employee engagement has not kept pace with its proliferation in the U.S. and around the world (Lavigna, 2013). We then articulated why employee engagement in the public sector may manifest itself differently because of the unique context of public organizations and public service. In particular, while employees form both internal and external images of their organizations based on identities of organizational membership and their self-concepts (Tajfel & Turner, 1979), it is unclear to what extent public employees internalize these images as they form their attitudes, motivate themselves towards their task environment, and expend their energies towards task performance.

Our analysis used two types of images, Construed External Image (CEI), which refers organizational member beliefs about how their organization is viewed by non-members, and perceived organizational identity (POI), which refers to member beliefs about the enduring characteristics of their organizations. Building on the existing theorizing in business management research (Dutton et al., 1994), we hypothesized that CEI could be negatively associated with employee engagement in the public sector, in addition to hypothesizing a positive relationship. Social psychological literature suggests that when employees suspect that their organization is positively viewed by organizational outsiders, it would enhance feelings of prestige towards

organizational membership, which would in turn drive positive attitudes and prosocial behaviors towards the organization (Ashforth & Mael, 1989; Dukerich et al., 2002). However, because public employees may be uniquely motivated by public service values (Perry et al., 2010), their responses to negative CEI may not be to reduce their work effort, but instead they may work harder to improve their organization's performance and reputation. The results of our analysis support this very argument.

In particular, we found that CEI had a negative and statistically significant indirect relationship with employee engagement (through job identification), but did not have a statistically significant direct association with employee engagement. As expected, POI was positive and statistically significant in predicting employee engagement. Overall, job identification did serve as a mechanism through which both CEI and POI influenced EE and mediated between 60% and 83% of their total effects (Table 4), and was thus a theoretically relevant mediator.

According to social identity theory, organizational members may use group affiliation as a mechanism for social categorization and maintain positive social identities only if doing so extends their own self-concepts (Dukerich et al., 2002). Thus, while group prestige may depend upon how the group or organization is viewed by outsiders (Fuller et al., 2006), the results do not entirely discount this line of thinking. In particular, the results show that there may indeed be a galvanizing effect, i.e. public employees may become more emboldened to work harder when they are under criticism, observe negative external images or low public support for their organizations. From an organizational rationality perspective, this galvanizing behavior effectively insulates the organizational core from negative external shocks (Thompson, 1967), and thus would be a useful mechanism to direct employee behavior. Because CEI's only

statistically significant relationship with employee engagement was indirect, i.e. through job identification, this implies that job identification behaviors may serve as a useful mechanism to engage and motivate employees in the presence of a negative external environment. However, the negative influence of CEI may also mean that when CEI is positive, it has a small but negative direct association with job identification and a negative indirect association with employee engagement. This may mean that positive external images may replace the need for urgency with complacency, although there needs to be greater research on this phenomenon.

The extant literature on employee engagement has contributed to an understanding of aspects of the work-environment that may lead to disengagement, and the types of actions managers can take to enhance employee engagement (e.g., Harter et al., 2002). The results of our analysis do show that allowing public employees to more fully identify with the organization can enhance their engagement, and managers can tap into this by increasing employee task significance, job meaningfulness (Hackman & Oldham, 1980, Kahn, 1990), giving employees resources (Borst, Kruyen, & Lako, 2017), and enhancing employee self-esteem needs (Fuller et al., 2006).

However, in spite of this there may be characteristics of the job that are out of managerial control, such as the images that public employees construct of themselves and the socio-political context of their organization. Our underlying assumption is that when employees construct organizational images, they take into account various sources of information (Bandura, 1977), including, but not limited to the kinds of images and narratives they see represented by non-organizational members (Garrett et al., 2006; Purcell et al., 2017). Thus, while these representations may be outside the domain of managers, they may be able to effectively motivate

their employees through job identification and by emphasizing their own normative values and the missions of their organizations.

Conclusion

This paper began by bringing light to the lack of scholarly attention towards employee engagement in the public sector, especially when contrasted with its use in practice. In particular, public administration research has not fully explored the relationship between organizational images and employee engagement. To address this gap in the research, we tested whether two organizational images, construed external image (CEI), and perceived organizational identity (POI), significantly predict public employee engagement, and whether this relationship is mediated by job identification. We found that how organizational members feel they are viewed by outsiders (CEI) has a negative association with employee engagement, while their own perceptions of the enduring qualities of their organization (POI) has a positive association with employee engagement.

There are a number of research contributions and practical implications that emerge from this analysis. Firstly, public administration scholars working in the human resource management literatures have largely focused their attention towards constructs such as job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and public service motivation, but have paid less attention towards employee engagement. This is in spite of the renewed focus on employee engagement in the federal sector (Partnership for Public Service, 2018), which includes multiple agencies conceptualizing and measuring federal employee engagement, mandates that require agencies to include improvement on employee engagement indices as part of their annual performance plan reporting (Donovan et al., 2014), and Congressional hearings that focus on the state of federal

employee engagement[1]. We thus chose employee engagement based on its policy relevance, importance in the current management literature and federal policy-making circles (Hameduddin & Fernandez, 2019; Lavigna, 2013).

Secondly, employee engagement has emerged as a theoretically important construct because of its relationship with job performance. Importantly, unlike distal job attitudes such as job satisfaction and organizational commitment, employee engagement is more proximal to job performance and represents a less fragmented approach towards understanding employee behavior (Christian et al., 2011; Gruman & Saks, 2011). Thus, identifying whether employees are able to bring their full energies towards their work-tasks and express their preferred selves (Kahn, 1990) has important consequences for both employee performance and organizational performance (Christian et al., 2011; Harter et al., 2002; Hameduddin & Fernandez, 2019; Rich et al., 2010).

Lastly, while there is generally a paucity of research that examines organizational images (Rho et al., 2015), the relationship between organizational images, job identification, and employee engagement has been hitherto understudied. It may be more important to study these images because of the unique nature and context of public organizations and public employees. In particular, compared to private organizations, public organizations rely much more on public support and political legitimacy as they seek to achieve their missions (Meier & Bohte, 2007). In addition, they may not have the same means to communicate and build external reputations and support (Liu & Horsley, 2007), both of which have emerged as important predictors of organizational performance and success (Wonneberger & Jacobs, 2017). These reputations and

[1] *The Best and Worst Places to Work in the Federal Government: Hearing Before the Subcommittee on Government Operations, U.S. House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform,* 115th Cong. (2017).

sources of support may in turn influence employee attitudes such as construed external image and perceived organizational identity.

Among the practical implications of the findings are that negative construed external images should not be seen as a crisis, but rather as an opportunity for development. In particular, by emphasizing public service values, service-oriented behaviors (Luu, 2018), and organizational goals and missions, public managers may be able to use these images to effectively motivate employees to change their organization's performance and reputation. This is consistent with research on organizational change, which emphasizes effectively articulating the need for change as an important predictor of successful organizational change (Fernandez & Rainey, 2006), and emphasizing person-organization fit in this process (Teo, Pick, Xerri, & Newton, 2016). Importantly, because public managers may not be able control the external sources of information that inform employee attitudes and their self-efficacies (Bandura, 1977), they may be able to effectively counter or complement these images by emphasizing person-job fit, increasing job meaningfulness (Kahn, 1990) through dimensions of public service motivation such as self-sacrifice (Perry et al., 2010), and by fulfilling employee needs for self-esteem (Fuller et al., 2006).

Relatedly, communicating both the need for change and emphasizing organizational values and mission speaks to the role of safety and availability as an antecedent to employee engagement (Kahn, 1990; Rich et al., 2010). In particular, employees that perceive a politically charged or negative socio-cultural environment may form negative construed external images (Garrett et al., 2006; Purcell et al., 2017), which may lead to mental strain as a result of increased job demands (Karasek, 1979), especially if these images do not align with their own perceptions of their organizations (Festinger, 1957). In these situations, employees may feel reassured in the

presence of perceived organizational support as a source of safety (Rich et al., 2010). These would enhance the individual's availability of physical, emotional, and cognitive energies devoted towards task performance (Rich et al., 2010), and may lead to higher core-self evaluations and self-efficacies (Xanthopoulu, Bakker, Demerouti, & Schaufeli, 2007), which would in turn drive intrinsic motivation (Gagné & Deci, 2005). Some of these supportive managerial practices include providing employees with greater decision latitude in their task domains (Karasek, 1979), reframing job demands as challenging rather than as hindering employee performance and development (Crawford, LePine, & Rich, 2010), and using job crafting as a way to increase employee engagement (Tims & Bakker, 2014).

In spite of our findings and practical implications, there are a number of limitations of this study. Firstly, because we use cross-sectional data, our analysis does not allow for causal claims to be made between the independent and dependent variables. This is in spite of the fact that the SEM framework assumes a causal relationship between exogenous and endogenous variables. Having access to panel data would make it easier to make causal claims between organizational images, job identification, and employee engagement, and more fully rule out any reverse causality criticisms. In addition, since the data were gathered at the agency level, most of which are large and have multiple sub-units, our analysis is essentially coarse-grained. It may very well be that employees within particular federal agencies sub-units behave very differently compared to other sub-units within the same parent agency. Unfortunately, inferences about these fine-grained differences cannot be made given the limitations of the data source used.

Secondly, implicit in our theorizing and analysis organizational images—especially construed external image—is that these employees are located in a U.S. based social and political environment. However, limitations of the survey instrument do not allow us to divide the

population of survey respondents based on their geographic location (United States versus abroad). To account for this limitation, we analyzed the percentage of non-U.S. based full-time employees for each U.S. federal agency included in the sample. These ranged from a low of 0% for the U.S. Department of Education to a high of 11.9% for the Department of Defense, with an average of 1.27% of full-time employees working abroad. Given these low percentages, we do not feel that geographic location would adversely affect the results and the central argument of the paper.

Lastly, as with any study that uses survey data with a single instrument, there is a potential for common method bias to inflate standard errors and taint the overall results. One common way to determine the potential for common-method bias is by using Harmon's single factor test (Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Lee, & Podsakoff, 2003). This technique involves determining whether the dependent and independent variables load onto a single factor using confirmatory factor analysis. The results of this test show that no single factor accounted for observed variance in the dependent and independent variables, indicating that common-method bias may not be a cause for concern. The public administration field has generated quite a lot of debate about the extent of common method bias and its purported effects with some claiming that these effects are largely exaggerated and unescapable in organizational behavior research (Spector, 2006), and others arguing that all the statistical remedies to account for method effects fall short (Favero & Bullock, 2015). Fully accounting for these effects is difficult if the survey instrument does not include built-in measures such as a marker variable, or the research design reduces the chances of bias (e.g., Multi Trait Multi Method designs). However, since we use structural equation modeling, we are more fully able to account for measurement error compared to econometric methods such as regression analysis, which increases measurement reliability of

our parameter estimates. Furthermore, while it has been empirically confirmed that performance-related instruments are prone to common source bias, work attitudes or motivation instruments are relatively free from the potential risk of common source bias (Fuller Simmering, Atinc, Atinc, & Babin, 2016; Spector, 2006). Thus, even in the presence of a unique measurement error due to method effects, we are able to still produce consistent parameter estimates (Siemsen, Roth, & Oliveira, 2010).

Chapter 3 Appendix

Table A3.1: Results of Covariates in SEM Model

Parameter	Standardized coefficient	S.E.
Structural Model		
Tenure → Employee Engagement	0.005	0.007
Supervisory status → Employee Engagement	-0.000	0.008
Salary → Employee Engagement	0.018	0.008
Minority status → Employee Engagement	0.056***	0.007
Male → Employee Engagement	-0.035***	0.007
Tenure → Job Identification	-0.008	0.009
Supervisory status → Job Identification	0.061***	0.010
Salary → Job Identification	0.066***	0.010
Minority status → Job Identification	-0.013	0.009
Male → Job Identification	0.029***	0.009

* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

Chapter 4. Employee Engagement in the U.S. Federal Government: Media, Politics, and the Public

Abstract

Public management scholars have frequently commented on the distinctiveness of public organizations because of the unique political environments they face. While previous research has found that political support in the external environment influences organizational performance and structure, very little research extends this line of thinking to examine its effect on employee attitudes and behavior. In addition, scholars have not considered how media representation and public approval influences these attitudes. This paper considers the role of perceived public support, media representation, public approval, and political attention on the engagement of U.S. federal employees. The findings suggest that perceived public support and media representation do matter for how engaged employees are, which may in turn may have implications for how public organizations manage their reputations and navigate the external environment. The paper ends with a discussion of the theoretical and practical implications of the findings, and limitations of the study.

Introduction

Research in public administration has long established that private and public organizations differ in important ways, and that these differences necessitate a field of inquiry dedicated to the scientific study of public organizations (Rainey, 2014; Rainey and Bozeman, 2000). Among the frequently cited differences is the nature of the external environment of public organizations (Bozeman & Bretschneider, 1994). Scholars have argued that the external environment can serve as an important source of support, information, and legitimacy (Lawrence & Lorsch, 1967; Pfeffer & Salancik, 1978; Thompson, 1967), and existing public management research has devoted significant attention towards analyzing how factors in the external environment, such as uncertainty, resource munificence, and turbulence affect the structure and performance of public organizations (Andrews, 2009; Andrews, 2012; O'Toole & Meier, 1999). In addition, scholars have also captured the distinct nature of public organizations by devoting attention to political support for public organizations (Yang & Pandey, 2009). This line of research has frequently relied on managerial perceptions of political support as a measure of political support (e.g., Melton, 2017), and has generally established that political support does indeed influence the behavior and performance of public organizations (Pandey & Wright, 2006).

However, in spite of these findings there still remain important gaps in our understanding of how the external environment influences public organizations and employees. Firstly, while lack of political support may take the form of increased monitoring, budget cuts, and/or increased administrative burdens (Davis & Stazyk, 2015)—public opinion and media representation represent more diffuse, symbolic, and general sentiments towards public agencies that public employees pay attention to (Purcell et al., 2017). These sentiments in turn influence

both organizational reputation and media framing, which are important sources of legitimacy for public organizations (Carpenter, 2010; Deephouse, 2000; Wonneberger & Jacobs, 2017; Wæraas & Byrkjeflot, 2012). However, there is little research or theory connecting these influences to employee attitudes and behavior.

Secondly, while managerial perceptions of political support undoubtedly matter, recent public management research suggests that capturing archival measures, in addition to perceptual measures, may provide a fuller accounting of the conceptual space of the political support construct (Andrews, Boyne, Meier, O'Toole, & Walker, 2007). In addition, even though political support has shown to have significant effects on the structure and performance of public organizations, and the commitment of employees (Yang & Pandey, 2009), recent evidence suggest that other environmental factors such as public support, reputation, and media representation also matter for organizational performance and employee attitudes and behavior (Garrett et al., 2006; Purcell et al., 2017; Carpenter 2010). This is in addition to growing research on the role of bureaucratic communication and reputation management, which finds that public organizations increasingly have to adapt their processes and anticipate their representation in mass media (Thorbjørnsrud, 2015; Wæraas & Byrkjeflot, 2012).

This paper addresses these gaps by examining how political attention, media representation, public opinion, and perceived public support are related to employee engagement, and whether elements in the external environment moderate the relationship between perceptions of public support and engagement. Employee engagement has recently emerged as an important construct representing a more holistic approach towards employee motivation, and has been linked desirable outcomes such as higher organizational performance, and reduced turnover (Rich et al., 2010; Harter et al.,; 2002). Its influence is especially meaningful in the U.S. federal

government context since significant reform efforts have been made to increase the engagement of federal employees (Hameduddin & Fernandez, 2019). In addition, these efforts towards engagement have not been limited to the U.S. federal government, but have proliferated across the civil service systems of UK, Australia, and Canada, among others (Lavigna, 2013; MacLeod & Clarke, 2009; Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2016).

The following section reviews the employee engagement construct, and develops a conceptual model of engagement and environment influences, after which the data and methodology is discussed. The paper ends with a discussion of the results and conclusions for theory and practice.

Employee Engagement

Employee engagement, defined as "…the harnessing of organization members' selves to their work roles…physically, cognitively, and emotionally" (Kahn, 1990, 694), has become an emerging construct of importance for a number of reasons. Firstly, recent scholarship has linked higher levels of employee engagement to desirable organizational outcomes such as higher profitability, productivity, customer satisfaction, and lower employee turnover (Harter et al., 2002). In addition, employee engagement has also been shown to increase both task performance and organizational citizenship behavior (Rich et al., 2010). Secondly, efforts to engage employees have proliferated through the governmental and private sectors (Welch, 2011), and have taken a foothold in the public sectors of the U.S., UK, and Canada, among others (Hameduddin & Fernandez, 2019; Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2016). Importantly, in the U.S. Federal government, efforts to engage employees can be seen in the highly publicized Employee Engagement Index, which has been claimed to increase organizational performance (Donovan et al., 2014), although there is evidence of this association

(Hameduddin & Fernandez, 2019). In addition, federal agencies are required to report employee engagement scores as part of their annual performance plans, designated specific job roles to be responsible for increasing engagement, and have created specific programs to engage employees (Donovan et al., 2014).

However, in spite of the attention employee engagement receives, there is some divergence between how management scholars have defined psychological engagement and how it is measured in practice. In particular, practitioners have conceptualized engagement as a set of manipulatable managerial behaviors that represent the antecedents or drivers of employee engagement, as a way to offer practical guidance towards managers (Harter et al., 2002). However, scholarly research has focused on psychological engagement itself, as constituting dimensions of vigor or energy that one brings towards their job roles, absorption in particular work tasks, and dedication towards them in spite of failure (Schaufeli et al., 2002). Thus, psychological engagement, as opposed to engagement as defined in practice, is a heightened and energetic state which makes it distinct from other job attitudes such as job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and job involvement. Indeed, another criticism of the engagement construct represents whether it is distinct enough from these well-known and well understood job attitudes (Newman & Harrison, 2015; Shuck et al., 2017). However, both theoretical and empirical evidence lend evidence to the distinctives of psychological engagement. In particular, Christian, Garza, and Slaughter (2011) note that, theoretically, engagement represents a more holistic and connected job attitude that has a more proximal relationship with job performance, compared to job satisfaction and other job attitudes. Thus, according to them, engagement should have stronger relationships with job performance when compared against distal job attitudes. Indeed, this is what other research has borne out (Rich et al., 2010; Shuck et al., 2017).

While attention towards engagement and its use remains, because of the way scholarship on employee attitudes and behavior has progressed, we know very little about how employee engagement is influenced by factors in the external environment of the organization, either private or public. In particular, as Pandey and Wright (2006) note, while organizational behavior is concerned with individual-level behavior at the expense of considering the influence of the external environment, public management, drawing from political science, has focused on democratic control of bureaucracy through actors in the external environment without paying sufficient attention towards how such control translates into individual level behavior. It is important to connect these two into a single stream of research because of the generally negative external environments public organizations face (Garrett et al., 2006), and also because environmental influences may make their way down to individual attitudes of employees, thus informing their subsequent decision-making and behavior. The following section reviews some of these sources of influence in the external environment and hypothesizes how these may influence employee engagement.

The Public, Media Representation, and Employee Engagement

The External Environment of Public Organizations

The study of organizational environments has had a long history in organizational studies. Prominent scholars have variously focused on how environmental pressures influence organizational structure and organizational processes (Selznick, 1966), theorized how environmental uncertainty and complexity can affect firm success (Burns & Stalker, 1961), and also advocated for a contingency perspective that focuses on isolating the organizational core from external pressures through buffering mechanisms (Thompson, 1967). In the context of

public organizations, managers may seek to isolate their employees from external shocks and pressures, especially in the presence of negative perceptions of public approval of their agencies (Rho, Yun, & Lee, 2015). In addition, some have focused on resource dependence as a key factor that organizations consciously manipulate as they seek to expand their organizational domains (Pfeffer & Salancik, 1978; Scott & Davis, 2007). Indeed, public management literature suggests that public legitimacy and reputation does act as a resource that organizations seek to gain (Van Belle, 2003). This is especially the case since public organizations rely on diverse and multiple stakeholders, including executives, the legislature, judiciary, civil society, media, and the general public (Carpenter & Krause, 2012; Meier & Bohte, 2007).

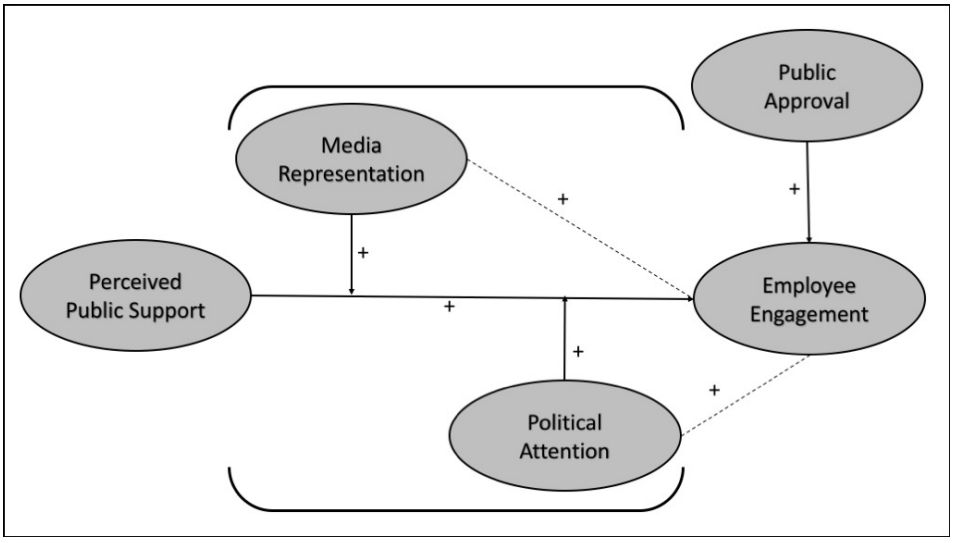
Lastly, a prominent perspective examines the process of institutionalization as a way of seeking conformity with the external environment (Meyer & Rowan, 1977). In essence, Meyer and Rowan (1977) argued that organizations, and their structure and processes, start to look like one another because of shared beliefs and rationalized myths about what organizations *should* look like. The influence of institutionalization processes (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983) also extends to the study of public organizations. In particular, March and Olsen (1983) argue that administrative reorganization and reform is informed by both administrative rhetoric and a rhetoric of political struggle for control of organizational resources and decision-making. Because of the problematics of attention, they argue, political representatives seek short-lived symbolic and ritualistic actions rather than long-term administrative reforms (March & Olsen, 1983).

Public Support and Engagement

Few would argue that public organizations exist in turbulent or negative external environments. In addition to being accountable to the direct recipients of public services, public

organizations are held accountable by political principals such as the legislature, courts, and executives, news media, in addition to the general public (Heclo, 1977; Rainey, 2014). In serving these multiple constituencies, public managers and employees find themselves balancing multiple values, such as due process, effectiveness, neutral competence, and efficiency (Meier & Bohte, 2007). The external environment of public organizations can be a source of legitimacy and reputation (Carpenter, 2010) on one hand, but it can also be a driver of goal ambiguity and reduced effectiveness on the other hand (Pandey & Wright, 2006). While there is a theoretical rationale and empirical for the importance of political support for the survival and performance of public organizations, there is a lack of understanding of how broad public approval and media representation affect public organizations and their performance. Figure 1 represents a conceptual model of public organizations, external representation, and employee engagement.

Figure 4.1: Conceptual Model of Public Organizations, External Representation, and Employee Engagement



A few different lines of research can help illustrate why these factors should matter for public organizations. Firstly, while scholars have frequently brought attention towards the potential negative effects of bureaucrat bashing (Yarwood, 1996; Goodsell, 2003; Hubbell,

1991), public management research has only recently begun examining the potential consequences of bureaucrat bashing (Abner, 2017; Garrett et al., 2006; Jahan & Shahan, 2012). For instance, Garrett et al. (2006) use focus groups of U.S. federal Senior Executive Service members to examine the effect bureaucrat bashing on programmatic outcomes and employee attitudes, finding that bashing has a negative influence on public programs as well as employee emotions. Building on this, Jahan and Shahan (2012) differentiate between policy bashing and rhetoric bashing. The former is oriented towards particular policy programs or outcomes and is constructive in nature (offering new solutions or directions), while the latter is generally focused on caricatures of individual employees as incompetent or greedy, among others (Hubbell, 1991; Jahan & Shahan, 2012). The preliminary evidence suggests that public employees are not only aware of how they are represented by political executives, members of the public (through public opinion), and the media, but they also affect emotional-cognitive reactions individual employees have towards their work (Purcell et al., 2017). Indeed, public opinion has been shown to be an important driver of public policy changes, especially when policy areas are considered salient to the general body politic (Burstein, 2003). Thus, feelings of support by through larger socio-cultural factors may fulfill employee needs for competence and belongingness (Gagne & Deci, 2005), thus driving intrinsic motivation and employee engagement.

H_1: Perceived Public Support will be positively related to Employee Engagement

H_2: Public approval will be positively related to Employee Engagement

Media Representation and Engagement

In addition to interpreting messages of support from the external environment, employees may also rely on organizational reputations as a way of developing their own organizational identities (Ashforth & Mael, 1989), which may in turn affect organizational performance and

employee attitudes (Rho et al., 2015). Indeed, research on organizational reputation suggests that public support for organizational mission can influence the reputation of public agencies, which may have consequences for both political support and general organizational performance (Carpenter, 2010; Deephouse, 2000). In particular, reputation is a multidimensional construct representing long-held beliefs about the capacity, performance, and efficacy of public organizations through multiple audiences and stakeholders in the domain of that particular organization (Carpenter & Krause, 2012; Lee & Van Ryzin, 2018). These reputations can have important consequences for bureaucratic discretion and autonomy (Carpenter & Krause, 2012). Thus, when organizations enjoy greater autonomy, their employees may be more likely to bring their emotional, cognitive, and physical energies towards task performance. However, given the multiple and diverse constituents public organizations serve, research within the field of mass communication suggests that public organizations face more difficulties in cultivating positive reputations, compared to their private sector counterparts (Liu, Horsley & Levenshus, 2010; Schillemans, 2012). In particular, Liu and Horsley (2007) note that public organizations face greater media scrutiny, generally poor public perceptions, and have to rely on public support to achieve their public missions.

In these environments, media representation can set the tone, content, and sentiment towards public organizations. Not only does this influence what public organizations are on the public's mind, but it also informs how the general public comes to view and evaluate these organizations (Wonneberger & Jacobs, 2017). Indeed, Meadows and Meadows (2016) find that generally positive media representation led to positive organizational reputations. This is in addition to research finding that the federal bureaucracy generally responds to messages and signals from the news media (Van Belle, 2003). Thus, when organizations enjoy more positive

media representation, employees may rely on these positive attributions as they construct their own self-concepts and seek consistency between their images and perceptions of group membership, and other's views of group membership (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). When these images are more positive, they may fulfill the needs for self-enhancement and self-distinctiveness (Dutton et al., 1994), making it easier to devote cognitive, physical, and emotional energies towards task performance. However, individuals may also use media representation in determining whether the general public supports their organization's mission and values. Thus, more positive media representation may lead to higher perceptions of public support.

H_3: Media Representation will be positively related to Employee Engagement

H_4: Media Representation will positively moderate the relationship between Perceived Public Support and Employee Engagement

Political Attention and Engagement

In addition to broad public support and media representation, political support for and attention towards organizational goals and mission may represent signals of legitimacy and also relate positively to measures of employee morale, such as employee engagement. Pandey and Wright (2006) develop a middle range theory which posits that external political pressure leads to greater organizational goal ambiguity, which in turn leads to greater role ambiguity for the individual employee. In particular, they argue that external actors may represent divergent interests that campaign for control over resource allocations, decision-making, and organizational structure (Waterman, Rouse, & Wright, 1998). Additionally, some political actors may have more direct influence over agency decision-making (such as legislators), while others

may represent more diffuse pressures on the agency (such as clients and other stakeholders) (Waterman et al., 1998).

Relatedly, another approach to observing the political environment has been to analyze the perceptions of political support and how they influence employee attitudes (Yang & Pandey, 2009; Melton, 2017). In particular, public managers may interpret supportive signals from the political environment as symbols of trust and satisfaction, which may enhance their own self-efficacy and commitment towards organizational goals (Yang & Pandey, 2009), which may in turn drive employee engagement. These signals may be especially salient given the generally negative external environments public organizations face (Garrett et al., 2006). Further, greater political support and attention may be interpreted as allowing greater autonomy towards achieving organizational goals, diffuse as they may be for public organizations, as well as lesser interference with the day-to-day operations of the organization (O'Toole & Meier, 1999). In addition, individuals may also use political attention as a way to determine whether there is public support for their organization's mission and values. Thus, one would expect higher levels of political attention to lead greater perceptions of public support.

H_5: Political Attention will be positively related to Employee Engagement

H_6: Political Attention will positively moderate the relationship between Perceived Public Support and Employee Engagement

Methods

Data

The primary data for this study comes from the 2016 Merit Principles Survey (MPS), which is a survey conducted by the U.S. Merit Systems Protection Board Merit. The MPS

included three distinct surveys (Path 1, Path 2, Path L) that were administered to full-time federal civilian employees using a stratified random sampling approach in twenty-four agencies. Measures for employee engagement, job satisfaction, job tenure, turnover intention, and perceived public support were drawn from Path 1 of the survey, which was administered to 37,452 employees, and garnered 14,515 responses for a response rate of 38.8% (Merit Systems Protection Board, 2016). The survey administration period was from July to September 2016. While the MPS covered twenty-four large agencies, the current analysis considered a subset of seven large agencies that were large, visible, and most importantly, had public opinion polling data available (Pew Research Center, 2015). Thus, the final number of observations was reduced to 4102.

In addition to employee engagement and other individual attitudes, data on news media representation was collected using EBSCOhost, public opinion data was gathered using the Pew Research Center's publicly available polling data, and data on political attention was collected using the Congressional Record website. The collection strategy for each of these variables is described in greater detail in the Independent Variables section. Table 1 shows statistics on key independent variables by agencies, while Table 2 shows descriptive statistics of all variables. Lastly, Table 3 shows the correlation matrix of variables.

Table 4.1: Key Variables by Agency

Agency	# Articles	Positive	Negative	Neutral	% Disapprove^{+}	% Approve^{+}	# Congressional Record
Justice	17	0.588	0.176	0.235	46	47	1225
Education	13	0.615	0.154	0.231	50	44	403
EPA	36	0.444	0.278	0.278	38	52	2003
Homeland Security	15	0.067	0.733	0.200	30	64	1853

NASA	32	0.594	0.063	0.344	17	70	288
Social Security	7	0.286	0.286	0.429	37	55	169
Veterans Affairs	32	0.250	0.563	0.188	52	39	1961
Average	20.819	0.320	0.432	0.248	38.706	53.411	1415.415

Sources: [+]Pew Research Center

Dependent Variable

The main dependent variable, engagement, was measured by creating a standardized factor from the following items: "The work I do is meaningful to me", "At my job, I am inspired to do my best work", "I have the opportunity to perform well at challenging work", and "I feel comfortable being myself at work." Each of these items generally represent the dimensions of vigor, dedication, and absorption as defined by Schaufeli et al. (2002). All three items were rated on a 1-5 Likert scale, had sufficient reliability (alpha=0.845) and loaded onto a single factor.

Independent Variables

Perceived public support. Perceived public support was captured using two items on the Merit Principles Survey. Respondents were asked to rate their level of satisfaction with "Public support for your organization's mission and work" and "Public support for your organization's performance." Both items were rated on 1-5 scale where 1 represented "Very Dissatisfied" and 5 represented "Very Satisfied." These items were highly correlated and had sufficient scale reliability (alpha=0.919). Factor analysis was used to combine both into a single standardized factor represented a measure of perceived public support.

Media representation. Media attention was captured by first coding articles that appeared in 2016 in two national publications: The New York Times, and The Washington Post.

The New York Times (NYT) was chosen because it is generally used in past communications and journalism research as the newspaper of record (Durham, 2006; Friedman, Gorney, & Egolf, 2006) because of its influence on public opinion, public policy, and the decision-making of bureaucracies (Van Belle, 2003). However, some have questioned the unqualified status of the NYT as the newspaper of record, noting that other newspapers may provide balance in coverage of news media (Zelizer, Park, & Gudelunas, 2002). To balance this, the Washington Post was also selected in the sampling frame because of its coverage of U.S. federal agencies.

The article search was conducted using the EBSCOhost search engine with the Academic Search Premier, Newspaper Source Plus, Newswires databases. Search terms for each of the agencies coded appear in the appendix. Once the initial search was complete, each article title was checked to ensure that it was referring to the agency name specified. The number of articles for each agency appear in Table 1. Once the search was complete, the coding strategy involved identifying the key elements of each article. Each article was coded based on its source (New York Times, or Washington Post), where it appeared (Front page or elsewhere, Editorial, Op-Ed) (Wonneberger & Jacobs, 2017), the key themes it covered (Personnel, Leadership, Policy Issue, Specific Legislation, Regulation/Agency Program), and whether its coverage of the agency was generally positive, neutral, or negative. Specific criteria were developed to determine the general sentiment towards agencies, which follow general guidelines established in prior management and mass communication research (Deephouse, 2000; Weber, 1990). These include 1) Which party is given voice in the article? 2) Is the voice sympathetic to the agency's concerns? 3) Is the representation of views paraphrased, or quoted? 4) How many "sides" are considered? What proportion of voice is given to what side? The author coded individually coded all 152 articles,

and a trained coder coded a random sample of 15 articles (10%). Intercoder reliability between the two coders was 74% suggesting a sufficient level of reliability (Weber, 1990).

Public approval. Public opinion data was collected using the Pew Charitable Trusts report "Beyond Distrust: How Americans View Their Government" (Pew Research Center, 2015).

Political attention. Political attention was captured by counting number of times the agency was mentioned in the Congressional Record in 2016, and was subsequently standardized. The Congressional Record is the official record of all proceedings of the U.S. House and Senate, which includes floor speeches, legislations, and resolutions, and generally represents how much attention is devoted to particular issues at the federal legislative level. While such a measure does not represent whether the attention the public agency received was positive or negative, scholars have relied on it as a measure of attention in previous research (Lee, Rainey, & Chun, 2009).

Table 4.2: Descriptive Statistics

Variable	Obs	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
Engagement	4,102	0	1	-3.213	1.176
Perceived Public Support	4,102	0	1	-1.862	1.412
Media Representation	4,102	0	1	-1.208	1.425
Public Approval	4,102	0	1	-1.334	1.817
Political Attention	4,102	0	1	-1.892	0.873
Job Satisfaction	4,102	0	1	-3.504	1.229
Turnover Intention	4,102	0.244	0.429	0	1
Female	4,102	0.396	0.489	0	1
Non-supervisor	4,102	0.432	0.495	0	1
Tenure	4,102	0.077	0.267	0	1

Control Variables

Apart from these main variables, the analysis included job related attitudes and demographic characteristics that would predict engagement (Saks, 2006), including job satisfaction, turnover intention, sex, agency tenure, and supervisory status. Job satisfaction was measured using a factor score of five items on the survey instrument that represented satisfaction with work itself, satisfaction with pay, satisfaction with promotions, satisfaction with co-workers, and satisfaction with supervisor ("Interesting work that I enjoy", "Pay", "Opportunity for advancement into supervisory/managerial roles", "Working relationships with coworkers", "Working relationship with supervisor"). Respondents were asked to rate their level of satisfaction with the items on a 1-5 scale, where 1 represented "Very Dissatisfied" and 5 represented "Very Satisfied."

Turnover intention was measured using a single item capturing intention to leave ("How likely is it that you will leave your agency in the next 12 months?"), which was rated on a 1-5 scale where 1 represented "Very Unlikely" and 5 represented "Very Likely". For the purposes of the analysis, this variable was converted to a dichotomous measure by collapsing the "Likely" and "Very Likely" categories to 1, while the "Very Unlikely", "Unlikely" and "Neither Likely Nor Unlikely" were converted to 0. Lastly, agency tenure was captured using a dichotomous measure where 0 represented agency tenure of four years or more, while 1 represented agency tenure of three years or less.

Model

The analysis used Ordinary Least Square Regression (OLS) with clustered standard errors by agency. Since the dataset contained individual observations nested within agencies, a

one-way fixed effects regression may have controlled for unaccounted variance between agencies (Wooldridge, 2003). However, since some observations (media representation, public approval, congressional representation) did not vary within a given agency, a fixed effects specification would suffer from multicollinearity, and was thus not used.

Results

Table 4 shows the results of the OLS regression. Model 1 includes the key independent variables without controls, Model 2 contains all variables, while Models 3 and 4 include moderation variables to test for hypothesis 4 and 6, respectively. The R-square values for the models ranged from 0.14 (Model 1) to 0.55 (Model 4). The general results show that Perceived Public Support is positive and statistically significant in all four models, thus failing to reject hypothesis 1. In particular, the results suggest a one standard deviation increase in Perceived Public Support would be associated with a 0.115 standard deviation increase in Employee Engagement (Model 2).

Public Approval was not statistically significant in any of the models, thus leading to a rejection of hypothesis 2. Media Representation was positive and statistically significant in all models, thus leading to a failure to reject hypothesis 3.

Table 4.3: Correlation Matrix

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1.Engagement	(0.845)									
2.Perceived Public Support	0.370*	(0.919)								
3.Media Representation	0.166*	0.234*	1							
4. Public Approval	-0.035*	0.056*	-0.197*	1						
5.Political Attention	-0.096*	-0.241*	-0.620*	-0.256*	1					
6.Job Satisfaction	0.731*	-0.365*	0.143*	-0.029	-0.092*	(0.782)				
7.Turnover Intention	-0.225*	-0.105*	-0.061*	0.007	0.060*	-0.237*	1			
8.Female	-0.007	0.019	0.079*	-0.145*	-0.082*	0.018	0.003	1		
9.Non-supervisor	-0.152*	-0.030	0.034*	-0.106*	-0.018	-0.148*	-0.032*	0.122*	1	
10.Tenure	0.019	0.035*	-0.031*	-0.132*	0.050*	0.011	0.012	0.028	0.164*	1

*p<0.05, reliabilities in parentheses (where applicable)

The results show that a one standard deviation increase in Media Representation would be associated with a 0.062 standard deviation increase in Employee Engagement (Model 2). The results for hypothesis 5 are mixed. In particular, Political Attention was positive and statistically significant in model 1, but lost its significance when control variables were added (Model 2). However, this variable became weakly significant ($p<0.10$) when moderators were included. In particular, when moderators were added, the results suggest that a one standard deviation increase in Political Attention was associated with a 0.0289 to 0.314 standard deviation increase in Employee Engagement.

Media Representation was not found to positively moderate the relationship between Perceived Public Support and Employee Engagement (Model 3), and thus hypothesis 4 is rejected. However, Political Attention was statistically significant in moderating the relationship between Perceived Public Support and Employee Engagement (Model 4), but in the opposite (negative) direction. This leads to a rejection of hypothesis 6.

Table 4.4: Regression Results

	Model 1 Engagement	Model 2 Engagement	Model 3 Engagement	Model 4 Engagement
Perceived Public Support	0.358***	0.113***	0.116***	0.118***
	(0.014)	(0.007)	(0.010)	(0.005)
Media Representation	0.114***	0.0618*	0.059*	0.058*
	(0.021)	(0.018)	(0.016)	(0.017)
Public Approval	-0.018	-0.009	-0.012	-0.014
	(0.016)	(0.018)	(0.017)	(0.016)
Political Attention	0.056***	0.028	0.028+	0.030+
	(0.021)	(0.0162)	(0.013)	(0.014)
Perceived Public Support * Media Representation			0.016	
			(0.009)	

Perceived Public Support * Political Attention				-0.027** (0.004)
Job Satisfaction		0.662*** (0.013)	0.662*** (0.013)	0.661*** (0.012)
Turnover Intention		-0.130** (0.024)	-0.130** (0.024)	-0.130** (0.024)
Female		-0.041+ (0.017)	-0.040+ (0.017)	-0.041+ (0.017)
Non-supervisor		-0.111*** (0.015)	-0.110*** (0.015)	-0.109*** (0.015)
Tenure		0.064 (0.037)	0.063 (0.037)	0.063 (0.037)
_cons	0 (0.0145)	0.091*** (0.013)	0.087*** (0.012)	0.084*** (0.012)
N	4102	4102	4102	4102
adj. R^2	0.1464	0.5560	0.5563	0.5567

Standard errors in parentheses

+ $p < 0.10$, * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

Discussion

This central thrust of this paper was to connect factors in the external environment to individual employee attitudes and behavior. While there is evidence to suggest that the external environment of public organizations does influence the performance and structure of public organizations (Andrews, 2009; Andrews, 2012; O'Toole & Meier, 1999), there is scant evidence for how these factors influence individual behavior and attitudes. In addition, scholars have relied on how public managers perceived the external political environment as a measure of political support (Pandey & Wright, 2006), without paying much attention towards the reputation

of organizations and their representation in the external environment. However, there is little theorizing of how environmental factors influence employee engagement, an emerging construct of interest for both scholars and practitioners (Welch, 2011). This is especially important because of the significant relationship between employee engagement and employee and organizational performance (Harter et al., 2002; Rich et al., 2010), the significant efforts the U.S. federal government and others have expended in trying to engage their employees (Donovan et al., 2014; Hameduddin & Fernandez, 2019; Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2016), and evidence that public employees may more difficult to engage and motivate (Bibb & Bosacker, 2017; Lavigna 2015).

Using an original measure of media representation, the results of this paper suggest that more positive media representation does indeed have a significant relationship with employee engagement. Thus, employees may perceive such media representation as a symbols of support towards their organizational missions and purpose, which may enhance their own self-concept and fulfill their own needs for self-enhancement (Dutton et al., 1994), and make employees feel more comfortable bringing their emotional, physical, and cognitive selves into their work roles (Kahn, 1990). Further underscoring the relationship between support from the external environment is the significant relationship between perceived public support and employee engagement. Thus, employees that feel more supported from the external environment tend to be more engaged in their work. This is a significant finding because research on employee attitudes that draws on organizational support theory has to date only recognized internal sources of support, i.e. through supervisors, senior leaders, and the organization in general (Jin & McDonald, 2016). This finding suggests that employees do pay attention to how they are represented externally, and that these perceptions are associated with their work effort.

In addition, political attention, which could also be interpreted as a source of support, legitimacy, and reputation (Carpenter, 2010), was positive and statistically significant ($p<0.10$) in models with moderator variables. However, contrary to the hypothesized relationship, political attention was negative and statistically significant in moderating the relationship between perceived public support and employee engagement. Thus, political attention may attenuate how much employees feel they are supported by factors in the external environment, which may dampen their levels of engagement. This may imply that political attention is not interpreted as a source of support but rather as a hindrance towards goal accomplishment and task performance, thereby influencing to what extent employees feel they are supported by the public.

Conclusion

This paper sought to understand how public approval, media representation, and political attention influence an emerging motivational construct of interest, viz. employee engagement. While existing research on individual level employee behavior (mainly conducted in the domain of organizational behavior) only examines the proximal sources of influence on employee motivation (such as job characteristics, and supervisory support, among others), public management research on the influence of the external environment does not take into account how these influences affect employee attitudes and behavior. The conceptual model presented in this paper aimed to connect these two disparate streams of research into a single theoretical model. The analysis of the results offer multiple implications for research and practice. Firstly, while this was one attempt at connecting external sources of influence on employee attitudes and behavior, the results demonstrate the need for further scholarly examination. In particular, more granular research on how public employees interpret sources of support (or the opposite) would help inform the management of public employees. This especially salient given the increasing

levels of public distrust (Pew Research Center, 2015) of government bureaucracy, as well as the proliferation of employee engagement efforts across major developed economies (Hameduddin & Fernandez, 2019; Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2016; 2017). In the context of these negative external environments (Garrett et al., 2006), further research may be able to demonstrate whether managers or human resource management practitioners are indeed limited in their ability to influence employee engagement.

Secondly and relatedly, given the influence of the external environment on the motivation of public employees, public managers may seek to buffer these influences (Thompson, 1967), or seek to actively enact their environments (Pfeffer & Salancik, 1978) through reputation management and public relations strategies. In this case, it is plausible that the influence of media representation and public support on employee motivation is moderated by existing organizational reputations and efforts aimed at reputation management (Christensen & Gornitzka, 2018). Indeed, research on corporate reputations finds that reputation is positively linked to organizational performance and the kinds of communication strategies organizations use (Kiousis, Popescu, & Mitrook, 2007; Meadows & Meadows, 2016). However, there is little scholarly research on how reputation extends to influence employee behavior and motivation.

Reputation and public relations may be especially salient because communications scholars have noted that, compared to private businesses, public organizations are constrained in their ability to actively influence public opinion through public relations (Liu & Horsley, 2007). In particular, because of legal constraints, federal agencies must comply with the Freedom of Information Act and statutes that prohibit active lobbying and advertising by government officials (Liu & Horsley, 2007). In addition, because of the public nature of their functions, public organizations generally face a lot more scrutiny in the news media (Allison, 2004), while

also having a public duty to inform citizens of their decisions (Lee, 2001). Lee (1999) also notes that, combined with their democratic function to inform the citizenry and maintain administrative accountability, public bureaucracies tend to be more difficult for media to cover, compared to elected officials. Part of the reason for this is the "mind-numbing and tedious actions inherent in public administration" (Lee, 1999, p. 453), such that the everyday successes of the public organizations receive less attention compared to the relatively few but visible scandals (Goodsell, 2003; Lee, 1999). Thus, public managers in such environments may have to adopt more proactive approaches towards media relations and government communication, and actively pay attention to perceived public support as they seek to motivate their employees (Liu & Horsley, 2007; Schillemans, 2012; Thorbjørnsrud et al., 2014).

In spite of these findings and their implications, there are a number of limitations of this study. Firstly, the use of cross-sectional data limits the ability to make causal inferences. A fuller analysis should make use of data over a number of years to limit concerns for inverse causality. More formally, it could be that perceived public support could itself drive engagement, which could lead to higher organizational performance and more positive media representation and public approval. Additionally, organizational reputations, which are formed over a long period of time (Carpenter, 2010) could drive media representation, which may be source of performance information for public managers as they make decisions about resource allocations. In particular, because of cognitive limitations, individuals may rely on heuristics and cognitive biases when they make performance evaluations (Moynihan & Pandey, 2010). However, these concerns have as yet to be connected to issues of reputation, media representation, and individual employee attitudes and behaviors. These are theoretically important questions, which cannot be answered in the present paper due to data limitations, but doing so would be a fruitful endeavor and would

help advance an important middle-range theory of public management (Abner, Kim, & Perry, 2017).

Secondly, because the dependent variable and some independent variables (perceived public support) were drawn from the same data source, the results could be tainted by common method bias (Podsakoff et al., 2003), although the extent of common method bias in current research is still a subject of some debate (cf. Favero & Bullock, 2015; George & Pandey, 2017). However, results of Harman's single factor test (Podsakoff et al., 2003) did not indicate that common method bias was a concern. In addition, results of a VIF test did not indicate that multicollinearity was a problem in the current analysis.

Chapter 4 Appendix

Table A4.1: Search Terms

Agency	Search Term in Title
Justice	"U.S. Department of Justice" OR "Department of Justice" OR "Justice Department" OR "DOJ"
Education	"U.S. Department of Education" OR "Department of Education" OR "Education Department" OR "Education"
EPA	"E.P.A." OR "EPA" OR "Environmental Protection Agency"
Homeland Security	"DHS" OR "Homeland Security" or "Department of Homeland Security"
NASA	"NASA" OR "National Aeronautics and Space Administration"
Social Security	"Social Security Administration" OR "Social Security" OR "S.S.A."
Veterans Affairs	"VA" OR "V.A." OR "Department of Veterans Affairs"

Chapter 5. Conclusion

The purpose of this dissertation was to investigate employee engagement as a prominent reform effort, examine its relationship with organizational performance, and with the external organizational environment. In Chapter 1, I introduced the main body of the dissertation and the theoretical gaps it indented to address, and provided a preview of the results of the analyses in the empirical chapters (Chapters 2-4). Chapter 2 examined the relationship between the U.S. Office of Personnel Management's Employee Engagement Index (EEI) and organizational and work-unit performance. It grounded the study of employee engagement, and specifically the EEI, in the study of administrative reform, which has a rich history in public administration research. In particular, scholars have frequently held change and reform to be a constant in public administration practice in the United States and beyond (Kaufman, 1956; Kettl, 2005).

In the U.S. federal context, administrative reform initially took on the form of structural changes, as exemplified by the 1947 Hoover Commission. In the recent past, however, administrative reforms have sought to change internal management practices by enhancing employee motivation, empowerment, engagement, and allowing federal managers more discretion to discipline employees (Gore, 1993; Rainey, 2014). This was the case with the Clinton administration's National Performance Review (Gore, 1993), and Bush administration Presidential Management Agenda. It seems that each new presidential administration is associated with another drumbeat of reform, and many of these reforms seem to be repackaged version of earlier reforms. In addition, their success has been subject to much debate, with scholars arguing that multiple reform efforts tend to sometimes be in conflict with one another, with little attention paid towards the internal logic of reform efforts (Jones & Kettl, 2003; Moynihan, 2006; Radin, 2000).

Interestingly, such critiques are not new to public administration research. For instance, Kaufman (1956) proposed that U.S. Public Administration is subject to three doctrines (executive control, neutral competence, and representativeness), which wax and wane with the passage of time, national trends, and the saliency of a particular reform effort. Similarly, Wise (2002) writing much later argued that, as opposed popular narratives of a global and monolithic New Public Management reform effort, some public management reform efforts can be described in terms of a search for normative values such as the demand for greater social equity, democratization, and empowerment. More importantly, however, is that the story of administrative reform is a story of rhetoric, myths, and the "sacred symbols of economy, efficiency, constituency pressure, and interest groups" (March & Olsen, 1983, p. 291). Thus, it is less important that the structures of administrative action change than it is for it seem that the drumbeat of reform is being given attention in political rhetoric.

Indeed, the findings from Chapter 2 reflect this fact. In particular, the rhetoric of reform has focused on employee engagement as a panacea to the problems of bureaucracy, both in the U.S. federal and state government, as well as internationally (Donovan et al., 2016; Governing Institute, 2013; Lavigna, 2013; Organisation for Economic Co-Operation and Development, 2016, The Best and Worst Places to Work in the Federal Government, 2017). Importantly, in the U.S. federal government, the reform does not fully represent the construct of psychological engagement, but rather represents a repackaging of exisiting items on an annual survey, which generally corresponds to what can be described as managerial engagement. Thus, since 2010, employee engagement has been measured using the Employee Engagement Index, scores on which have been argued to correspond directly to organizational performance (Donovan et al., 2014).

Specifically, in the applied psychology and business management literatures, employee engagement has been described "as the harnessing of organization members' selves during role performance; in engagement, people employ and express themselves physically, cognitively, and emotionally during role performances" (Kahn, 1990, p.694), and measured most commonly using Schaufeli et al.'s (2002) Utrecht Work Engagement Scale, representing three dimensions of vigor, dedication, and absorption. In spite of this, however, the results of the analysis (Table 2.4) reveal that the measure of employee engagement does associate positively with measures of organizational performance. What is unclear, however, is the mechanism through which the different factors of the Employee Engagement Index influence organizational performance.

Along with this question, there are others which would be theoretically important to consider. In the larger domain of research on administrative reform, scholars need to critically consider how research builds upon each other. While it is clear that the purpose of public administration research may not be to smiply "cover" administrative reforms (as a journalist would), even though this may frequently be a first step in exploratory research, but rather to develop theoretical knowledge about the art and science of public administration. In the context of Chapter 2, and knowing the cyclical nature of history, it will not be entirely surprising that because of the "rhetoric of realpolitik" (March & Olsen, 1983, p. 291), within the next decade or so, another new management trend may grip government bureaucracies. It is also likely that these new efforts may only serve the purpose of re-introducing old ideas into the collective consciousness, akin to 'old wine in new bottles'. This is not an entirely spectacular observation since the wine and bottle metaphor is not an infrequent one used to describe the state of management practice in public administration and social science research (Jordan, 2007; Macey & Schneider, 2008; Mani, 1995).

In addition, because this dissertation examines the push towards adopting employee engagement in the U.S. federal government context, the theoretical rationales proposed may simply be artifacts of the unique structure of American government, the separation of powers principle (O'Toole, 1987) or the constitutional silence on administrative matters (Rohr, 1986). Thus, it is unclear why the silent storm of employee engagement has become a global phenomenon, with civil service systems in the UK, Canada, and Australia using engagement as a way to manage and motivate their government workforce (Lavigna, 2013; Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2016). Analyzing these global trends is furthermore salient given the challenges and crises facing the world, from the rise of populism, authoritarianism, nativism and a willful distrust of a professional public service ethic (Daponte-Smith, 2017; Osnos, 2018).

Because the push for administrative reform is part of the larger institutional, social, and cultural context of public organizations (March & Olsen, 1983), it is important to consider how the external environment influences employee engagement in the U.S. federal government. In other words, because employee engagement has become a salient administrative reform effort in the U.S. and globally, situating it in the larger context and understanding the external sources of influence on levels of engagement can lend unique theoretical and policy-relevant insights. This is in addition to contributing to and extending research on the external organizational environment, which decades of public administration research has found to be a distinctive quality of public organizations (Bozeman & Bretschneider, 1994; Rainey & Bozeman, 2000).

Given this theoretical rationale, and the larger context in which public administration research situates itself, Chapter 3 uses social identity theory to argue that the organizational images employees form of their organizations matter for their levels of motivation and job

identification. These images not only include how organizational members see their own organization, but also images of how they feel their organization is perceived by external observers (Ashforth & Mael, 1989; Dutton et al., 1994). Importantly, research in the social psychology field finds that individuals use social categorization as a way to form consistent identities that differentiate them from others, and this is especially important in the context of groups and organizations (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). Since public administration research is predicated upon the distinctiveness of public employees and organizations from their private counterparts, it behooves researchers to consider these differences in terms of social categorization. For instance, it is well and good that researchers seem to argue (and I would agree) that public organizations and employees are different, does it mean that public organizations and employees self-identify as distinct entities and individuals? If so, how does their distinctiveness affect their motivation and performance? Does this distinctives manifest itself in terms of Public Service Motivation, or supervision mechanisms, or are there other mechanisms at play?

These questions become especially salient given the generally negative external environment public organizations and employees face. While some have characterized this as bureaucrat bashing (Garrett et al., 2006; Jahan & Shahan, 2012), others have argued that this negative view and disdain towards a large government apparatus is etched into the very founding of the United States (Kaufman, 1981; Yarwood, 1996), which is reflected in the absence of visible forms of state apparatus (Balogh, 2009).

The findings from Chapter 3 give credence to the fact that public employees are aware of how their work and organizations are viewed in the external environment, and that it affects their levels of engagement. In addition, these effects were mediated by levels of job identification,

such that greater identification with job function and fit made it less likely for the external environment to negatively affect their levels of engagement. This is generally consistent with the social psychology literature on identification, in that individuals are more likely to be motivated towards theirs groups and organizations when they enjoy greater levels of identification, which in turn occurs because identification serves purposes of self-enhancement, self-continuity, and self-distinctiveness (Dukerich et al., 2012; Dutton et al., 1994). Importantly, while the research on employee engagement, and the larger research on employee attitudes and job motivation, focuses on individual-level organizational antecedents, the findings from Chapter 3 indicate that extra-organizational factors do matter as well.

In particular, in Kahn's (1990) theorizing on employee engagement, safety, meaningfulness, and availability serve as antecedents to engagement. Without these antecedents, Kahn (1990) argued, individuals are not able to fully harness their emotional, cognitive, and physical energies towards work tasks. One way in which theorizing on engagement may move further is by investigating whether organizational images and identification affects these antecedents. It seems plausible that feelings of safety and security may be impacted by whether there is consistency or incongruity between employee images of their organization, their level of job identification, and the perceptions of how external actors see their organizations. Indeed, these feelings may disrupt self-continuity and lead to cognitive dissonance (Festinger, 1957), and eventually lead to a loss in motivation. Thus, there may be fruitful avenues of research that move away from micro-level theories of individual motivation and behavior and towards middle-range, or meso-level theories that incorporate important contextual variables (Abner, Kim, & Perry, 2017).

Another way to more fully incorporate existing research and extend theory is by examining the conceptual space of organizational images vis-à-vis organizational reputation. In particular, public administration scholars have recently theorized about the nature of organizational reputations in the public sector context, and how it affects public trust and branding (Carpenter & Krause, 2012; Lee & Van Ryzin, 2018; Teodoro & An, 2018).

Importantly, in the public sector context, reputations can carry a lot more weight because of the critical role public trust constituent support plays in the effectiveness and politics of public action (Carpenter & Krause, 2012). Thus, while the business management research literature has emphasized the relationships between organizational reputations and financial performance (Helm, 2011; Kiousis, Popescu, & Mitrook, 2007; Meadows & Meadows, 2016), reputations may have distinct implications for public organizations (Wæraas, A., & Byrkjeflot, 2012). Thus, researchers may need to investigate whether organizational images and organizational reputation are compatible concepts, or whether there are conceptual differences between the two. Importantly, it is plausible that organizational images affect reputations, but to what extent do employees pay attention to either is a matter of debate (Helm, 2011), in addition to whether one has a larger influence over employee motivation compared to the another. These serve as important questions for future research.

While organizational images do matter, and can be a way to understand how the external environment influences employee engagement and motivation, Chapter 4 more fully considers the role of another important external environmental factor, viz. media representation. In particular, the chapter develops a theoretical model using existing research on organizational reputations the role of the media (Deephouse, 2000), and media relations in the public sector context (Lee, 1999; Schillemans, 2012; Thorbjørnsrud et al., 2014). While scholars working in

the communications field have identified distinct features of public organizations and the way in which they communicate using media, little research has extended the impact of this distinctiveness on employee motivation and organizational performance. For example, as Liu et al. (2010) note, public organizations face greater media scrutiny, have statutory limitations on their public relations authority, and to date have not fully embraced the communication as a management tool. In addition to this, scholars have commented on the low levels of public trust and poor perceptions public organizations face (Yarwood, 1996; Stanford, 2014; Garrett et al., 2006; Pew Research Center, 2015).

In this environment, it is not difficult to imagine a scenario wherein negative media representation would not affect how public employees view their own organization and whether they are fully motivated towards their organization's mission and goals. Indeed, the evidence indicates that employees are generally aware of their organization's reputations (Helm, 2011), and the findings from Chapter 3 do illustrate this point further. On the other hand, it may be plausible that organizations can buffer the influence of the external environment by emphasizing organizational fit and organizational identification. The results of Chapter 4 do indicate that positive media representation does indeed associate positively with employee engagement, but that public approval ratings (Pew Research Center, 2015), do not have any such relationship. In addition, political attention as an external environmental variable does seem to have a marginally positive association with employee engagement.

While these results are encouraging insofar as they shed light on the importance of media representation on employee engagement, there are important questions that further research help uncover. Firstly, while scholars have commented on the new role of media in public sector organizations (Thorbjørnsrud, 2015; Thorbjørnsrud et al., 2014), it is unclear to what extent this

is an artifact of country context. This also holds true for the increased scrutiny public organizations face in the popular press (Liu et al., 2010). It would be a great disservice to the field of public administration if findings that hold true in the unique U.S. context were taken to be generalizable across different countries.

Secondly, and in spite of the lack of generalizability, the results do offer encouragement for more fully understanding how media relations affect public organizations and employees. In this context, and similar to the implications that arise from Chapter 3, it is important to consider the conceptual space of media relations, organizational reputations, and organizational images, to determine which one of these factors most proximally influences organizational performance and employee motivation/engagement. In developing an integrated theory of external influence on public organizations, it may also be important to consider how existing constructs such as performance information use may affect the motivations of employees, and whether they interact with organizational reputations and images.

Specifically, from a communications perspective, performance information may be seen as a particularly effective messaging tool through which public organizations seek to enact their external environments, develop trust in the public, and garner political support for their mission and goals. Indeed, recent research does indicate that performance information not only affects the way in which political principals evaluate public programs, but also forces motivated decision-makers to reprioritize performance information to align with their preferences and assumptions (Christensen, Dahlmann, Mathiasen, Moynihan, & Petersen, 2018). Based on this, it may be possible that a larger analysis incorporates performance information, organizational reputations, images of public employees, as well as organizational performance to predict employee performance. Such an analysis may provide further evidence for consider distinct

aspects of the external organizational environment which have, as of yet, received little to no scholarly attention.

In conclusion, while the three empirical chapters of this study offer answers to important questions, they also bring light to important theoretical questions that deserve attention from public administration scholars. This chapter has situated the discussion of employee engagement in the larger context of administrative reform and considering the influence of the external environment in unique ways. While answering the questions posed in this concluding chapter may move at a piecemeal rate, with perhaps little hope for integration, synthesis, or even convergence of research findings and practice (Pollitt, 2001), attempting to answer these questions would still be a worthwhile and welcome enterprise, and one that would occupy a researcher for many years to come. This writer hopes to live up to the challenge.

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TAHA HAMEDUDDIN
Curriculum Vitae
Indiana University, Paul H. O'Neill School of Public and Environmental Affairs
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EDUCATION

Indiana University, School of Public and Environmental Affairs, Bloomington, Indiana
Ph.D. in Public Affairs July 2019
Dissertation: Three Essays on the Employee Engagement Construct: Exploring the Role of the External Environment, and its Efficacy in the U.S. Federal Government
Dissertation Committee: Sergio Fernandez (chair), Claudia Avellaneda, Michael McGuire, Sean Nicholson-Crotty
Major Fields: Public Management, Public Policy Analysis
Minor Field: Organizational Behavior & Human Resource Management, Kelley School of Business, Indiana University

University of Georgia, School of Public and International Affairs, Athens, Georgia
Master of Public Administration May 2014
Major Fields: Public Management, Nonprofit Administration

University of Missouri, Columbia, Missouri
Bachelor of Science in Economics, Bachelor of Science in Statistics December 2012
Minor in Classical Humanities & General Honors Certificate

PEER-REVIEWED ARTICLES

Hameduddin, Taha & Sergio Fernandez. (2019), "Employee Engagement as Administrative Reform: Testing the Efficacy of OPM's Employee Engagement Initiative." *Public Administration Review*. https://doi.org/10.1111/puar.13033

MANUSCRIPTS UNDER REVIEW

Hameduddin, Taha & Shinwoo Lee. "Engagement among Public Employees: Examining the Influence of the External Environment and the Role of Job Identification." *Public Management Review.* (Revise and Resubmit)

MANUSCRIPTS UNDER PREPARATION

Hameduddin, Taha. "Employee Engagement in the U.S. Federal Government: Media, Politics, and the Public"

Hameduddin, Taha & Hongseok Lee. "Sexual Harassment & Employee Engagement: Evidence from the U.S. Federal Context"

Hameduddin, Taha. "Employee Engagement and Workplace Aggression: Evidence from the U.S. Federal Government"

Lee, Hongseok & **Taha Hameduddin**. "Sexual Harassment Behaviors in the Public Workplace: Do Gender Context and Organizational Climate Matter?"

Hameduddin, Taha. "Democracy in Governance Networks: The Role of Voice as Accountability"

WORKING PAPERS

Rutherford, Amanda & **Taha Hameduddin**. "Executive Vacancies in Federal Agencies: Symbolic or Substantive Crises?"

Hameduddin, Taha & Sergio Fernandez. "Predicting the Adoption of Open Innovations: Federal Agency Usage of Challenge.gov."

Demirciouglu, Mehmet & **Taha Hameduddin**. "The Effects of Collaboration across Government and Non-Government Stakeholders on Innovative Behavior: Evidence from Managers at the Australian Public Service"

Hameduddin, Taha. "Nonprofit Innovation: A Systematic Literature Review"

RESEARCH PRESENTATIONS (*anticipated)

*Engbers, Trent & **Taha Hameduddin**. "A Research Synthesis of Public Service Motivation and Leadership", Elevating Public Service Motivation Conference (Brigham Young University), Sundance, Utah (September 25-28, 2019)

*Rutherford, Amanda & **Taha Hameduddin**. "Executive Vacancies in Federal Agencies: Symbolic or Substantive Crises?", American Political Science Association, Washington, D.C. (September 1, 2019)

Lee, Hongseok & **Taha Hameduddin**. "Sexual Harassment Behaviors in the Public Workplace: Do Gender Context and Organizational Climate Matter?", Midwest Political Science Association, Chicago, IL (April 5, 2019)

Hameduddin, Taha. "Employee Engagement, the External Environment, and Public Support: Evidence from the U.S. Federal Government", Association of SPEA PhD Students Conference, School of Public and Environmental Affairs, Indiana University, Bloomington, Indiana (February 15, 2019)

Hameduddin, Taha & Hongseok Lee. "Sexual Harassment & Employee Engagement: Evidence from the U.S. Federal Context," American Political Science Association, Boston, MA (September 2, 2018)

Hameduddin, Taha & Shinwoo Lee. "Engagement Among Public Employees: Examining the influence of the External Environment and the Role of Job Attitudes," American Society for Public Administration, Denver, CO (March 13, 2018)

Hameduddin, Taha & Sergio Fernandez. "Employee Engagement as Administrative Reform: Testing the Efficacy of OPM's Employee Engagement Initiative," American Political Science Association, San Francisco, CA (September 2, 2017)

Hameduddin, Taha & Sergio Fernandez**.** "Employee Engagement and Performance: Evidence from the U.S. Office of Personnel Management's Employee Engagement Initiative," Public Management Research Conference, Washington, DC (June 9, 2017)

Demirciouglu, Mehmet & **Taha Hameduddin**. "The Effects of Collaboration across Government and Non-Government Stakeholders on Innovative Behavior: Evidence from Managers at the Australian Public Service," Association of SPEA PhD Students Conference, School of Public and Environmental Affairs, Indiana University, Bloomington, Indiana (February 24, 2017)

Hameduddin, Taha. "Nonprofit Innovation: A Systematic Literature Review," Association for Research on Nonprofit Organizations and Voluntary Action Conference, Washington, DC (November 17, 2016)

Hameduddin, Taha & Sergio Fernandez**.** "Federal Agency Usage of Challenge.gov: Predicting the Adoption of Open Innovation," American Political Science Association Conference, Philadelphia (September 3, 2016)

Hameduddin, Taha. "Predicting the Adoption of Open Innovations in the Federal Government: The Role of Managerial Practices," Association of SPEA PhD Students Conference, School of Public and Environmental Affairs, Indiana University, Bloomington, Indiana (February 19, 2016)

Hameduddin, Taha. "Performance and Open Innovation in the Public Sector: The Case of Challenge.gov," Association of SPEA PhD Students Conference, School of Public and Environmental Affairs, Indiana University, Bloomington, Indiana (April 10, 2015)

OTHER PUBLICATIONS

Hameduddin, Taha and Megan LePere-Schloop. (2013). "Best Practices for Public Splash Pads: Case Studies from Florida and Georgia." University of Georgia Archway Partnership.

GRANT WRITING EXPERIENCE

Hameduddin, Taha (March 2019). "Media Reputation, Bureau Bashing, and Employee Morale in the U.S. Federal Government." $3000. Paul Volcker Junior Scholar Research Grant, American Political Science Association. Not funded.

Fernandez, Sergio and **Taha Hameduddin**. (October, 2017). "Successful Implementation of OPM's Employee Engagement Initiative in the U.S. Federal Government: What Does It Look Like?". $20,000. IBM Center for the Business of Government. Not funded.

Amsler, Lisa, Michael McGuire, Jessica Sherrod, and **Taha Hameduddin**. (November, 2014). "The Legal Framework for Local Government and Innovation through Collaborative Governance". $45,000. Local Government Research Collaborative. Not funded.

TEACHING

Associate Instructor/Instructor of record: SPEA V-236 Managing and Leading Organizations (Fall 2016, Spring 2017, Fall 2017, Spring 2018, Fall 2018, Spring 2019)

Guest lecturer: SPEA-V 621 Seminar in Teaching Public Affairs (February 2017); SPEA-V 263 Public Management (October 2016); SPEA-V 362 Nonprofit Management and Leadership (February 2016)

Level 1 Certification, Top Hat

SERVICE

Manuscript reviewer

2019 Academy of Management Annual Meeting (OB &PNP Divisions)
International Review of Administrative Sciences
Perspectives on Public Management and Governance

Journal of Policy Analysis and Management

Association of SPEA PhD Students (President, May 2017-May 2018; Secretary, May 2016-May 2017; Social Officer, May 2015-May 2016; Conference Committee Member, May 2015-May 2016)

AWARDS, HONORS & PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES

Academy of Management, Public and Nonprofit Division

Top 10 Reviewer Award, Academy of Management Annual Conference (August 2019)

Doctoral Student Professional Development Consortium Participant (August 11, 2018)

Public Management Research Association

Doctoral Student Professional Development Workshop Participant (June 8, 2017)

American Political Science Association

2017 APSA Conference Travel Grant, $125 (September 2017)

2016 APSA Conference Travel Grant, $170 (September 2016)

Indiana University, School of Public and Environmental Affairs

Summer Fellowship, $3,000 each (May 2015, May 2016, May 2017, May 2018)

University of Georgia, Athens, Georgia

Student Spotlight, Public Service and Outreach (May 2014)

Featured by Public Service and Outreach Division for public service work at The University of Georgia. Accessible at http://outreach.uga.edu/featured-taha-hameduddin/

First Place, Georgia Students for Public Administration Policy Competition (February 2013)

University of Missouri, Columbia, Missouri

Chancellor's Excellence Award for Multicultural Leadership (April 2012)

Chancellor's Excellence Award for Emerging Leadership (April 2011)

Curator's Grant-in-Aid (Fall 2010, Spring 2011 & Fall 2011)

Dean's List (Spring 2009, Fall 2009, Spring 2010 & Fall 2010)

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Indiana University School of Public and Environmental Affairs, Bloomington, Indiana

Research Assistance Experience

Professor Jim Perry — March 2018-July 2019

Maintained an online database of Public Service Motivation research.

Professors Jennifer Brass and Allison Schnable, "Systematic Review of NGO Literature Using Machine Learning/Topic Modeling Methods" — May-June 2017

Professor Thomas Rabovsky — August 2015-May 2016

Helped create/maintain database of performance of educational institutions.

Professor Michael McGuire — August 2014-May 2015

Conducted archival research for a book project on civil servants.

University of Georgia, Archway Partnership, Athens, Georgia

Graduate Assistant (May 2013-May 2014)

Relevant Projects: Formulated Personnel Policies Manual for the City of Tennille, Georgia; Developed an Operations Manual for the Twin Cities Country Club of Sandersville, Georgia; Used interview research methods to prepare report entitled "Best Practices for Public Splash Pads: Case Studies from Florida and Georgia" (with Megan LePere-Schloop); Formulated Bylaws for the Americus-Sumter County Chamber of Commerce, Inc.; Grant writer for a Georgia Department of Transportation Grant for the City of Cairo, Georgia

PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIPS

Midwest Political Science Association
Academy of Management (Public and Nonprofit Division)
American Political Science Association (Public Administration Division)
Pi Alpha Alpha Public Affairs and Administration Honor Society

PRESS

Kelman, Steve. May 30, 2019. "'Employee engagement' and agency performance." *The Lectern, FCW.* Accessible at https://fcw.com/blogs/lectern/2019/05/kelman-employee-engagement-spea-opm.aspx?admgarea=thelectern

American University News. June 12, 2017. "Public Management Research Conference Brings Fresh Perspective to Pressing Issues". *American University News*. Accessible at https://www.american.edu/spa/news/pmrc-brings-fresh-perspective-to-pressing-issues-06122017.cfm

University of Georgia Public Service and Outreach. May 9, 2014. "Featured Student: Taha Hameduddin". *University of Georgia Public Service and Outreach*. Accessible at http://www.archwaypartnership.uga.edu/news/archway-news/featured-student-taha-hameduddin/

University of Georgia School of Public & International Affairs. "Recent MPA Graduate Featured as Spotlight Student". *University of Georgia School of Public & International Affairs*. Accessible at http://spia.uga.edu/recent-mpa-graduate-featured-as-spotlight-student/

University of Georgia School of Public & International Affairs. "Graduate Students Go Head-to-Head in Policy Competition". *University of Georgia School of Public & International Affairs*. Accessible at http://spia.uga.edu/graduate-students-go-head-to-head-in-policy-competition/

LANGUAGE SKILLS

Fluency: English; Conversational proficiency: Urdu, Hindi, and Arabic; Basic proficiency: French

OTHER ACTIVITIES

Radio co-host, WIUX-LP Bloomington (99.1 FM). *Don't Curry About It*, 2016-2018