THE CHILD SUPPORT INCENTIVE PROGRAM: CONSTRAINTS AND THE CAPACITY FOR ORGANIZATIONAL CHEATING BY STREET-LEVEL BUREAUCRATS

by

Tracy R. Graham

A dissertation submitted to the faculty of
The University of Utah
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Department of Political Science

The University of Utah

December 2010

The University of Utah Graduate School

STATEMENT OF DISSERTATION APPROVAL

The dissertation of **Tracy R. Graham**

has been approved by the following supervisory committee members:

Richard T. Green	, Chair	**12/4/2009** Date Approved
Matthew J. Burbank	, Member	**12/4/2009** Date Approved
James J. Gosling	, Member	**12/4/2009** Date Approved
J. Steven Ott	, Member	**12/4/2009** Date Approved
Leslie Francis	, Member	**12/4/2009** Date Approved

and by **Matthew J. Burbank** , Chair of

the Department of **Political Science**

and by Charles A. Wight, Dean of The Graduate School.

ABSTRACT

Many have argued that government "should be run like a business." This argument has evolved throughout the years, but implies that implementing performance measures, benchmarks and incentives will provide inducements for improving organizational performance. While the literature is replete with such arguments, there has been little attention paid to the "wrong-side" of performance management and whether incentive structures result in instances where individuals and organizations engage in efforts to cheat, or "game the system."

The nation's child support program is a good example of a government program that has adopted an incentive-based approach. Four state child support agencies, representing varied degrees of performance, allowed their staff to participate in a survey that explored issues of cheating and knowledge of the child support incentive program.

This study constructed cheating as the capability of artificially inflating performance levels. The underlying research hypothesis, based on principal-agency theory, suggested that higher levels of cheating would be found among higher incentive earning states. The findings of the study suggested otherwise.

The study found that while front-line child support professionals identified performance as being important, few were aware that a child support incentive system existed. This finding is important as it suggests that the incentive structure does little to influence front-line worker behavior and does not appear to have much impact on

workers' performance levels. Furthermore, there appeared to be no difference in knowledge levels among workers between high and low performing states.

Using multivariate analysis, the key finding of the study was that respondents reporting high levels of role conflict, and lower levels of job satisfaction were more likely to report feeling pressure to cheat. The finding related to role conflict is consistent with the constructs of principal-agency theory suggesting that the more clearly roles are defined, the less likely agents are to act against the wishes of principals. The link between job satisfaction and role conflict on feeling pressure to cheat provides an intriguing starting point from which to further explore the issue of cheating and the applicability of principal-agent theory to explain cheating behavior.

CONTENTS

ABSTRACT iii

LIST OF TABLES viii

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS x

Chapters

INTRODUCTION 1

1 PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT IN THE PUBLIC SECTOR: AN OVERVIEW 6

Weberian Organizational Theory 7
PPBS Budgeting and Management Systems 8
Management by Objectives 9
Zero Base Budgeting 10
Open System Models 11
Total Quality Management 12
The Reinvention Argument 13
The New Managerialism 15

2 DEFICENCIES WITH PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT AND INCENTIVE SYSTEMS 18

Principal-Agency Theory 19
Weaknesses of Principal-Agency Theory 20

3 THE CHILD SUPPORT INCENTIVE PROGRAM 27

The Social Security Amendments (1975) 28
The Child Support Enforcement Amendments (1984) 29
The Family Support Act (1988) 31
The Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (1996) 33
The Child Support Performance and Incentive Act (1998) 35
The Deficit Reduction Act of 2005 40

The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 40

4 RESEARCH DESIGN 42

Research Questions 42
State Programs Participating in the Study 43
State "A" 45
State "B" 45
State "C" 46
State "D" 47
Hypotheses 48
Survey Construction 49

5 MEASURING THE KNOWLEDGE OF CHILD SUPPORT INCENTIVE PROGRAM BY FRONT-LINE WORKERS 56

6 ASSESSING ORGANIZATIONAL CHEATING 65

7 PART ONE: INFLUENCING VARIABLES ON CHEATING- ANALYSIS FOR ALL SURVEY RESPONDENTS 75

Method 75
Findings 78
Dependent Variable #1: Possibility of Cheating 79
Role Conflict and the Possibility of Cheating 80
Job Stress and the Possibility of Cheating 82
Dependent Variable #2: Awareness of Others Cheating 84
Role Conflict and Awareness of Others Cheating 85
Job Satisfaction and Awareness of Others Cheating 87

8 PART TWO: INFLUENCING VARIABLES ON CHEATING- ANALYSIS OF STATE LEVEL RESPONDENTS 90

Findings for Cheating- State A 91
State A- Job Satisfaction and Possibility of Cheating 92
State A- Strategizing and Possibility of Cheating 93
Findings for Cheating- State B 95
State B- Awareness of Others Cheating and Job Satisfaction 96
Findings for State C 97
State C- Role Conflict and the Possibility of Cheating 98
State C- Supervision and the Possibility of Cheating 99
State C- Role Conflict and the Awareness of Others Cheating 101
State C- Job Satisfaction and Awareness of Others Cheating 103
Findings for State D 105
State D- Role Ambiguity and Awareness of Others Cheating 106

State D- Knowledge of Performance Appraisal and
Awareness of Others Cheating 107

9 FEELING PRESSURE TO CHEAT: A PREDICTIVE MODEL 112

Dependent Variable: Pressure to Cheat 112
Independent Variables 113
Findings 115
Job Satisfaction and Feeling Pressure to Cheat 117
Role Conflict and Feeling Pressure to Cheat 118
Possible to Inflate Performance and Feeling Pressure to Cheat 119

10 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION 122

Finding #1- Performance Matters for Child Support Professionals 124
Finding #2- Unawareness of Incentive System 125
Finding #3- Understanding Cheating Within the Child Support Context 127
Finding #4- The Importance of Role Conflict and
Job Satisfaction with Cheating 130
Finding #5- Respondents' Ideas About the Possibility
of Cheating Are Related to Feeling Pressure to Cheat 132
Finding #6- Limitations of the Principal-Agent Model 132
Future Research 133

APPENDICES

A- STATE "A" PROFILE DATA 138

B- STATE "B" PROFILE DATA 139

C- STATE "C" PROFILE DATA 140

D- STATE "D" PROFILE DATA 141

E- CHILD SUPPORT SURVEY 142

F- SCALE QUESTIONS AND CONSTRUCTION 153

WORKS CITED 155

LIST OF TABLES

Table Page

4.1 State incentive rankings 44

5.1 Responses of state's ability to receive incentive funding 58

5.2 Responses for possibility of penalties for poor performance 59

5.3 Responses of whether organizations have been penalized 60

5.4 Responses comparing incentive and nonincentive tasks 61

5.5 Standardized measures for incentive and nonincentive tasks 62

5.6 Measures for incentive and nonincentive tasks (excludes caseload size variable) 63

6.1 Responses for impact of personal performance on organizational performance 66

6.2 Responses for strategizing with co-workers to improve performance 67

6.3 Responses for strategizing with supervisors to improve performance 68

6.4 Responses for organizational strategizing to improve performance 69

6.5 Responses for possibility of cheating (Inflating performance) 71

6.6 Responses for knowledge of others cheating (Inflating performance) 72

6.7 Responses for workers feeling pressure to cheat (Inflate performance) 73

7.1 Survey questions pertaining to cheating 78

7.2 Summary of association of independent variables on the possibility of cheating 79

Table Page

7.3 Summary of association of independent variables on others cheating 80

7.4 Survey questions pertaining to role conflict 81

7.5 Effect of role conflict on possibility of cheating for all states 82
7.6 Survey questions pertaining to job stress scale 83

7.7 Effect of job stress on possibility of cheating- All states 84

7.8 Effect of role conflict on awareness of others cheating- All states 85

7.9 Survey questions pertaining to job satisfaction scale 87

7.10 Effect of job satisfaction on awareness of others cheating- All states 88

8.1 Summary table of significant variables for the possibility of cheating 90

8.2 Summary table of significant variables for awareness of others cheating 91

8.3 Effect of job satisfaction on possibility of cheating- State A 92

8.4 Effect of strategizing and possibility of cheating- State A 94

8.5 Effect of job satisfaction and awareness of others cheating- State B 96

8.6 Effect of role conflict on the possibility of cheating- State C 99

8.7 Effect of supervision on possibility of cheating- State C 100

8.8 Effect of role conflict on awareness of others cheating- State C 102

8.9 Effect of job satisfaction on awareness of others cheating- State C 104

8.10 Effect of role ambiguity on awareness of others cheating- State D 106

8.11 Effect of knowledge of performance appraisal on awareness of others cheating- State D 108

9.1 Logistic regression predicting pressure to cheat from: Gender, race, state, job satisfaction, role conflict, possible to inflate performance, and awareness of incentives 116

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The culmination of this dissertation has not been an isolated endeavor and a number of individuals and organizations deserve special thanks from the author. First, Rick Green and Matt Burbank have been invaluable sources of support and knowledge as this project has unfolded over the past four years. My employer, the Office of Recovery Services, has been supportive throughout the years as I have worked to complete my dissertation and Ph.D. Special thanks go to Mike Tazelaar, Emma Chacon, and Mark Brasher for allowing me the flexibility and support as I have worked through this lengthy process. And last, but certainly not least, my wife Micah, and three children (Mallaree, Jarron, and Nikkee) deserve special recognition for putting up with me as I have tried (sometimes not too successfully) to balance the demands of work, school, and family. Once this is done, I will focus my efforts to be a better husband and father to you all!

INTRODUCTION

Public administration in the United States has a lengthy obsession with the values and practices associated with democracy on the one hand, and with values and practices of the business world on the other. The discipline of public administration has struggled throughout its history with reconciling these two distinct philosophical approaches to public management. In recent years, the field has leaned heavily toward the business model, with members of Congress, presidents, scholars, and the media asserting that government should be run more like a business.

This call to action has been bolstered by the implementation of incentive programs, performance management, and privatization for public government services. While the rhetoric espouses the intrinsic worth of these private-sector influenced methods, there has been limited, though insightful, discussion in the public administration literature pertaining to the possibility that these types of programs may introduce questionable practices within public organizations.

Personal experience has caused this author to inquire of the inherently problematic aspects associated with incentive structures and performance measurement systems in the public sector. While the literature suggests the possibility of employees manipulating performance, there has been little empirical work conducted on the subject. The questions remain: do incentive systems offer perverse incentives to organizations and their employees to perform well in incentive areas? Is it possible that performance

management systems can be manipulated by organizations and their employees? If this manipulation occurs, under what conditions does it take place? Do certain organizational characteristics curtail or enhance the likelihood of what Bohte and Meier (2000) call organizational cheating? These fundamental questions represent the underpinnings of this study.

Bohte and Meier (2000) studied the occurrences of organizational cheating within Texas public school systems prior to the national passage of the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) initiative. Their findings suggested that schools lacking resources and those that felt pressure from "extreme task demands" were more likely to cheat than other schools. Bohte and Meier concluded their article by calling on the discipline of public administration to pay more attention to the conditions under which organizations may feel pressure to cheat and to remedy those situations accordingly. This study attempts to answer Bohte and Meier's call to action by focusing on the impact the nation's child support incentive system has on front-line child support workers.

The nation's child support program presents a valuable case study in relation to the problematic side of incentive systems and performance management. Since so many aspects of the child support program are related to collections, the process of quantifying inputs, outputs, and outcomes has been relatively simple compared with other social welfare programs. In addition, the child support program is one based on a shared partnership between the federal and state governments. Under this partnership, states have been given a great deal of latitude in establishing the ways in which they choose to organize themselves. Some states have chosen to centralize service delivery, while others rely on programs administered at the local level. In addition, some states rely on private

service contracts to provide services to the public. This organizational diversity allows for a comparison between states and the subsequent methods each adopts to perform effectively.

More important, however, is each state's ability to participate in an active incentive program which seeks to reward states for performing well on a predetermined performance objective system. The incentive-based program identifies key performance areas for the child support program in five substantive areas. Ultimately states can "maximize" their incentive dollars by scoring well on preselected performance standards. Earned incentive dollars are intended to be reinvested in the child support program to improve the program's effectiveness. It is also important to note that penalties exist for poor performance in several of the performance measures. It is, therefore, in each state's best interest to perform well in the program.

This study examines the degree to which the federal child support incentive program acts as a constraint upon street-level child support workers and their daily work activities. If the incentive system acts as a mechanism to focus worker's tasks, a subsequent research question surrounds the likelihood of child support agencies' willingness to engage in manipulative behaviors by attempting to artificially increase performance in the key incentive areas. Specifically, this study will explore the experiences of individual child support workers and the pressures they may feel to engage in these questionable practices.

Chapter 1 of this dissertation provides an underlying foundation regarding the historical development of performance management systems in American public administration. As mentioned previously, the concept of performance management is not

a new one for the discipline. In fact, this analysis demonstrates that the issue of measuring performance is one that cycles through the course of our nation's administrative history.

Chapter 2 provides a more detailed analysis of the nature of principal-agency theory in relation to the use of governmental incentive programs. While some suggest this mode of thinking results in effective methods for instituting control and enhancing efficiency, others counter this idea by pointing out some of the deficiencies associated with principal-agent type relationships. As this chapter demonstrates, there are some potentially negative consequences related to incentive systems and the use of performance management. As a result, incentive programs have the potential to introduce perverse incentives resulting from implementation of incentive structures.

Chapter 3 presents a historical analysis of the development of the child support enforcement program in the United States. The chapter places specific focus on the development of the child support incentive system in the wake of significant policy changes that resulted from the welfare reform initiatives of the early 1990s. In addition, the chapter provides additional details concerning each of the performance measures including how the measures are calculated and their underlying reasons for existing.

Chapter 4 addresses the methodological constraints used by this study in attempting to address the research questions at hand. The chapter explains that data were gathered from four state administered child support agencies using an online survey. The chapter also provides the rationale used to categorize the four state programs in relation to the incentive levels each earned. Of particular importance is identifying the constraining impact the incentive has at the individual worker level. Do overwhelming

pressures exist within child support agencies to perform well in incentive areas? Do workers feel compelled to manipulate computer systems to artificially increase performance outcomes? These, and other, important questions were addressed through the questions posed by the survey.

The remaining chapters present the findings of the study. Chapter 5 focuses on the results of the study concerning the knowledge street-level child support workers have regarding the child support incentive systems. The results of this analysis presented some surprising results regarding how well workers understood the concepts and tasks related to the incentive system. Chapter 6 focuses specifically on assessing the level of organizational cheating in each of the agencies studied, while Chapters 7 and 8 focus on eight independent variables and their subsequent impact on cheating. Finally, Chapter 9 implements a multivariate logistic model that tests the effects of several key variables on the pressure to cheat.

Performance management systems and incentive programs have been implemented in a wide-range of programs to enhance their effectiveness and their value to the public at large. While this study does not adopt the perspective that performance management systems are inherently bad, it does highlight deficiencies and unintended consequences that emerge when implementing these types of programs. The primary justification for writing this dissertation is to shed some light on attempts to develop performance management systems in a way that does not compromise the integrity of their disciplines and practices.

CHAPTER 1

PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT IN THE PUBLIC SECTOR: AN OVERVIEW

One of the methods used to improve oversight and accountability in government has been to implement performance measurement systems in public agencies. Proponents of these systems argue that they have two purposes: to enhance efficiency and to promote accountability of government agencies (Broom et al. 2002; Coggburn and Schneider 2003; De Lancer and Holzer 2001; Garvey 1995). Heinrich (2003) relied heavily upon Thompson's (1967) descriptions of organizations in developing a useful framework which described the development of performance measurement systems in the United States. Thompson's approach is used in this proposal as a means to facilitate a discussion of the history of performance measurement in the United States.

James Thompson suggested that organizations can best be understood by looking at two broad categories of organizational theory that attempt to describe how organizations function. The first group, labeled as "closed systems," relies heavily upon notions of rationality. From a closed perspective, organizations are viewed as rational entities seeking to maximize efficiency, organizational performance, and outputs (Thompson 1967). Closed system approaches tend to emphasize the organization's need to establish certainty in their environment through the establishment of hierarchies,

formal rules, and repetitive processes (Thompson 1967). In contrast, Thompson found that open system theories were not as dependent upon hierarchy and rules as closed system models. Instead, open systems are viewed as "natural systems" comprised of interdependent parts that cooperate with one another in order to cope with uncertain and unstable environments (Thompson 1967). These two approaches are used as a guiding theme in analyzing the historical development of performance management in American government.

Weberian Organizational Theory

Closed system approaches rely upon the Weberian notion of bureaucracy (Thompson 1967). While Weber's writings were not translated into English until the mid- twentieth century, ideas closely resembling Weber's theory of bureaucracy were expressed by many of the early theorists in the field of public administration. For Weber, bureaucratic processes and structures were constructed by individuals in an attempt to accomplish a given set of goals (Coser 1977; De Lancer and Holzer 2001). The underlying theme of rationality lies at the heart of Weber's theory of bureaucracy.

Weber viewed organizations as embodying inherent interests, goals, and purposes (Thompson 1967). The establishment of rules, hierarchy, and authority help create a sense of uniformity within bureaucracies to assist in accomplishing organizational purposes (Burke 1986; Perrow 1972). These structures also serve to buffer the organization from external influences in an intentional effort to increase certainty within the organizational environment.

According to Perrow (1972, 5), the elimination of all unwanted "extraorganizational influences" proved to be a rational approach for maximizing

efficiency. As such, the bureaucratic model exhibited the potential to remove the imperfections associated with human behavior from organizational settings. "The more bureaucracy is 'dehumanized', the more completely it succeeds in eliminating from official business love, hatred, and all purely personal irrational and emotional elements which escape calculation. This is the specific nature of bureaucracy and it is appraised as its special virtue" (Weber 1946, 216).

Other developments in the closed system approach include Taylor's (1912) scientific management movement, Luther Gulick's (1937) POSDCORB principles, and Chester Barnard's (1938) influential book *The Functions of the Executive*. Each of these approaches emphasized the role of a relatively small number of variables in environments where goals and tasks were known, and where a prediction of outcomes was generally considered to be reliable (Heinrich 2003).

PPBS Budgeting and Management Systems

Under the constructs imposed by closed system approaches, early attempts at developing modern performance management systems began to emerge by the 1950s. Many of these approaches were imported to public sector organizations from the business world. One of the first attempts at developing a more holistic approach to systematic management was Planning Programming Budgeting Systems (PPBS) (Gosling 2002; Nelson et al. 1998).

Schick (1966) identified PPBS as moving beyond control and managerial budgeting through the use of extensive planning and goal setting. "One of the major aims of PPB[S] is to convert the annual process of preparing a budget into a conscious appraisal and formulation of future goals and policies" (Schick 1966, 244). Schick

claimed that the three functions of budgeting (control, management, and planning) would come into balance under PPBS. Most importantly, PPBS required top policy makers to establish broad policy objectives (Schick 1966). Once these objectives were identified, they acted as a constraint for lower ranking officials in the bureaucracy and served as a guide for subsequent actions.

While PPBS promised to improve government, it eventually failed as a budgeting system in the United States. The reasons for its failure included the difficulty of identifying measurable objectives, inadequate training in implementing PPBS for agency budgeting officials, and the fractured federal governmental structure which hindered coordination efforts between the executive and legislative branches (Gosling 2002).

Management by Objectives

Another private sector management approach that was applied to the public sector was *Management by Objectives* (MBO). This approach, developed by Peter Drucker (1954), placed a heavy emphasis on the role of management in accomplishing organizational objectives. According to Drucker, management has three distinct purposes: ensuring economic performance, enhancing efficiency/productivity, and managing people effectively to accomplish the first two managerial functions.

With these goals in mind, Drucker argued that the best way to improve management was through the systematic identification of objectives deemed critical to the success of an organization. "Objectives are needed in every area where performance and results directly and vitally affect the survival and prosperity of the business" (Drucker 1954, 63). By identifying and measuring these objectives, management would

improve its position to meet the needs of customers and improve organizational performance.

The importance of Drucker's MBO model was the emphasis it placed on quantitative (and qualitative) measurement of individual and organizational performance in order to improve efficiency and productivity. Versions of MBO were implemented in both the private and public sectors (Brady 1978; De Woolfson 1975) and proved to be influential in the development of subsequent performance management systems in American management.

Zero Base Budgeting

A final example of a closed system model was the implementation of zero-base budgeting (ZBB) during the 1970s and 1980s. After being elected president in 1976, Jimmy Carter brought the zero-base budgeting concept with him after using it while serving as governor of the state of Georgia. ZBB required government agencies to construct four separate budgets on the basis of four different funding scenarios (Gosling 2002). This process required budgeting officials to examine their entire budget each year and to identify priorities within their respective programs. While ZBB was ultimately abandoned by the federal government as a formal budgeting system with the election of Ronald Reagan, key principles of ZBB continued to be used by budget managers at both the federal and state levels of government (Gosling 2002).

It is also important to recognize that key characteristics of ZBB dealt with performance management and monitoring (Brown 1981; Lauth 1985). In citing Georgia's experience with ZBB, Lauth (1985) found that ZBB offered decision makers the opportunity to direct resources to programs that had achieved key program objectives.

Brown's (1981) article suggested that decision makers using ZBB systems would make their final budgetary decisions based upon which programs demonstrated high cost-effectiveness. In sum, ZBB presented a budgetary system that continued funding for programs which demonstrated effective performance in key areas.

The examples of MBO, PPBS, and ZBB all represented closed system approaches as defined by Thompson (1967) and Heinrich (2003). Each of these perspectives attempted to describe organizations and how they prescribe remedies to help them improve performance internally. Interestingly, each of these viewpoints describes organizations as endogenous entities where all variables are known and where individuals respond willingly to authority and rules (Heinrich 2002). As organizations became more intricate over time, a new perspective would develop to account for the emerging complexities facing organizations.

Open System Models

Unlike the closed system approaches, open system models viewed organizations as "natural systems" (Thompson 1967) where organizational structures were more fluid and open to outside influences. While rational-legal models (i.e., closed system approaches) placed emphasis upon the bureaucratic response of buffering the organization from external forces, open system approaches embraced the challenges associated with organizational interdependence (Heinrich 2003; Thompson 1967).

The origin of open-systems thinking was grounded in the work of Herbert Simon who criticized rational-decision making processes (Thompson 1967). Simon's (1945) pointed critique found that rational decision making assumes that knowledge is complete and that all factors can be identified through systematic analysis. Simon suggested that

this is not the case. Instead, Simon proposed the notion of "bounded rationality" to help describe decision making in an environment of uncertainty and unknowns. "In making administrative decisions it is continually necessary to choose factual premises where truth or falsehood is not definitely known …" (Simon 1945, 60).

Simon's contributions to the field of organizational theory go well beyond his theory of decision making. Simon's influence helped scholars to begin questioning the rationally-based closed system approaches of organizational theory and move toward a more open, systemic conception of how organizations operate (Steiss and Daneke 1980). New managerial theories and concepts emerged in the wake of challenging the dogmas related to traditional organizational theory. The main emphasis in many of these approaches embraced an external (or open) perspective in finding ways to increase organizational productivity in an ever increasingly interconnected world.

Total Quality Management

Total Quality Management (TQM) emerged in the 1980s as dissatisfaction with previous attempts to improve management had failed (Heinrich 2003). The primary emphasis of TQM addressed the role "customers" play in the business world. "The consumer is the most important part of the production line. Quality should be aimed at the needs of the consumer, present and future" (Deming 1986, 5). By emphasizing the customer and improving quality at all levels of an organization, TQM promised to "transform" management systems in the American business world.

In developing TQM, Deming identified fourteen points that would help his efforts to transform American management systems. Included in these fourteen points was a need for management to create a "constancy of purpose" (23) for employees,

emphasizing quality at all levels, promoting employee involvement, and focusing on constant improvement of products and processes to benefit the customer.

TQM took the business world by storm and was subsequently adopted by public sector agencies across all levels of government. The way in which TQM was implemented varied, but the one common theme that emerged was the reliance upon performance measures by management to improve productivity within organizations. While it can be argued that the way TQM was actually implemented differed from Deming's ideas, the TQM movement reinforced the ideals associated with measuring performance in the psyche of American management.

The Reinvention Argument

Calls to reinvent government grew in fervor with the Reagan Era, which brought with it taxpayer revolts, demands for downsizing government, and policies promoting devolution. This resulted in a call from academics, politicians, and the general public to take a serious look at how government conducted its business. Reinventing government emerged as a dominant theme, even a new paradigm, for improving government performance, while at the same time, reducing government programs and expenditures (Poister 2003).

Osbourne and Gaebler's (1993) *Reinventing Government* had a tremendous impact on government reform in the early 1990s. They argued that in order for government to improve, it must adopt an entrepreneurial approach that would enable government workers to cut through "bureaucratic red tape" and to perform more effectively.

It is important to note that Osbourne and Gaebler's reinvention approach viewed government as being inherently different from business. While supportive of some private sector practices, Osbourne and Gaebler suggested that reinvention attempts must refocus on shifting government to an outcome-based perspective. In order to accomplish this goal, government should use privatization, contracting for services, decentralizing decision making authority, and adopting performance measures to monitor performance (Osbourne and Gaebler 1993).

Osbourne and Gaebler's work heavily influenced Vice President Al Gore's *National Performance Review* (NPR). Commissioned by President Bill Clinton, Gore oversaw the reinvention efforts for the federal government. The mission given to Gore was two fold: first, make government work better, and second, make it cost less (Gore 1993).

Reinvention relied upon methods of performance management as its primary tool (Gore 1993). "Performance management programs should have a single goal: to improve the performance of individuals and organizations" (Gore 1993, 26). The NPR went on to say that "agencies will gradually build performance information into their own budget guidance and review procedures, into their strategic and operational plans, and into revised position descriptions for their budget, management and program analysts" (Gore 1993, 111).

With the publication of the NPR, the Clinton administration embarked on a mission to reinvent the federal government using performance management as a key method to accomplish their goals. During the proceeding years, the Clinton administration and Congress passed welfare reform legislation and adopted the

Government Performance and Review Act (GPRA) which required all federal agencies to identify specific performance measures for their organizations by September 30, 1997 (Kravchuck and Schack 1996).

Proponents of GPRA argued that it would provide an effective tool to assist Congress in obtaining additional oversight of the bureaucracy. Supporters claimed that GPRA would ensure accountability to citizens and elected officials alike, in addition to helping instill a results oriented perspective for government (Mihm 2001). Mihm contended that once results oriented government was implemented, employees in this type of system would "understand the importance and the connection between their individual performance and the organization's success" (2002, 42-43).

The New Managerialism

The call for reinventing government in the 1990s, combined with a reliance upon rationally-based economic theory, resulted in the development of a new managerial philosophy in the public sector known as both the New Public Management (NPM) and managerialism (Hughes 1994). These terms will be used interchangeably in this study. Managerialism represented an ideology which praised the values associated with management itself (Pollitt 1993). NPM assumed that individuals in government organizations were rational and would respond accordingly through proper performance monitoring by supervisors (Hughes 1994). Essentially, NPM suggested that effective management, by itself, was capable of improving government programs and services (Pollitt 1993).

Hughes (1994) contended that NPM placed an emphasis on governmental results. In order to improve government results, managers adopting the NPM perspective rely

heavily upon developing flexible (i.e., nonbureaucratic) organizations, promoting performance monitoring systems, and bringing market forces to bear in government through the practices of contracting for services and privatization (Hughes 1994). Proponents of the NPM claimed that these approaches resulted in an improved and more economical government for citizens.

While Pollitt (1993) has pointed out some inherent weaknesses with managerialism (including the lack of clearly established goals in public programs, and the model's inability to deal with the conflicting values of fairness and equality in comparison with that of efficiency), this new managerial philosophy has developed into what Rosenbloom (2002) has called the dominant managerial approach in public administration today. It appears as if the field's love affair with performance monitoring is here to stay.

In conjunction with the growing popularity of performance monitoring and incentive plans, it is important to note that the child support program at the national level has enamored itself with these practices. Chapter 3 provides a detailed history of the development of the child support program during the past thirty years. Special emphasis is placed on how the program has used a combination of performance management techniques and the use of incentives, to dramatically emphasize the importance of performance at the state and local levels of government. In turn, this emphasis on performance allows states to draw additional federal funding for good performance as well as the possibility of penalties for poor performance levels.

How successful the reinvention effort is remains to be seen. While some are critical of the reinvention developments in the field of public administration (Moe 1994;

Nathan 2001; Radin 2002), it seems as if the proposals initiated with PPBS have come full circle. Contemporary public administration relies heavily upon quantitative measures as the basis for improving results, performance, and accountability. Performance management is presented as a uniquely qualified means to solve many of government's most serious problems.

CHAPTER 2

DEFICENCIES WITH PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT AND INCENTIVE SYSTEMS

The reasons given for implementing performance management systems fall into two broad categories: first, the values associated with efficiency, and, second, to exert more control and accountability over public programs. This chapter focuses on the latter. It explores the literature associated with bureaucratic control through performance management and how the use of incentives attempts to "reign in" the bureaucracy.

Brehm and Gates (1997) suggested that one body of literature provides an underlying foundation for explaining how the use of performance management and incentives affect subordinates and superiors within contemporary organizations. This literature employed an economic perspective that suggested that individuals are ultimately self-interested and act in a rational manner to fulfill their own needs (Downs 1967). Assuming that subordinates are ultimately self-interested, one can rationally infer that they will only carry out the wishes of others if properly induced into acting according to their superior's wishes. Principal-agent theory has built upon this notion and has attempted to develop a model which explains how superiors (i.e., principals) can exert control over subordinates (agents).

Principal-Agency Theory

Rational actor models hinge upon the idea that individuals will almost always act in a manner that benefits (or in the verbiage of economists, "maximizes") their own self-interest (Brehm and Gates 1997; Downs 1967; Miller 1990). Because it is assumed that individuals will act rationally, developers of rational-actor models make the broad claim that they offer a robust approach that can be used to predict numerous types of behavior.

Economists (in addition to other social scientists) developed principal-agent models to describe the relationship that exists between superiors and subordinates in a number of fields, including public management (Arrow 1985; Lynn 1996; Pratt and Zeckhauser 1985). Specifically, principal-agent models rely heavily upon the notion of incentives, inducements, and punishments as motivating factors in controlling subordinate behavior. The result of such systems is a model which creates "linear, hierarchical, top-down" relationships that act as a constraint upon subordinate behaviors and actions (Feldman and Khademian 2002, 543-44).

Superiors in principal-agent relationships act as the principal. Principals, in general, have a given set of preferences regarding some type of activity that they would like to see implemented. Since principals typically do not have the time, resources, or even knowledge to complete these tasks, they must rely on subordinates (agents) to carry out these assignments on their behalf. Under such relationships, the principal's primary duty is to establish a system and design "incentives such that the agents find it in their own interests to take the best possible set of actions (from the principal's perspective)" (Miller 1990, 325).

While principals may establish these systems, they are inherently reliant upon agents to carry out their wishes. Under such relationships, agents are viewed as having their own distinct preferences and other self-interests that may differ from the preferences of principals (Arrow 1985; Brehm and Gates 1997; Hammond and Miller 1985; Lynn 1996; Miller 1990). As such, lower-level subordinates have the potential to wield a great deal of power and influence in principal-agent relationships (Mechanic 1962).

Because these differences among preferences persist, the primary duty of the principal is to create a situation where the preferences of agents come into line with those of the principal. According to principal-agent theory, the best way to do this is through the development of a contractual type relationship which relies heavily upon the notion of inducements to control and direct subordinate behavior and actions (Wood and Waterman 1994). In terms of this study, the child support program in the United States relies heavily upon performance measures created by Congress and the Office of Child Support Enforcement (OCSE) (the principals) which act as a constraint on state and local programs' (the agents) collective behavior.

For nearly two decades economists have claimed that their models are robust and predictive in nature given the assumptions of rationality and utility-maximization. While their assertions may be true (again, given their limited characterization of human nature), a growing body of literature has emerged which criticizes the applicability of principal-agency theory in a number of substantive areas.

Weaknesses of Principal-Agency Theory

The first of these criticisms relates to issues of hidden or unobservable actions (Lynn 1994). Lynn found that a significant problem in principal-agent relationships is

"securing reliable task performance from agents" (1994, 115). Lynn goes on to suggest that agents can engage in behaviors or activities that principals fail to observe. While principals, in their efforts to control agent behavior, seek to minimize these situations, they continue to persist. The result is that principals cannot possibly observe all activities of their agents due to cost restraints (Brehm and Gates 1997), the difficulty associated with monitoring certain activities (Pratt and Zeckhauser 1985), and the general limitations in rewards that principals can offer agents (Arrow 1985).

A second problem with principal-agency relationships according to Lynn is that information asymmetries exist where agents, by the nature of their work, are placed in positions to know more about their work than do their principals (Lynn 1994). These information asymmetries result in potential disruptions to the power structure implicit between principals and agents. Where principals have been viewed as being in control, agents are in the position of having more information available to them and may use it to their advantage (Brehm and Gates 1997).

A consequential third problem is that issues pertaining to trust between principals and agents are frequently problematic. Miller (1990) claimed that principal-agency relationships tend to focus on agent activities that are easy to observe. In establishing an incentive system based on observable actions, agents are left in the potentially precarious position of being held accountable for things that are outside of their control. "When this occurs, the principal and the agent can only contract for outcomes which may be jointly determined by the agent's actions and some external random variable[s]" (Miller 1990, 329).

The result of these types of situations is an agent blaming her performance on factors falling outside of her direct control. The principal, who is placed in a position of not knowing for sure, may not believe the agent and suggest she is shirking her responsibilities. In the end, neither the principal nor agent trust each other leaving both parties in a worse position (Miller 1990).

A fourth problem with principal-agency models is that they present situations where agents are placed in the position where they may manipulate outcomes to benefit themselves (Hammond and Miller 1985). It is important to recognize that the incentive to manipulate outcomes is likely the result of the three previous criticisms (hidden actions, information asymmetries, lack of trust) associated with principal-agent relationships. While principals can attempt to create situations where manipulation is less likely, agents frequently will find themselves in a position where they can inherently improve their situations *vis a vis* their principals. This criticism poses serious questions for the validity associated with contemporary incentive systems.

Stone provided some additional insight into why agents may be willing to manipulate outcomes. While numerical analysis represents the predominant mode of implementing control in principal-agent relationships, Stone has noted that measuring only represents "one of many ways to describe" social phenomena (2002, 163). Stone's perspective of measurement in contemporary policy analysis provides a useful construct from which to view performance management systems in the public sector.

According to Stone, the use of numbers as a measurement device is not as unbiased as many would like to think. Stone argued that numbers are used strategically by individuals or organizations in an effort to promote specific perspectives. As such,

numbers are used symbolically as a storytelling device concerning problems and possible solutions. "Numbers … are measures of human activities, made by human beings, and intended to influence human behavior" (Stone 2002, 177).

Using numbers as a foundation for measuring schemes results in four identifiable outcomes that fundamentally question the objectivity frequently attributed to the use of quantitative methods. First, whenever numbers are used, a conscious decision must be made about what counts and what does not (Stone 2002). Those who make these decisions must construct various classification schemas in deciding where variables fall and how they will ultimately be counted. The result is that boundaries must be created so decisions can be made about what is included and excluded. In other words, "counting always involves deliberate decisions about *counting* as" (Stone 2002, 164).

As a result, the decision of what counts and what does not entails a second problem—ambiguity. While many might make the assumption that the use of numbers results in less ambiguity, Stone contended, "Ambiguity—the range of choices in what to measure or how to classify—always lies just beneath the surface of any counting scheme" (2002, 165).

Stone's suggestion, that numbers may be ambiguous, flies in the face of the intuitive notion that numbers imply precision and accuracy. The result is that numbers and measurements result from a value-laden, heavily subjective, and inherently political process that defines how the numbers are constructed. A careful analysis of the counting process reveals a less than objective perspective on the use of numbers and measurement systems.

A contemporary example of some problems with measuring is that public schools are now required to report progress on student performance under the guidelines of the No Child Left Behind policy initiative. While at first glance this seems fairly easy to accomplish, difficult questions begin to emerge. For example, should the scores of mentally challenged students be included in the school totals? What about the scores of students who speak English as a second language? Decisions on what counts and what does not has a dramatic impact on final scores depending upon how different schools include these groups of students in their respective counting schemes.

Third, by measuring something, one implies a need for action (Stone 2002). Why would something be measured if it did not warrant being monitored in the first place? The simple act of finding a way to measure something suggests it is important enough to be measured. In addition, measurement also implies that a problem (or potential problem) may exist and that a solution is available to remedy the problem. The success of any given solution requires adequate measurement to be able to demonstrate that the solution was an effective antidote to the problem.

Once a measurement has been introduced, it implies that individual or organizational behavior is being monitored. The fourth impact of measurement is that people, both individually and organizationally, respond to being measured (Stone 2002). "Measurement, like a mirror, triggers the natural desire to look good. People want to conform to their own ideals as well as to general social values. Measurement provokes people to 'play the role' and to present themselves as they want to be seen" (Stone 2002, 178). Stone identified this phenomenon of responding to measurement as *reactivity*.

Reactivity is an important component of the measuring process. The entire philosophy of performance management is to improve performance through measuring activities and setting goals to increase individual and organizational achievement. Designers of performance management systems fully expect people to react to being measured and to improve their own performance. "People change their behavior in response to being measured, and the changed behavior leads to results that are actually different from what they would have been without the measure" (Stone 2002, 180).

While people may want to look good when being measured, it is important to consider that self-image is not the sole factor influencing behavior in measurement systems. A fifth result of measurement is the role inducements play in the measurement process. According to Stone, inducements rely heavily on the carrot-stick approach. Inducements can be viewed as either a reward (positive inducements) or as punishment (negative inducements). "Every reward contains an implicit or potential penalty of withdrawal, and every penalty short of death contains an implicit reward of cessation" (Stone 2002, 265).

When an inducement is offered to someone, their reactivity level to the measurement can be greatly influenced beyond that of just simply looking good. "When people are measured … something more than their self image and their desire to please is on the line; their fate is at stake" (Stone 2002, 179-80). Many performance management systems rely on inducements as an enforcement mechanism to alter behavior. As a result, performance measures can be viewed in both positive and negative perspectives. When so much is at stake, Stone has suggested that people "have a strong incentive to manipulate measures" to improve their own position and standing (2002, 180).

If Stone's theory is accurate, a serious dilemma is raised concerning the objectivity of performance measurement systems.

> Understanding reactivity is so important … because, unlike deliberate falsification of numbers, it is an inextricable feature of social measurement. Moreover, reactivity violates the canons of good scientific practice, on which all statistical reasoning is based. Scientific method assumes a strict separation between the observer and the observed. The subject of measurement should never measure himself or herself. To do so would be the essence of subjectivity, and scientific measurement pursues the ideal of objectivity, where neither the subject nor the observer has incentive or opportunity to manipulate the way a measure appears. (Stone 2000, 180)

Stone's framework provides a useful perspective on the impact of measurement and performance management systems. In addition to Stone's critique of the use of numbers, others have noted that performance management can contribute to dysfunctional organizations (Bouckaert 1995), "gaming the system" (Poister 2003), and even organizational cheating (Bohte and Meier 2000).

These issues lie at the heart of understanding the development of the child support incentive program in the United States. Chapter 3 details the history of the program relative to its emphasis of performance management and the development of a comprehensive incentives system for state and local programs.

CHAPTER 3

THE CHILD SUPPORT INCENTIVE PROGRAM

Child support, until the mid 1970s, was largely considered a private matter left to be resolved between parents and the state or local court systems (Sorenson and Hill 2004). As previously mentioned, this "private" child support system was one that hinged upon judges making determinations regarding child and spousal support for both divorced and never-married parents and their children. A primary problem inherent with this private system was its requirement of hiring attorneys in an attempt to obtain court-ordered child support (Garfinkel et al., 1998). This system resulted in a haphazard and inequitable allocation of child support for families throughout the country.

The problem of children not receiving support from parents became more apparent over time. By 1970, one child out of eight was living in a family headed by a single mother (Huang et al. 2004). In a related trend, the amount of public dollars being spent on welfare tripled between the years of 1955 and 1975 (Garfinkel et al., 1998). Policy experts found that single-parent families were severely at risk for living in poverty and depending entirely upon the nation's welfare system for daily sustenance. The early emphasis of the child support program focused on using child support to help offset the costs associated with the nation's public assistance program. The emergence of the nation's "public" child support system culminated in 1975 when Congress narrowly

passed Title IV-D of the Social Security Act which established the nation's first comprehensive child support system (The history of child support and its partners, 2003).

This chapter provides an overview of the nation's child support program and its subsequent development during the past thirty years. While its beginnings were modest, it has emerged as a major policy component in the nation's welfare system. Congress expanded the program in 1984, 1988, and most significantly in 1996 with the passage of the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (PRWORA). Each of these acts added programmatic elements in an effort to make the child support program more effective and efficient (The history of child support and its partners, 2003). Most importantly, for this study, are the culminating changes brought with the passage of the Child Support Performance and Incentive Act of 1998 which established the system's current incentive program. The following pages will provide background on this important legislative initiative.

The Social Security Amendments (1975)

Until the passage of the Social Security Amendments in 1975, the nation's child support program was essentially a private program administered by parents and their interactions with the state's various court systems (Sorenson and Hill 2004). As the number of children residing in single-parent households increased, pressure mounted by women's groups for government to do something about the growing problem of children not being supported by absent parents, usually fathers (Garfinkel et al., 1998). The culmination of this pressure, in addition to the realization that child support could be used to offset some of the costs associated with welfare programs, led to the narrow passage of the Social Security Amendments in 1975 which created the modern child support system.

Specifically, Title IV-D of the Social Security Act required all states to establish an independent organization to oversee child support collections for families receiving Aid for Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) (The history of child support and its partners, 2003). This landmark legislation created the federal Office of Child Support Enforcement (OCSE) to oversee the implementation of the child support program by the states and authorized the federal government to pay three-fourths of the bill associated with start-up costs for the program (Garfinkel et al. 1998; The history of child support and its partners, 2003). The states were given these funds to help "locate absent parents, establish paternity, establish child support orders, and obtain child support payments" (Huang et al. 2004, 109).

While the creation of OCSE and the IV-D program was initially controversial, Congress soon realized that in order for the child support program to move forward, it needed additional powers and authority to become more effective. By 1984 when President Ronald Reagan signed The Child Support Enforcement Amendments, both the House of Representatives and the U.S. Senate unanimously passed the legislation demonstrating a desire for the child support program to become more aggressive than it had been in the past (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 1984).

The Child Support Enforcement Amendments (1984)

The Child Support Amendments made four significant changes to the child support program. First, and foremost, the 1984 legislation expanded the child support program and its services to both AFDC recipients as well as nonwelfare families (The history of the child support program and its partners, 2003). Upon passage of the

amendments, the nation's child support program and its services became available to anyone in need, regardless of their involvement with the welfare system.

The second important emphasis of the 1984 law was the change in the requirement for states to find ways to expedite the establishment of child support and paternity (The history of child support program and its partners, 2003; Garfinkel et al. 1998). In its annual report to Congress, OCSE reported that in 1981, more than 8.1 million women were raising children alone. Of those, only 4 million had established a child support obligation (United States Department of Health and Human Services 1984). Child support experts began to place emphasis on the importance of establishing paternity and child support orders quickly so that financial support could begin as soon as possible for parents and children in need.

Third, the new legislation required states to adopt standardized child support guidelines in an attempt to reduce the inconsistent way in which child support orders were established. These inconsistencies in ordered child support amounts were typically the result of differences in judicial philosophy being applied in different judicial jurisdictions (Huang et al., 2004). For the first time in the program's history, states would be required to develop a standardized methodology in the way its judges determined what a child support obligation would be. This would prove to be an important first step in standardizing the process used for establishing child support orders throughout the country and eliminating biases that had previously existed in the way these support amounts were determined.

The fourth change that the 1984 legislation brought about was a number of new enforcement techniques to be utilized by the states. The most important of these new

enforcement methods was the mandate that states must begin implementing immediate income withholding for all child support delinquencies in excess of thirty days (Sorensen and Hill 2004). Under this new provision, employers were required to withhold child support directly from the noncustodial parent's wages. Second, states were required to establish processes to withhold state tax returns from noncustodial parents who were delinquent in their child support obligations (The history of child support and its partners, 2003). This change provided states with an additional tool to collect monies owed by delinquent noncustodial parents by applying it to past-due child support arrearages owed to either the State or the family. Finally, states were required to adopt "long-arm" provisions to make it easier to collect child support across state lines (Garfinkel et al. 1998).

The changes emerging from the 1984 legislation represented an important step in increasing the necessary tools to effectively collect child support by the nation's IV-D agencies. These changes represented the foundation of the IV-D program. However, future amendments to the nation's child support program would be required to further enhance collection efforts on the part of state agencies and the OCSE.

The Family Support Act (1988)

Four years elapsed before Congress and the president were willing to enhance the child support program again. An important aspect of the 1988 legislation involved the mandate for states to begin developing fully automated computer information systems (The history of child support and its partners 2003). The new legislation built upon standards that were first introduced with the Child Support Amendments in 1984.

One of the most significant changes of the Family Support Act was the mandate for states to implement mandatory income withholding, regardless of whether a delinquency existed, by the year 1994 (Huang et al. 2004). Income withholding, as Sorenson and Hill (2004) noted, has been child support enforcement's most effective collection tool to date. The ability for states to use income withholding has been a critical addition in helping IV-D agencies increase child support collections throughout the nation and has been used increasingly since 1988.

In addition to the income withholding provisions, the Family Support Act also enhanced the 1984 Child Support Amendments by requiring states to adopt provisions making their child support guidelines presumptive (United States Department of Health and Human Services 1989). Under this new requirement, noncustodial parents would need to make significant arguments as to why their child support amounts should deviate from the guideline amount. If a judge allowed a deviated amount to be entered in a court order, the new legislation required the judge to enter specific findings of fact explaining why the deviation was warranted.

With the ascent to power of Newt Gingrich and the "Contract with America" Republicans in 1995 came new and fervent promises to reform the nation's welfare system. Congress and the president would once again look to the child support program as a central player in moving people from welfare to work. The Personal Responsibility and Work Reconciliation Act of 1996 (PRWORA) ended the AFDC program and replaced it with a broad block grant entitled Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF). The child support program also underwent serious enhancements as it played

an important role in providing monetary support for families moving from welfare toward self-sufficiency.

The Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (1996)

President Bill Clinton signed the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (PRWORA) into law on August 22, 1996. While much of the attention related to PRWORA focused on reforming the nation's welfare program, significant changes were also made to the child support system. Under PRWORA, child support enforcement was viewed as an integral component of welfare reform that could provide financial stability for families thus keeping at-risk families from using government assistance.

PRWORA enhanced the child support system in a number of important ways. First, employers were required to report all newly hired employees to IV-D agencies who would maintain the data as part of a State Directory of New Hires (SDNH) and transmit this information to the National Directory of New Hires (NDNH). This data base would be made available to all of the nation's IV-D agencies for the purposes of collecting child support (Sorenson and Hill 2004).

In a related matter, states were also required to pass the Uniform Interstate Family Support Act (UIFSA) which made the enforcement of child support obligations uniform across state boundaries (The history of child support and its partners 2003). UIFSA was viewed as a critical component to solving a persistent problem of enforcing child support orders when the noncustodial parent resided in another state.

Third, PRWORA placed an increased emphasis on establishing paternities for out-of-wedlock children born in hospitals. States were required to change their laws to allow for paternity acknowledgement forms to be filled out and signed by parents while they were in the hospital and then forward the signed documentation to the states' offices of vital records.

Fourth, a number of new enforcement remedies were added to the child support arsenal. These additional tools included provisions to deny passports to individuals who were more than $5,000 delinquent in child support, increased emphasis of income withholding (United States Department of Health and Human Services 1996; The history of child and its partners 2003), and mandated the requirement for states to establish centralized State Disbursement Units (SDUs) from which all child support payments would be sent (United States Department of Health and Human Services 1996).

Finally, PRWORA paved the way for the development of a contemporary incentive program. Like much of the rhetoric surrounding the "reinventing government" movement of the 1990s, PRWORA adopted an outcomes-based approach in many of its programs, including child support. While the full-blown incentive program would not be officially sanctioned until 1998, PRWORA implemented audit criteria which would focus on child support outcomes. These incentives provided an additional revenue stream to support the IV-D program and would reward child support programs for good performance (United States Department of Health and Human Services 1996).

PRWORA fundamentally changed the way in which human service and welfare agencies conducted their business. While debates continue regarding the success of the welfare reform initiative, researchers have found that the nation's child support program

played an important part in reducing the number of individuals receiving TANF benefits under the PRWORA initiatives (Huang et al. 2004; Mead 2005).

The Child Support Performance and Incentive Act (1998)

In an attempt to bolster the contributions of state child support agencies, policymakers in Congress were quick to adopt the Child Support and Performance Incentive Act (CSPIA) of 1998 to offer state child support programs the ability to earn additional funds for good performance. Undoubtedly influenced by the Government Performance and Review Act (GPRA), the newly proposed child support incentive program moved beyond the scope of simple cost-effective measures and boldly embraced the contemporary movement associated with performance management and carrot-stick incentive structures (Cassetty and Hutson 2005).

The CSPIA directly resulted from the PRWORA changes in 1996 which required the Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), in conjunction with state IV-D directors, to develop a new performance-based incentive system (Gardiner et al. 2003). The CSPIA constructed a new child support incentive system for state IV-D agencies which would be based on performance in four key performance areas in addition to the previously used cost-effectiveness measure. In order to ensure that states did not cheat in reporting their progress on these standards, a comprehensive data reliability audit would be conducted of state systems to ensure that the data maintained and entered into state IV-D computer systems was accurate and complete.

In establishing the CSPIA, Congress guaranteed a capped pool of money would be available beginning in federal fiscal year 2000 and continue through 2008. The amount of incentive money each state would receive was granted on the basis of how

each state did on the performance measures and was ultimately calculated on a weighted basis in terms of the total amount collected by the IV-D agency (Gardiner et al. 2003). Each state IV-D agency is required to submit annual reports (the OCSE 157, and the OCSE 396) to the federal office which is used as the basis for granting the states' incentive awards.

As mentioned previously, the CSPIA created five key performance standards that would be used as the basis for rewarding state IV-D agencies. The standards chosen were a reflection of OCSE's strategic plan and emphasized key areas of the child support program. Additionally, the CSPIA adopted a mechanism through which OCSE could impose penalties on child support agencies for failing to meet minimum standards in these areas of performance. The penalties associated with poor performance resulted in a penalty against the states' grant under Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF). The first year generally resulted in a penalty of one percent of the state's TANF grant and continued up to 5 percent unless the state demonstrated improvement in the problem area.

The first performance measure was the Paternity Establishment Percentage (PEP). A fundamental aspect of the child support program revolves around establishing paternity for children who are born to unmarried parents. In developing this standard, OCSE and the nation's IV-D directors agreed to offer each state the opportunity of choosing one of two methods for measuring the PEP score: the IV-D PEP measure or the statewide PEP measure.

A state choosing the IV-D paternity standard (45 CFR 305.2(a)(i)) is measured on the number of paternities that are established *within* cases assigned to the IV-D agency. Under this performance standard, the IV-D agency is only responsible for establishing paternities over which it directly has control. The IV-D PEP measure is determined by the following formula:

$$\frac{\text{The Total Number of Children in the IV-D caseload in the Fiscal Year, or at the option of the State, as of the end of the Fiscal Year, who were Born Out-of-Wedlock with Paternity Established or Acknowledged}}{\text{The Total Number of Children in the IV-D Caseload as of the end of the preceding Fiscal Year who were Born Out-of-Wedlock}}$$

Conversely, if a state chooses to employ the statewide paternity standard (45 CFR 305.2(a)(ii)), the IV-D agency is held responsible for establishing paternities statewide—even for situations where the agency may not have a case. Under this scenario, child support agencies are required to work with birthing facilities in the state to ensure that paternity establishment processes are completed and reported to the states' vital record agencies. The statewide PEP measure is determined by the following formula:

$$\frac{\text{The Total Number of Children Born Out-of-Wedlock and for Whom Paternity has not Been Established or Acknowledged During the Fiscal Year}}{\text{The Total Number of Children Born Out-of-Wedlock During the Preceding Fiscal Year}}$$

The minimum standard that states must maintain, without imposition of a penalty, for both of the PEP standards is a 90 percent score. Gardiner et al. (2003) reported that there appears to be no difference in state performance between the two PEP options; however, they have noted that the IV-D measure seems to be improving more rapidly than is the statewide measure.

The second incentive measure monitors the number of cases within the IV-D program that have an actual child support order in place (45 CFR 305.2(a)(2)). Again,

this standard is directly related to OCSE's strategic plan and is a necessary element if child support is to be paid to custodial parents on behalf of their children. The minimum performance standard is that 40 percent of cases in the IV-D caseload must have a child support order. This standard is determined by the following formula:

$$\frac{\text{The Number of IV-D Cases with Support Orders During the Fiscal Year}}{\text{Total Number of IV-D Cases During the Fiscal Year}}$$

The percentage of current child support paid (45 CFR 305.2(a)(3)) is the third incentive measure created by the CSPIA. This measurement directly concerns itself with the collection of support that is owed on a monthly basis. Again, this measurement is related to the OCSE's strategic plan to provide regular (i.e., monthly) financial support to families. States are expected to maintain a minimum percentage of 40 percent to avoid penalty. This standard is computed by the following formula:

$$\frac{\text{The Number of Dollars Collected for Current Support in IV-D Cases}}{\text{Total Dollars Owed for Current Support in IV-D Cases}}$$

The fourth measurement relates to the number of past-due collections (45 CFR 305.2(a)(4)) brought in by IV-D agencies. This measurement attempts to capture the amount of collections child support programs are successful in collecting that are overdue or late. This measurement is computed by the following formula:

$$\frac{\text{Total Number of IV-D Cases Paying Toward Arrears}}{\text{Total Number of IV-D Cases with Arrears Due}}$$

Finally, the CSPIA continues the tradition of monitoring IV-D agencies' cost effectiveness ratios (45 CFR 305.2(a)(5)). Simply put, this measure provides a return-on-investment approach that attempts to demonstrate the ratio that comes about by looking at the IV-D agency's expenditures and the amount of collections that are made by that IV-D agency. The measurement is determined by the following formula:

$$\frac{\text{Total IV-D Dollars Collected}}{\text{Total IV-D Dollars Expended}}$$

The federal government requires state IV-D agencies to submit to regular data reliability audits. Using information contained on the OCSE 157 report, auditors monitor state systems for completeness and accuracy. In order to conduct these audits, Gardiner et al. (2003) reported that OCSE requires at least 120 cases from each state to conduct their analysis. Once completed, states must pass their data reliability tests at a 95 percent confidence interval to avoid penalty. Should a state be unable to meet the 95 percent threshold, it is considered exempt from participating in the incentive program for the area in which it failed.

In sum, the CSPIA adopted a "carrot and stick" approach to the newly formed child support incentive system. It is important to note that states that perform well on these measures can bring in additional revenues to support their respective programs. The opposite also holds true. States that perform poorly, or that fail to pass the data reliability component, are penalized for their "inadequate" performance. In theory, the child support incentive program provides a mechanism which acts as a constraint upon IV-D agency behavior at the state level and guides state efforts in key areas important to the federal government.

The Deficit Reduction Act of 2005

An additional factor relevant to this analysis pertains to the passage of the Deficit Reduction Act (DRA) of 2005. The legislation, which passed by the narrowest of margins, brought serious budgetary cuts to nearly all of the nation's domestic programs. The child support program was not exempt from these budgetary shortfalls. Specifically, the cuts associated with the child support program focused on the child support incentive plan. While the incentive program was left intact, one critical component was removed. When the CSPIA was initially adopted, it was accepted that states would be able to draw down their incentive award, which counts as program revenue for the state. The state was then authorized to draw down federal match dollars (66 percent), on the amount of incentive that was earned by the state.

The Deficit Reduction Act ended the practice of drawing down the additional 66 percent match on incentive payments beginning October 1, 2007. The cuts were justified by some on the basis that state practices of receiving federal funds from the incentive and then matching those with the IV-D match rate of 66 percent (also federal funds) constituted another example of states engaging in "double dipping."

The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009

Since the passage of the Deficit Reduction Act, concerted efforts within the child support community have tried to get Congress to reinstate the federal match on incentives earned. The recent passage of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA), or commonly referred to as the "stimulus package" temporarily addressed this issue. The ARRA allows, on a temporary basis, states to match their incentive dollars with the federal match. States can match their earned incentive with federal match funds (66

percent) for a two-year timeframe that ends in 2010. After that date, the prohibition of matching funds on incentives will be reinstated.

The economic crises of the past several years have resulted in a direct impact on child support programs within the states. While the full impact of these cuts remain to be seen, there is no doubt that state programs who have worked toward improving their performance in the incentive program are the most likely to be hurt under the new funding limitations imposed by the DRA. The temporary reinstatement of federal matching dollars will help, but the cuts that result from this drop in federal funding pose significant challenges for cash-strapped state programs.

This chapter has provided details pertaining to the development and implementation of an incentive program for the federally mandated child support program. Thus far, the analysis has focused on the factual and theoretical aspects of this program. The question remains as to how effective the incentive program has been in acting as a constraint on child support agencies and how it has affected street-level child support workers and their day-to-day activities. The following chapters will present empirical results that will shed some additional light on these important questions.

CHAPTER 4

RESEARCH DESIGN

The previous chapter provided a detailed history of the development of the child support incentive program in the United States. While states have used this incentive program as a means to increase funding for their respective child support programs, little research has examined the influence this program has on street-level child support workers. This dissertation explores the impact of the child support incentive program for front-line child support workers and to further entertain the conditions under which these workers provide child support services to the public. Principal-agent theory provides the theoretical framework from which this analysis is conducted.

Research Questions

The first research question inquires into the influence the child support incentive program has on child support agencies. Does the incentive program shape individual behavior for street-level child support workers? Do the daily activities child support workers engage in support the key tenets of the incentive system? Do workers consciously complete daily tasks that serve to increase individual and organizational performance in the child support incentive system?

If the incentive system acts as a constraint upon individual activities, the second research question delves into the dark side of performance management. Do child

support workers feel undue pressure to increase performance in the areas covered by the incentive system? Principal-agency theory suggests that agents (in this case front-line staff) may have some inherent interests to engage in manipulation or to "game the system" in an attempt to improve their standing within their organization. In some instances, these activities are justified as they may benefit the organization in comparison with other child support programs from around the country.

In order to answer these questions, child support workers from four different states were surveyed about their daily work activities and their general attitudes about the pressures associated with working in a child support agency. A copy of the survey instrument is found in Appendix B.

Because some of the information obtained from the surveys was somewhat delicate, the four selected states remain anonymous and are referred to as: "State A," "State B," "State C," and "State D." Appendices A-1 through A-4 contain state profile information, including performance data and other important characteristics for each state. A brief summation of each of the states' characteristics and performance under the child support incentive program is conducted in the following pages.

State Programs Participating in the Study

The participating states were selected based upon each state's receipt of federal incentive funds. In order to determine the amount of incentives each state received, an examination of all state programs was conducted using the federal fiscal year 2005 incentive statistics. Each state program was ranked by three factors: 1) incentive dollars per case, 2) incentive dollars per full-time employee (FTE), and 3) incentive dollars as a percent of total collections. Once each of the three rankings was figured, an average

score was computed for each state. After reviewing the list of states, four state programs agreed to allow their employees to participate in the survey. Table 4.1 provides the ranking data used to select the states.

Based on the criteria used, State "A" is considered a "high incentive state," State "B," a "medium-high" incentive state, State "C," a "medium-low" incentive state, and State "D," a "low" incentive state. All four of the state programs are state administered. No county-based programs agreed to participate in this study.

The four states varied in size. For instance, the number of FTEs ranged from 247 to over 1,600 for one of the states. Not surprisingly, there was a wide range in terms of the number of cases each state was assigned (ranging from a low of 45,000 to a high of 377,000) and the amount of dollars collected (ranging from a low of $94 million to a high of $613 million) for FFY 2005.

Each state program participating in this study agreed to allow their employees to participate. The survey was administered between the months of October and December 2007 to over 1,300 child support workers in the four programs. While response rates varied from state to state, the total response was 54.5 percent. The following pages provide a brief description of the four state programs that participated in this study.

Table 4.1 State incentive rankings

State	Incentives by Caseload	Incentive by FTE	Incentive by Collections	Average Rank
A	7	12	11	10.000
B	17	14	4	11.667
C	26	13	21	20.000
D	25	39	22	28.667

State "A"

State A was the smallest of the child support programs that participated in this study. State A had a relatively small number of employees (247) and a modest caseload consisting of about 45,000 cases. Based on the report data, it appeared that the number of FTEs and the number of cases remained relatively constant throughout the years. With that said, total collections for State A dropped in FFY 2006 for the first time since the inception of the child support incentive system in 1999.

The performance measures for State A demonstrated good and improving performance in the five incentive areas. The only potential blemish in State A's performance history pertained to the state's Paternity Establishment Percentage (PEP) score. State A dropped below the 90 percent threshold in 2001 but has shown constant improvement since that time. It appears that the improvement was enough to avoid federal financial penalties to the state.

State A represented the lowest amount of participation in the survey of the states participating in the study. Only 27 members of State A's staff responded to the survey. While it was nearly impossible to determine the response rate to the surveys (repeated efforts were made to contact the state about the number of individuals given the survey, but no response could be obtained), the response rate was estimated to be somewhere around 20 percent.

State "B"

State B was the most unique of the four states participating in this study as it was the only one that had a couple of counties which elected to manage their own child

support program. Those surveyed for this study worked for the state program and not the counties'. Of 185 total child support workers, 100 responded to the survey (resulting in a 54 percent response rate). State B's total number of child support employees (including state and county) has remained constant, albeit with a slight upward trend. The state's reports also demonstrated a consistent drop in the number of cases since FFY 1999.

The state's performance has been consistent as well. Like State A, State B has experienced problems attaining its PEP score. Unlike all of the other states, however, State B used the IV-D measurement instead of the statewide measure. The state's woes in this area began in FFY 2000 when the state earned a PEP score of 61.5 percent, well below the 90 percent threshold. In addition to the poor number, the state failed its data reliability audits in the paternity establishment area. While the state improved its score enough in years 2000-2001 to avoid any further financial penalties, it did not achieve the 90 percent level until 2003. The data show constant improvement in each subsequent year.

In addition to the data reliability failure in the PEP score, State B also failed a data reliability audit for payments toward arrears in 2001. Failing the data reliability review results in the state's inability to participate in incentive funding for that particular area. In sum, it appeared that State B received some penalties toward its incentive, although it is important to recognize that these losses occurred several years ago.

State "C"

In State C, 530 employees received the survey and 369 responded to it. The response rate of 69.7 percent was the highest among the states participating in this study.

State C reported 650 FTEs in FFY 2006, which represents a significant increase over past years. In addition, State C has experienced a significant increase in its caseload since 1999. Likewise, State C has seen increases in its total collections.

In terms of performance, State C has shown constant improvement in its five incentive areas. Like States A and B, State C has also struggled achieving its PEP score. In FFY 2000, State C's PEP score was 81.4 percent. The state improved this number to 86.3 percent the following year, but it dropped again (80.7 percent) in FFY 2002. It is unclear at this time if State C received a financial penalty for this failure to meet the 90 percent performance level. Again, the incentive problems experienced by State C are beginning to fade due to the length of time in which the infractions occurred.

State "D"

State D also reported high response rates for the survey. Four hundred and thirty two potential respondents were given the survey and 263 responded for a response rate of 60.9 percent State D appeared to have experienced some dramatic decreases in the number of FTE's in FFY 2006 (930 down from 1, 041 in FFY 2005). The caseload in State D has experienced a steady downward trend, decreasing from a high of 390,000 cases in FFY 2002 to nearly 368,000 in FFY 2006. While caseloads and staff have dropped, State D has experienced increases in collections culminating in an eight-year high of almost $550 million in FFY 2006.

State D follows a pattern similar to that of the other states in this study. Its performance has steadily increased, but once again, the state has experienced some problems with the PEP score. Initially, State D reported a PEP score of over 91 percent

in 2000. A year later, however, the state reported a score of 86.70 percent followed the next year by a 79.7 score in 2002. The 2002 score should have resulted in a financial penalty to the state. FFYs 2003 and 2004 showed modest increases in State D's PEP score culminating in the state achieving 92.5 percent in FFY 2005. The state has remained above the 90 percent threshold ever since.

In summary, each of the states participating in this dissertation exhibits some very clear similarities. Each has experienced some historic problems in achieving the minimum standards for the PEP score, although these are probably starting to fade in the institutional memory of each of the programs and its staff. In all of the other areas, the states have all maintained or improved upon each of the five incentive measurements.

Along with those similarities, there also appeared to be some dramatic departures between the states. States B and C have both experienced significant staffing increases, while State A has remained steady and State D actually dropped. In addition, State C was the only state to see significant increases in its caseload. All of the other states experienced decreases in the number of cases assigned to the child support program. Finally, States B, C, and D all experienced increases in collections. State A experienced a drop in collections in FFY 2006, which dramatically departs from collections experienced in the other states observed in this study.

Hypotheses

Based upon the construction of the dependency on incentives (see Table 4.1), hypotheses can be constructed to test the underlying research questions posed by this study. The first of these hypotheses dealt directly with the issues of the federal incentive amounts each state receives. It was reasonable to expect that workers from high

incentive states, who theoretically are more dependent upon incentive dollars, would identify tasks pertaining to the achievement of performance goals at higher rates than lower incentive states. Therefore, I hypothesize that:

$$H_1: A>B>C>D$$

where > indicated state workers having more knowledge of the federal child support incentive and its correspondingly acted as a constraint on worker tasks:

A second hypothesis, more central to the overall goal of this research was also constructed regarding the specific issue of organizational cheating by child support workers. I hypothesized that the more dependent a state was on incentive dollars, the more likely incidents of organizational cheating would be. Therefore, it was reasonable to hypothesize:

$$H_2: A>B>C>D$$

where > indicated states having more incidents of organizational cheating.

Survey Construction

In order to gather the data necessary for this study, permission was obtained from each selected state's IV-D director to interview front-line staff regarding their knowledge of the federal incentive system. Specific questions were tailored to measure the extent that day-to-day work was constrained by the federal incentive program. The survey, found in Appendix B, explored child support workers' opinions related to the pressures they may or may not feel to improve performance in the areas identified in the incentive

program. The survey was administered to all child support workers in each state program that agreed to participate in the study.

The introduction of the survey explained that the purpose of the study was to "research the attitudes, beliefs, and practices" of child support workers from around the country. In addition, the introduction explained that workers' responses would remain anonymous, and they were free not to participate in the study. It also explained that their response to the survey served as their consent to participate in the study. The introductory statement emphasized that workers' responses were important to improving the nation's child support program and would bolster survey response rates.

The questionnaire was delivered to recipients using an online survey source. This method of data gathering posed a number of distinct advantages over traditional (paper-based) survey administration. First, the online survey provided a simple way to deliver the survey to a relatively large number of potential survey respondents. More importantly, all of the child support workers who participated in the survey had access to the Internet to accomplish their job duties. As a result, delivering the survey through online means made sense since all of the potential survey respondents had the means to participate, if they wished, and none were excluded because they were unable to access the survey instrument. Finally, the online survey was a reasonably inexpensive method to administer the survey to a large and geographically diverse number of individuals.

The online survey was designed to allow respondents to skip questions and each question provided respondents the opportunity to respond with a "don't know/choose not to answer" type of response. If a respondent chose not to respond to a question, they

were allowed to continue with the survey and to complete as many or as few of the questions as they wished.

The survey began by asking respondents some generally simple questions (Questions 1-4) regarding their work history and experience within the child support program. These questions were asked early in the survey to assure the respondents that the questions discussed pertained to their jobs and were relatively simple to answer.

The next series of questions (Questions 5-9) inquired into the level of knowledge front-line employees have about the child support incentive system. The responses to these questions allowed for further analysis of worker compliance within the overall incentive structure and acted as an independent variable concerning the second research question.

Incidents of organizational cheating, because of their nature, are not readily observable. With that said, one of the primary purposes of this study was to gauge the degree of organizational cheating that occurs within child support agencies. The measures established for organizational cheating in this study (Questions 13-15) acted as the dependent variable for the purposes of analysis. These questions, by design, attempted to measure the degree of organizational cheating from a couple of different perspectives.

For example, Question #13 attempted to measure the degree to which organizations developed specific strategies to improve performance in key areas. Respondents were asked to indicate their opinion to the following question: “My organization spends a lot of time developing strategies to increase performance in key areas.” This question was quite subtle, but it attempted to identify how workers viewed

organizational attempts to improve performance. It is important to note that the responses to this question did not directly ask about the issue of cheating. Rather, it was an attempt to measure the level of organizational influence from a worker's perspective.

Question #14 was more pointed. It asked respondents to identify if "It is possible to take actions in my caseload that will artificially inflate my individual performance levels." Again, this question, by design, did not imply worker culpability. Rather, it simply inquired into the possibilities of cheating within their workplace.

Question #15 asked respondents to answer: "I am aware of others in my organization who take actions to artificially inflate their individual performance levels." Again, I did not ask respondents whether they specifically engaged in such activities, but the question attempted to focus workers on what was actually going on in terms of cheating within the organization while not specifically implicating themselves.

Finally, Question #16 bluntly asked workers if "In the past year, I have felt pressure from someone in my agency to manipulate my caseload to improve performance." Again, workers did not indicate if they succumbed to these supervisory demands, only if they felt this type of pressure from their managers.

The responses to these four questions provided the foundation for this research. They are important elements in determining the degree of organizational cheating that may, or may not, exist within the child support agencies participating in this study.

A primary goal of this study was to find a remedy to offset the likelihood of organizational cheating. In order to accomplish this goal, survey questions were designed to measure a number of additional variables that may help identify factors that led to increases in organizational cheating.

Bohte and Meier (2000) identified a number of variables that potentially acted as motivation for organizations to engage in organizational cheating. One of these variables was poor organizational performance. Poor performance may provide justification for some to engage in questionable activities to improve performance. Poor performance may be determined by an agency's inability to meet minimum performance standards or in a decline of performance over time. The performance data gathered from each of the states determined if performance problems existed in the past, and if these performance woes acted as a precursor for propensities to engage in cheating.

Additionally, Bohte and Meier suggested the likelihood of organizational cheating increased when task demands at the individual, team, and organizational levels were overwhelming. Peterson et al. (1995) developed a validated scale that measured a number of role-related items. These scales were used in the survey instrument for this research. The first of these scales measured the worker's sense of work overload and stress (Questions 21-25 of the survey). In theory, if workers felt extreme pressure because of overwhelming workloads, they might be more likely to engage in questionable behaviors to overstate their individual performance. The survey posed several questions about the degree to which workers felt capable of accomplishing the necessary daily tasks that would result in successful job performance.

In a similar vein, if task demands were such that workers felt pressure to manipulate outcomes, a common strategy was to engage in "creaming" or selecting easy cases to work (Blau 1955; Wilson 1989). Working cases that are more likely to result in payments may be a strategic device workers employ in order to meet the demands managers and the organization place on them to perform. Working "easier" cases in lieu

of the more difficult ones was a mild form of cheating but was one that may be relatively common among caseworkers. Survey questions (Questions 11-13) inquire about the emphasis workers place on finding effective strategies to improve performance.

The survey also asked child support workers if they felt others monitored their work product within their respective organizations. The survey instrument adopted a validated scale developed by Oldham and Cummings (1996) which measured worker's perceptions of organizational supervision. This scale was created by combining questions 17, 34, 35, 36, and 37 in the survey. These questions asked a battery of questions focused on the individual worker (or agent) in relation to their supervisors (or principals). As principal-agency theory suggests, it is imperative for principals to implement processes to monitor the behavior of agents. As demonstrated in Chapter 3, where monitoring is considered to be inadequate, principal-agent theory suggests that agents will pursue their own self-interests. While all forms of cheating are probably viewed in negative terms by organizations, the degree to which performance is monitored likely varies between and among child support agencies. Workers may be more willing to engage in forms of cheating if they felt that monitoring was done haphazardly. Therefore, the survey attempted to assess employee attitudes concerning how closely their work product was monitored.

A number of additional independent variables were measured by the survey. First, the instrument measured the degree of employee job satisfaction (Questions 38-39), by using a scale developed by Cammann et al. (1983). Notions of role ambiguity (Questions 25-29) and role conflict (Questions 30-32) were investigated by using scaled questions developed by Peterson et al. (1995). Each of these variables was important,

because they provided insights into the clarity child support workers had in regard to their job. The concept of role conflict was one that could be potentially important as the possibility of receiving competing task demands might have impeded individual decision-making for child support workers.

Finally, the survey explored how well employees understood how their employer measures performance. Williams and Levy (1992) developed a series of questions that measured employee understanding of performance appraisal systems (Questions 41-44). The survey concluded by asking some additional general demographic questions (Questions 45-50). Survey respondents were also given an opportunity at the end of the questionnaire to answer an open-ended question that asked, "Is there anything else you would like to share regarding your work performance and experience?"

The survey tool described in this chapter was the basis for the analysis that follows. The questions were designed for specific purposes that would allow further exploration of the research questions which lie at the heart of this study. The following chapters focus on the degree to which child support workers understand the incentive system structure, and whether they were willing to engage in "cheating" behaviors to enhance their individual and organizational performance.

CHAPTER 5

MEASURING THE KNOWLEDGE OF THE CHILD SUPPORT INCENTIVE PROGRAM BY FRONT-LINE WORKERS

This research investigates the impact that incentive systems have on incidents of organizational cheating in the substantive area of child support enforcement. In order to gather relevant data, I interviewed child support professionals from four state level programs using a battery of questions pertaining to their workplace. Some of the questions posed to workers related to their individual knowledge of the child support incentive system. This chapter seeks to arrive at a conclusion concerning the individual knowledge and understanding of the child support incentive system by front-line child support workers.

State child support programs can earn additional funding for performing well in five specific categories (see Chapter 3 for more detail). It is reasonable to hypothesize that state workers coming from "high" incentive states may have more knowledge of the incentive program than those working in "low" incentive states. This hypothesis is:

$$H_1: A>B>C>D$$

A couple of different methods could be used to arrive at an answer to the question of how knowledgeable staff is about the incentive plan. The simplest way was to ask

them about it. With that said, it may not have been reasonable for front-line staff to know specifically whether an incentive program existed. Given that line of reasoning, the survey instrument measured specific job-related tasks that correlated with four of the five incentive measures.

In order to establish front-line worker knowledge of the incentive program, child support workers were asked three specific questions pertaining to their organization's involvement in an incentive program. The first question asked respondents whether their organization received additional funding for "outstanding organizational performance." The overwhelming response from all workers, as presented in Table 5.1, was "I don't know."

The responses to this question demonstrated an overall low level of worker knowledge that their programs could earn additional funding for performance. While responses from State A (the high incentive state) suggested that a third of respondents felt their program could earn additional funding, two-thirds said either their state did not earn additional funds, or they did not know if additional funds could be earned. Conversely, State D (the low incentive state) had the second highest correct response (21.07%) to the question.

Given the responses to this question, it appeared there is quite a bit of uncertainty among respondent state workers about their organization's ability to earn incentive dollars. Over half of all respondents indicated that they did not know if additional funds were available and almost 28 percent incorrectly stated that their program could not earn incentive dollars for performance.

A second question asked survey respondents about the possibility of penalties for

Table 5.1. Responses of state's ability to receive incentive funding

State	Yes	No	Don't Know	Total
A	9 33.33%	5 18.52%	13 48.15%	27 100%
B	10 10.99%	45 49.45%	36 39.56%	91 100%
C	69 19.60%	93 26.42%	190 53.98%	352 100%
D	51 21.07%	56 23.14%	135 55.79%	242 100%
Total	139 19.52%	199 27.95%	374 52.53%	712 100%

poor performance. The question inquired about the possibility of penalties in the event their organization failed "to perform in certain areas." When couched within these "negative terms," the overwhelming response from respondents was that their agency could be penalized. The survey results for this question are presented in Table 5.2.

Over three-fourths of all of those surveyed (75.89%) indicated that it was possible for their organization to be penalized for poor performance. Only 2 percent said that their organizations were not susceptible to financial penalties, while a significant portion (21.84%) said that they did not know if their organization was subject to penalties. This pattern holds true when the data are examined at the state level. The only minor exception to these findings was in the response-set from State B participants. Fewer respondents indicated that their state could be penalized (66.30%), while more said their state could not be penalized (6.52%). In addition, a higher proportion of State B respondents indicated that they did not know if their agency could be penalized (27.17%) than in the other participating states.

Substantively, more respondents in all states recognized that their agencies could be punished financially for poor performance than knowing that their agency could earn additional incentive funding for meeting, or exceeding goals. The responses suggested that the majority of respondents from all states seemed confident that negative incentives

Table 5.2. Responses for possibility of penalties for poor performance.

State	Yes	No	Don't Know	Total
A	21 77.78%	0 0.00%	6 22.22%	27 100%
B	61 66.30%	6 6.52%	25 27.17%	92 100%
C	265 76.59%	7 2.02%	74 21.39%	346 100%
D	188 78.33%	3 1.25%	49 20.42%	240 100%
Total	535 75.89%	16 2.27%	154 21.84%	705 100%

could result for poor performance, but were unaware of the reality that IV-D child support programs were capable of earning extra monies for good performance.

A third question asked respondents if their state had ever experienced financial penalties for poor performance. As Chapter 3 detailed, the IV-D child support program provides several mechanisms through which states can be penalized for not meeting performance standards in the five incentive areas. Once again, the data demonstrated that most respondents did not know if their state has ever been penalized. The results for this question are displayed in Table 5.3.

The responses to this question suggested a lot of ambiguity existed among workers concerning their understanding of the possibility of penalties being levied against state child support programs. Three-fourths of the respondents indicated that they did not know if their program received any financial penalties. These results were remarkably consistent among the respondents from each state.

In order to assess the accuracy of this question, the responses need to be compared to any instances where the participating state may have experienced actual financial penalties for failing to meet incentive standards. While "official" data could not be obtained from the federal Office of Child Support Enforcement regarding this matter, the data presented in the Appendices regarding each state's performance levels suggested

Table 5.3. Responses of whether organizations have been penalized.

State	Yes	No	Don't Know	Total
A	2 7.41%	5 18.52%	20 74.07%	27 100%
B	13 14.13%	12 13.04%	67 72.83%	92 100%
C	56 16.09%	27 7.76%	265 76.15%	348 100%
D	18 7.47%	44 18.26%	179 74.27%	241 100%
Total	89 12.57%	88 12.43%	531 75.00%	708 100%

that in only one case, State D, was there ever a likelihood of financial penalties being levied against the state. Once again, the survey results indicated a general finding of low worker knowledge about the incentive system.

One possibility for this low-level understanding of the incentive system by workers may have been that workers did not identify with an "incentive system" but would identify work tasks that directly pertain to that system. As a result, a series of questions in the survey asked respondents to rank eleven task-oriented items, five of which were the actual incentive items, on a scale of one to ten, with one representing a low priority for the agency and ten being high. The purpose of these questions was to measure the degree of importance front-line workers assigned to incentive and nonincentive tasks. The results of the analysis suggested that front-line workers hardly distinguished between incentive and nonincentive tasks. This finding provides further evidence that front-line workers do not understand the federal incentive system. These data are found in Table 5.4.

In order to determine the overall understanding of front-line workers of the performance incentive items, an additive scale was created to compare the knowledge of incentive and nonincentive work tasks. These scales were created by adding the sum of all worker responses to the five incentive and six nonincentive tasks. The range for

Table 5.4. Responses comparing incentive and nonincentive tasks.

Incentive Items				Nonincentive Items			
Paternity Establishment				IV-A Collections			
State	Mean	Median	Standard Deviation	State	Mean	Median	Standard Deviation
A	10.11	11	2.19	A	10.56	11	1.121
B	9.88	11	2.524	B	8.75	10	3.156
C	8.85	11	3.332	C	8.53	10	3.392
D	9.99	11	2.2	D	8.86	10	2.971
Order Establishment				Customer Responsiveness			
State	Mean	Median	Standard Deviation	State	Mean	Median	Standard Deviation
A	9.93	11	2.218	A	10.2	11	1.581
B	10.05	11	2.279	B	9.82	11	1.986
C	8.97	11	3.266	C	9.68	11	2.157
D	10.19	11	1.862	D	10.03	11	1.859
Current Support				Cost Controls			
State	Mean	Median	Standard Deviation	State	Mean	Median	Standard Deviation
A	10.37	11	1.944	A	7.24	9	3.876
B	10.23	11	1.955	B	6.49	8	4.166
C	9.68	11	2.368	C	6.87	8	4.032
D	10.07	11	1.866	D	7.55	9	3.614
Past Due Collections				Caseload Size			
State	Mean	Median	Standard Deviation	State	Mean	Median	Standard Deviation
A	10.15	11	2.013	A	6.64	7	3.451
B	9.62	11	2.340	B	5.7	5	3.652
C	9.05	10	2.610	C	5.6	5	3.631
D	9.55	10	2.211	D	6.35	6	3.653
Cost Effectiveness				Total Collections			
State	Mean	Median	Standard Deviation	State	Mean	Median	Standard Deviation
A	7.15	8	3.613	A	10.44	11	2.022
B	6.43	7.5	4.000	B	10.16	11	2.089
C	6.57	7	3.825	C	9.33	11	2.777
D	7.78	9	3.536	D	9.91	11	2.145
				Federal Timeframes			
				State	Mean	Median	Standard Deviation
				A	10.44	11	0.961
				B	9.62	11	2.557
				C	9.19	11	2.868
				D	9	10	3.122

incentive items was 5-55 and nonincentive items ranged from 6-66. Once the additive value was constructed, a standardized score was figured by dividing the incentive scale score by 5 (the number of incentive tasks) and the nonincentive scale by 6 (the number of nonincentive tasks). The results of this computation are presented in Table 5.5.

At first glance, the construction of these scale items demonstrated a slight difference in the way front-line workers ranked incentive and nonincentive work tasks in importance. The results clarified that most workers slightly identified incentive tasks as being more important than the nonincentive tasks. These findings tended to support the general finding that most workers demonstrated little knowledge of the incentive system. It is also important to note that there was also very little difference between how the high incentive and low incentive state workers ranked these items.

In looking at the individual items that made up the scale, it became apparent that caseworkers did not feel it was important for their organizations to keep caseload size to a manageable level. This was the lowest of all of the ranked items and was not surprising given some of the comments survey respondents attached to their surveys. In an effort to create a more balanced measure, a second incentive scale was created to remove the caseload question from the analysis. These results, shown in Table 5.6, demonstrated an

Table 5.5. Standardized measures for incentive and nonincentive tasks.

Incentive Items (Range 1-11)				Nonincentive Items (Range 1-11)			
State	Mean	Median	Standard Deviation	State	Mean	Median	Standard Deviation
A	9.541	10	1.678	A	9.253	9.667	1.503
B	9.236	9.7	2.030	B	8.424	8.667	1.993
C	8.619	9.1	2.337	C	8.199	8.500	2.076
D	9.516	10.2	1.831	D	8.617	9.000	2.004

Table 5.6. Measures for incentive and nonincentive tasks (excludes caseload size variable).

Incentive Items (Range 5-55)				Adapted Non Incentive Scale (Range: 5-55)			
State	Mean	Median	Standard Deviation	State	Mean	Median	Standard Deviation
A	47.7037	50	8.389	A	48.88	51	6.49564
B	46.1778	48.5	1.015	B	44.8409	46	1.01
C	43.0936	45.5	1.169	C	43.5917	45	1.05
D	47.5809	51	9.153	D	45.3872	48	9.451

almost indecipherable difference between the incentive and nonincentive task scales. In other words, child support workers from all four state programs generally identified nearly all of the tasks as being "highly" important for their organizations.

In sum, the results from this analysis do not support the hypothesis that workers from high incentive states would rank incentive tasks higher than nonincentive tasks. As the data show, workers, regardless of their state performance on incentives, ranked both categories nearly equally. Couple this finding with the results from the questions that inquired into the ability for state programs to earn additional funding for high performance; it was readily apparent that most child support workers do not have a general, let alone a detailed, understanding of the child support incentive program.

This finding was surprising given how state programs that perform at high levels have become dependent upon these additional incentive dollars to bolster their programs. Principal-agency theory suggests it is rational for organizations to emphasize key performance areas, particularly where good performance in those areas can result in positive (in this case financial) outcomes for the organization. In the four participating states, survey respondents did not rank incentive tasks in the way principal-agency theory would suggest. While organizations might rely heavily upon these dollars, it does not

appear that the states surveyed for this project communicated those needs to the street-level worker.

CHAPTER 6

ASSSESSING ORGANIZATIONAL CHEATING

One of the key purposes of this study was to identify whether incidents of organizational cheating were higher among states drawing more incentive dollars. The underlying theory suggests that state programs which draw more performance-based incentive dollars might be more inclined to engage in cheating-types of activities in order to facilitate the continued increase of incentive dollars to their programs. According to principal-agency theory, agents might be willing, in some situations, to bend the rules in order to maximize their own profitability.

In order to assess this important question, survey respondents were asked a battery of questions pertaining to their behaviors concerning cheating. Careful attention was paid to construct questions in a way that would answer the question without posing any risk to the survey participants. The survey questionnaire and research methods were consistent with the policies of the University of Utah's Institutional Review Board (IRB) and received IRB approval prior to gathering any data.

Before addressing the questions related to cheating, it was important to assess other activities that were perceived to be related to the issue of organizational cheating. First, survey respondents were asked how they felt their own individual performance impacted overall organizational performance. It seemed reasonable to expect higher

levels of self-reported incidents of individual contributions in high incentive states compared with low incentive states. This expectation was not met in this study. Table 6.1 demonstrates that the vast majority of survey respondents (regardless of their state's level of incentive dollars) felt that their performance had an impact on their organization's performance. Ninety percent of respondent's either "strongly agreed" or "agreed" that their individual performance mattered in terms of organizational performance. There appeared to be wide consensus among respondents that individuals play an important part of organizational performance.

A second series of questions inquired into the role strategy played in improving performance. In terms of organizational cheating, it seemed reasonable to expect that state programs that spent more time strategizing might find themselves with higher instances of organizational cheating. Two questions were asked about the degree to which workers strategize to improve performance with co-workers and supervisors. An additional question asked survey respondents to rate whether their organization spent a lot of time trying to develop strategies to improve performance. Using these questions as a foundation, an additive scale was constructed to measure the total amount of strategizing going on within the organizations. Again, I hypothesized that high incentive states would strategize at higher levels than low incentive states.

Table 6.1. Responses for impact of personal performance on organizational performance.

State	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Total
A	13 48.15%	13 48.15%	1 3.70%	0 0.00%	0 0.00%	27
B	46 50.55%	38 41.76%	6 6.59%	1 1.10%	0 0.00%	91
C	116 33.72%	179 52.03%	29 8.43%	12 3.49%	8 2.33%	344
D	103 44.02%	120 51.28%	9 3.85%	1 0.43%	1 0.43%	234
Total	278 39.94%	350 50.29%	45 6.47%	14 2.01%	9 1.29%	696

Overall, survey respondents indicated moderate levels of strategizing with co-workers, but higher levels with their supervisors. These findings were consistent at the state level as well. As Tables 6.2 and 6.3 indicate, workers said they either strongly agreed or agreed that they spent time strategizing about performance with their co-workers. In total, nearly two-thirds (66 percent) of respondents indicated they spent time talking about performance strategies with their co-workers. While there was some degree of variance between the states (State B being the highest at 86 percent and State C the lowest at 58 percent), the vast majority of responses suggested moderately high levels of co-worker strategizing.

The responses rose significantly, however, when respondents reported about strategizing with their supervisor. Table 6.3 depicts an overall response rate of 75 percent who either strongly agreed or agreed they spent time with their supervisors strategizing about their individual performance. This finding is not surprising as a supervisor's primary function focuses on the productivity of staff.

Based on the underlying research hypothesis, I expected to see higher incentive states engaging in more strategizing between supervisors and staff. The data presented in Table 6.3 demonstrated consistent results between states concerning supervisor

Table 6.2. Responses for strategizing with co-workers to improve performance.

State	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Total
A	7 25.93%	10 37.04%	6 22.22%	4 14.81%	0 0.00%	27
B	28 31.11%	49 54.44%	9 10.00%	3 3.33%	1 1.11%	90
C	48 14.04%	152 44.44%	90 26.32%	43 12.57%	9 2.63%	342
D	60 25.32%	107 45.15%	54 22.78%	12 5.06%	4 1.69%	237
Total	143 20.55%	318 45.69%	159 22.84%	62 8.91%	14 2.01%	696

Table 6.3. Responses for strategizing with supervisors to improve performance

State	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Total
A	3 11.54%	16 61.54%	5 19.23%	1 3.85%	1 3.85%	26
B	26 29.21%	47 52.81%	10 11.24%	4 4.49%	2 2.25%	89
C	68 19.77%	173 50.29%	59 17.15%	34 9.88%	10 2.91%	344
D	71 30.08%	116 49.15%	36 15.25%	10 4.24%	3 1.27%	236
Total	168 24.17%	352 50.65%	110 15.83%	49 7.05%	16 2.30%	695

strategizing. The difference between the highest reported scores for supervisor strategizing ranged from 82 percent (State B) and 70 percent (State C). While the data demonstrated that supervisors may spend a significant amount of time with staff strategizing, the results did not suggest that managers from higher incentive state spent more time with their staff in comparison with lower incentive states. State A, the highest incentive state, reported a 73 percent score while State D, the lowest incentive state, reported 75 percent of respondents either agreeing or strongly agreeing they spent time with their supervisors in strategy sessions. It appeared, based upon the responses, that child support supervisors from all of the participating states spent a significant amount of time developing strategies to improve performance with front-line workers.

In contrast, a significant drop in respondents' answers was found regarding the degree to which their organizations attempted to develop strategies for improving performance. Again, it seemed reasonable to expect that higher incentive states would report higher levels of organizational strategizing than lower incentive states. Table 6.4 presents these data.

Interestingly, State D, the lowest incentive state, reported the highest response rate for organizational strategizing with 68 percent stating they either strongly agreed or agreed that their organization spent a significant amount of time trying to find ways to

Table 6.4. Responses for organizational strategizing to improve performance.

State	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Total
A	2 8.00%	8 32.00%	8 32.00%	4 16.00%	3 12.00%	25
B	13 15.12%	39 45.35%	18 20.93%	6 6.98%	10 11.63%	86
C	31 9.37%	138 41.69%	79 23.87%	50 15.11%	33 9.97%	331
D	57 25.45%	95 42.41%	48 21.43%	14 6.25%	10 4.46%	224
Total	103 15.47%	280 42.04%	153 22.97%	74 11.11%	56 8.41%	666

improve performance. Conversely, the lowest reported incidents of organizational strategizing was State A (40 percent), the highest incentive state. States B and C were somewhere in between ranking 60 percent and 51 percent, respectively.

It consistently appeared that among the survey responses, most respondents strategized with their supervisors at higher levels than with co-workers. In addition, the majority of respondents ranked their respective organizations consistently at lower levels for developing strategies to improve performance. While the researcher expected to see differences between co-workers, supervisor, and organizations, it was somewhat surprising to find the low regard most workers reported for their organization's efforts at finding ways to improve performance.

More importantly, this finding suggests a problem with a primary assumption of this research concerning the notion that high performing organizations spent more time strategizing to improve their funding through the child support incentive system. With that said, the data do not provide specific evidence contrary to the assumption regarding the way in which organizations may influence performance. These results may suggest that lower performing organizations (such as State D in this study) may be spending more time strategizing on ways to improve performance in order to obtain a larger piece of the available incentive pie that may result from increased performance.

These findings, while in no way definitive, do pose some interesting questions regarding the way workers perceived the role their organizations played concerning developing and implementing strategies to improve performance. The results of these data suggest that the majority feel their supervisors are important players in strategizing in comparison to co-workers and especially their organizations.

A second series of questions posed to survey respondents concerned the issue of cheating. The issue of cheating was operationalized through the development of three core "cheating" questions. First, respondents were asked if it was possible to artificially inflate performance within their caseloads. Second, participants responded to whether they were aware of others in their organizations who took actions to artificially inflate their performance levels. Finally, respondents were asked if they felt pressure during the past year from someone in their organization to manipulate their individual performance. For each of these variables, it seemed appropriate to expect to find higher reported incidents of cheating in high incentive states.

Concerning the first cheating variable, a plurality (36 percent) of all respondents either disagreed or strongly disagreed with the assertion that individuals could artificially inflate their performance. The findings are presented in Table 6.5. Nearly 30 percent of all respondents agreed or strongly agreed that performance levels could be inflated, while 19 percent indicated they neither agreed nor disagreed with the claim. Sixteen percent indicated that they did not know if performance could be inflated.

In terms of the participating states, State B (47 percent) reported the highest agreement levels. The other three states reported similar agreement scores with State C being the highest (30 percent), followed by State A (26 percent) and State D (22 percent).

Table 6.5. Responses for possibility of cheating (Inflating performance)

	Strongly Agree/Agree		Neither		Strongly Disagree/Disagree		Don't Know		Total
State A	7	25.93%	8	29.63%	11	40.74%	1	3.70%	27
State B	42	46.67%	15	16.67%	20	22.22%	13	14.44%	90
State C	102	29.65%	66	19.19%	134	38.95%	42	12.21%	344
State D	53	22.46%	42	17.80%	87	36.86%	54	22.88%	236
Total	204	29.27%	131	18.79%	252	36.15%	110	15.78%	697

The state with the highest responses disagreeing with the claim that performance can be inflated was State A (41 percent). States C and D reported 39 percent and 37 percent disagreement rates, respectively, followed by State B with 22 percent.

My hypothesis suggesting that higher incentive states would report higher levels of possible cheating appears not to hold true. With the exception of State B, a medium-high incentive state, States A, C, and D all reported similar scores to each other. Of particular note was the number who indicated they did not know if cheating was possible. There appeared to be a relationship between low incentive states reporting higher degrees of "don't know" responses in comparison to higher incentive states.

The second cheating variable asked if survey respondents knew of others within their organizations who artificially inflated their performance levels. Table 6.6 presents these findings. A plurality of responses (35 percent) either strongly agreed or agreed that they knew of someone engaging in cheating behavior. Nearly a quarter of all respondents answered, "don't know" to the question, while 21 percent either disagreed or strongly disagreed with the question. Twenty percent were ambivalent toward the question.

With the exception of State A (22 percent), the research hypothesis suggesting

Table 6.6. Responses for knowledge of others cheating (Inflating performance)

	Strongly Agree/Agree		Neither		Strongly Disagree/Disagree		Don't Know		Total
State A	6	22.22%	7	25.93%	8	29.63%	6	22.22%	27
State B	42	46.67%	14	15.56%	9	10.00%	25	27.78%	90
State C	132	38.04%	78	22.48%	64	18.44%	73	21.04%	347
State D	62	26.16%	41	17.30%	69	29.11%	65	27.43%	237
Total	242	34.52%	140	19.97%	150	21.40%	169	24.11%	701

that higher incentive states reported more incidents of cheating seemed to be consistent with the results from the survey. State B (47 percent) reported the highest "agreement" score, followed by State C (38 percent), and State D (26 percent). State A reported the lowest agreement scores with 22 percent. The "Don't Know" responses were relatively equal between the responding states.

The contrast between the results of the second and third cheating questions was very interesting. While question two essentially asked respondents to report on behaviors from others in the organization, the third cheating question attempted to get at the respondents' ideas of whether they themselves engaged in this behavior. While the question did not directly ask workers if they participated in these types of behaviors, it asked respondents to indicate whether they felt pressure from someone in their organization to inflate their performance. The results are presented in Table 6.7. The overwhelming response from all states was "no."

Eighty-five percent of respondents said that they did not feel any pressure to take actions to artificially increase performance levels. These ratings held relatively consistent between the states. The highest percentage of "no" responses came from State

Table 6.7. Responses for workers feeling pressure to cheat (Inflate performance).

	Yes		No		Don't Know		Total
State A	2	7.41%	22	81.48%	3	11.11%	27
State B	15	16.48%	72	79.12%	4	4.40%	91
State C	38	10.95%	289	83.29%	20	5.76%	347
State D	14	5.93%	213	90.25%	9	3.81%	236
Total	69	9.84%	596	85.02%	36	5.14%	701

D (90 percent), followed by State C (83 percent), State A (81 percent), and State B (79 percent).

In conclusion, the vast majority of survey respondents from all four states generally acknowledged that their individual performance had an impact on their organization's overall performance. This finding suggests child support workers from the four participating states recognize that their individual contributions matter in terms of how well their overall organizational performance. In contrast, however, the same workers generally do not feel that their organizations play a large part in providing guidance in terms of providing strategies for them to improve their performance. Instead, workers reported they strategize with co-workers and supervisors at relatively high levels. This finding suggests that front-line workers may experience a disconnect in the way they view their organizational world in terms of their immediate supervisor and colleagues. By doing this, they appear to be somewhat oblivious to the nature of their organization as a whole that may have come about because of specialization and compartmentalization within the agency. This finding challenges an underlying assumption of this work that organizations matter when it comes to influencing individual performance.

In terms of measuring cheating, the pluralities of responses suggested that cheating may exist, to some degree, in all organizations. While respondents suggested: 1) it was possible to inflate performance levels, and 2) they knew of others who participated in these types of behavior, the overwhelming majority indicated that they, themselves, have not felt pressure to inflate performance. These findings support the possibility that cheating does occur within child support agencies. The following chapter explores these findings in more detail.

CHAPTER 7

PART ONE: INFLUENCING VARIABLES ON CHEATING-ANALYSIS FOR ALL SURVEY RESPONDENTS

The previous chapter provided an overview of the broad issues pertaining to organizational cheating. The findings of that chapter suggested that the vast majority of child support professionals participating in this study did not feel that cheating was occurring within their organizations. With that said, it is important to recognize that a minority of respondents reported that some degree of cheating did occur.

This chapter focuses on whether several key variables effect organizational cheating. This chapter begins this process by analyzing the data from all survey respondents in order to examine how cheating is related to variables identified as important in previous research. Chapter 8, a companion to this chapter, continues the analysis with a comparison of the differences and similarities from a state-level perspective.

Method

From previous studies, I identified eight specific variables related, in some degree, with incidents of cheating. These eight variables include: 1) poor organizational performance, 2) overwhelming task demands and stress, 3) strategizing and finding ways

to increase performance, 4) supervision and monitoring of employee behavior, 5) job satisfaction, 6) role ambiguity, 7) role conflict, and 8) the understanding of the agency's performance appraisal system by staff. Seven of these eight variables served as independent variables for this study (poor organizational performance was discussed in Chapter 6). The survey instrument used to gather the data for this study measured these variables in an attempt to see how survey respondents' answers related to their self-reported incidents of cheating.

As Chapter 4 detailed, survey questions were constructed in a way to measure respondent's opinions about these issues. Once the data were gathered, scales were created using multiple questions as the basis to create a single variable for each of the seven independent variables. While the number of questions for each variable differed (ranging from a low of two questions for the variable "job satisfaction" and a high of five for the variables "job stress" and "role ambiguity"), the basic method for constructing the surveys remained the same. Additive scales were created using the responses to the questions. Missing answers and "don't know" responses were removed from the analysis as they provided no substantive value to the questions being asked.

The majority of survey questions consisted of either five or seven-point Likert-type responses. For ease in analysis, responses to each of the questions pertaining to the seven independent variables were collapsed into three categories; "strongly agree/agree," "neither disagree or agree," and "strongly disagree/disagree." For example, the question related to job satisfaction asked survey participants to respond to the question: "All in all, I am satisfied with my job." At this point, respondents could select from seven responses ranging from "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree." In order to

accommodate the analysis of the data, responses indicating "strongly agree" and "agree" were collapsed into one response set, mid-range responses were collapsed, and "strongly disagree" and "disagree" responses were combined. This process was repeated for each of the survey questions related to the seven aforementioned independent variables.

Once this task was completed, scale items for each of the seven variables were constructed. Scales were created by simply adding the scores from the questions used as the basis for the scaled item. Using the job satisfaction scale as an example, the collapsed survey responses for two questions were used to create this scale item. This resulted in a scale that had a response range of 2-6 (this was later recoded for a range of 1-5). Once the scale was created, the scale was again collapsed into three categories: "strongly agree/agree," "neither agree or disagree," or "strongly disagree/disagree." This was done to increase the number of responses in each of the categories in order to meet some of the demands associated with the chi-square analysis which would be completed The detail for each scale, including the questions used for the creation of the scales, is found in Appendix F.

In terms of the dependent variable (cheating), two questions were used to measure the amount and types of cheating that might occur within the surveyed child support agencies. The two "cheating" questions inquired into two different aspects associated with cheating. The first explored the possibility of one's ability to manipulate performance levels. The second asked whether the respondent was aware of others in the organization who artificially inflated performance. Due to ethical constraints, the survey was unable to ask respondents if they themselves participated in these questionable activities. Table 7.1 provides the wording of these questions.

Table 7.1. Survey questions pertaining to cheating

13. It is possible to take actions in my caseload that will inflate my individual performance levels.
14. I am aware of others in my organization who take actions to inflate their individual performance levels.

Findings

In looking at the results for all of the survey respondents, bivariate analysis was used to compare the seven independent variables against the two definitional constructs associated with cheating. Tables 7.2 and 7.3 present the findings of this analysis for the dependent variables for the possibility of cheating and awareness of others cheating.

When the dependent variable of cheating was operationalized as "possibility of cheating," the bivariate analysis suggested statistical significance for the variables of role conflict ($\chi^2 = 18.672$) and job stress ($\chi^2 = 9.907$) (see Table 7.2). These findings allowed rejection of the null hypothesis which suggested that no relationship existed between the variables. The summary measures are presented in Table 7.2 for each of the seven variables. Similarly, Table 7.3 presents the bivariate results which demonstrated statistically significant relationships for the variables for role conflict ($\chi^{2 =} 22.758$) and job satisfaction ($\chi^2 = 14.760$) when the dependent variable was operationalized as "awareness of others cheating." The following sections present the findings for each of the two dependent variables for cheating separately.

Table 7.2. Summary of association of independent variables on the possibility of cheating

Independent Variables	N	Chi-Square	Probability	Tau-b
Role Conflict	541	18.672	0.001	0.02
Job Stress	527	9.907	0.042	0.02
Job Satisfaction	571	6.441	0.169	n/a
Supervision	560	8.16	0.086	n/a
Role Ambiguity	552	2.342	0.673	n/a
Strategizing	560	4.151	0.386	n/a
Knowledge of Performance Appraisal	520	2.046	0.360	n/a

Dependent Variable #1: Possibility of Cheating

As mentioned previously, two of the seven independent variables were statistically significant for the dependent variable measuring the possibility of cheating. The tau-b measure of association for both variables of role conflict and job stress was .02, which indicated a moderately weak relationship between the variables. It is important to recognize that the plurality of responses indicated respondents either strongly disagreed or disagreed with the possibility of cheating occurring within their respective organizations. With that said, a small number of respondents disagreed with the claim that cheating does not occur.

This analysis explores the interrelations of the statistically significant variables with the operationalized definitions used for cheating. While the relationships were not particularly strong, they do provide additional detail into how these variables associate with the notion of cheating.

Table 7.3. Summary of association of independent variables on others cheating

Independent Variables	N	Chi-Square	Probability	Tau-B
Role Conflict	555	22.758	0.00	0.000
Job Satisfaction	600	14.760	.005	0.001
Role Ambiguity	580	2.731	0.604	n/a
Supervision	582	5.363	0.252	n/a
Job Stress	548	7.822	0.098	n/a
Strategizing	577	6.047	0.196	n/a
Knowledge of Performance Appraisal	531	2.258	0.323	n/a

Role Conflict and the Possibility of Cheating

The independent variable measure for role conflict was created from responses to three questions (see Table 7.4) designed to measure the level of conflict respondents experienced in completing their job duties. According to principal agent theory, role conflict should be minimized in order for agents to perform their duties more efficiently and effectively. The underlying hypothesis here suggests that as role conflict increases among child support professionals, so would reports of cheating. The measure for role conflict was collapsed into three specific categories which are defined here as low role conflict, medium role conflict, and high role conflict. Bivariate analysis was conducted which examined the relationship between these two variables and are presented in Table 7.5.

Respondents who reported low levels of role conflict also tended to report low levels of cheating. This particular finding falls in line with the underlying hypothesis, which suggests that as one's level of role conflict decreases so does corresponding

Table 7.4. Survey questions pertaining to role conflict

31. I often get involved in situations in which there are conflicting requirements.
32. I receive incompatible requests from two or more people.
33. I have to do things that should be done differently under different conditions.

notions of cheating. Likewise, the analysis found that those indicating medium levels of role conflict reported relatively similar levels of cheating (36.2, 29.6, and 34.2 percent, respectively).

However, the distribution of responses for those reporting high levels of role conflict was bimodal in nature. Forty-two percent of respondents reporting high levels of role conflict reported low levels of cheating while 41 percent reported high levels of cheating. Only 17 percent of high role conflict respondents reported medium levels of cheating.

Principal-agent theory suggests feelings of role conflict among agents results in situations where instructions from principals may not be as clear as they should otherwise be. This idea falls in line with the prospect that if role conflict is minimized for agents (by principals), the agents' understanding of tasks are more clearly defined. As tasks are more clearly defined, and roles in accomplishing these tasks are better understood, the need or desire for cheating would decrease.

The data, however, do not support this expectation. The analysis finds that the theoretical expectations seem to hold true for those reporting low levels of role conflict. It does not hold true, however, for those reporting medium and high levels of role conflict. Among moderate and high role conflict respondents, the responses indicate participants were almost as likely to report low levels of cheating as they were high

Table 7.5. Effect of role conflict on possibility of cheating for all states

	Role Conflict							
Possibility of Cheating	Low		Medium		High		Total	
Low	65	54.6%	88	36.2%	75	41.9%	228	42.1%
Medium	23	19.3%	72	29.6%	31	17.3%	126	23.3%
High	31	26.1%	83	34.2%	73	40.8%	187	34.6%
Total	119	100%	243	100%	179	100%	541	100%

$\chi^2 = 18.672$ tau b = .02
p = .001

levels. This finding is significant in that the data presented split results among the distribution of responses for high and medium role conflict respondents and their corresponding views of cheating.

Job Stress and the Possibility of Cheating

In addition to role conflict, job stress was also found to be statistically significant when compared with the variable for the possibility of cheating. Job stress was constructed based on five questions in the survey (see Table 7.6). The method explained earlier in this chapter was used to create the scaled item for job stress. As in the previous analysis involving role conflict, bivariate analysis was used to compare the scaled measurement for job stress (independent variable) with the dependent variable for possibility of cheating. Like the analysis for role conflict, similar distributions emerged for each of the categories for job stress, particularly with those indicating high levels of job stress. The data are presented in Table 7.7.

Table 7.6. Survey questions pertaining to job stress scale

21. There is a need to reduce some parts of my job.
22. I feel overburdened in my job.
23. I have been given too much responsibility.
24. My workload is too heavy.

Those reporting low levels of job stress also tended to report low levels of cheating. For those indicating more moderate levels of job stress, they also tended to report low levels of cheating, although the percentage reporting high levels of cheating slightly increased. Among those indicating high levels of stress, however, a divergence in responses between low and high levels of cheating begins to emerge. Among those reporting high levels of job stress, 39 percent said there was a low possibility of cheating within their respective organizations. In contrast, nearly 43 percent reported high likelihoods of cheating. Similar to the measurement for role conflict, a polarization of responses existed among those indicating high job stress. Only 18 percent of moderate job stress respondents reported medium levels of cheating.

Based upon principal-agent theory, one would reasonably expect that as levels of stress increases, the likelihood of cheating would also increase. While a plurality of responses of high stress respondents (43 percent) reported higher levels of cheating, the relatively close percentage of high stress respondents for high and low levels of cheating appears to be inconsistent with what should be expected under the theory.

In conclusion, the results of the analysis show remarkably similar results in the distribution of responses for the scales measuring role conflict and job stress for those at

Table 7.7. Effect of job stress on possibility of cheating- All states

Possibility of Cheating	Job Stress: Low		Medium		High		Total	
Low	51	52.6%	121	40.7%	52	39.1%	224	42.5%
Medium	18	18.6%	77	25.9%	24	18.0%	119	22.6%
High	28	28.9%	99	33.3%	57	42.9%	184	34.9%
Total	97	100%	297	100%	133	100%	527	100%

$\chi^2 = 9.907$ p = .042
tau b = .02

the higher level of both scales. The polarized responses in the distribution are surprising in that one would reasonably expect like-minded individuals in the independent variable categories to feel similarly about the substantive issue of cheating. The next section conducts a similar analysis, only this time the definitional construct of cheating is changed to focus on respondents' awareness of others cheating.

Dependent Variable #2: Awareness of Others Cheating

For the purposes of this dissertation, cheating has been defined in two ways. This section focuses on the issue of cheating by looking at how survey respondents perceive others within their organizations in terms of cheating. This shift in perspective for the dependent variable of cheating provides a second way in which the issue of cheating can be observed. The question used to measure this aspect of cheating (Question 15 in the survey) was specific in that it asked respondents if they were aware of others who took actions to inflate their performance levels. While the overall plurality of responses (48 percent) from all survey participants indicated they either strongly disagreed or disagreed

that they were aware of others cheating, 35 percent either strongly agreed or agreed with the question.

Bivariate analysis was used to determine if any of the seven previously identified independent variables were related to this second variable for cheating. In this analysis, the variables for role conflict and job satisfaction were found to be associated with the "others" cheating variable. These findings are presented in Table 7.3.

Role Conflict and Awareness of Others Cheating

Role conflict resurfaces as a statistically significant variable for this second cheating variable as it did for the first definitional variable. As mentioned earlier, the variable for role conflict emerged from three questions in the survey (see Table 7.3) pertaining to aspects of conflicting situations experienced by survey respondents. It is important to note once again that the plurality of responses (nearly 50 percent) reported low levels of others cheating. However, over one-third of respondents suggested they either strongly agreed or agreed that they were aware of others engaging in activities to inflate individual performance. Table 7.8 presents these results.

Table 7.8. Effect of role conflict on awareness of others cheating- All states

Others Cheating	Role Conflict: Low		Medium		High		Total	
Low	44	33.1%	135	52.1%	95	58.3%	274	49.4%
Medium	29	21.8%	34	13.1%	27	16.6%	90	16.2%
High	60	45.1%	90	34.7%	41	25.2%	191	34.4%
Total	133	100%	259	100%	163	100%	555	100%

$\chi^2 = 22.758$ p = .000
tau b = .000

The data suggest that when role conflict is low, there are indications of slightly higher reports of respondent awareness of others cheating. However, those responding to medium levels of role conflict generally indicated low awareness of others cheating. Of those reporting high levels of role conflict, 58 percent say they either strongly disagree or disagree with the notion that they are aware of others cheating. Conversely, only 25 percent of high role conflict respondents said they either strongly agreed or agreed with the assertion that they were aware of others inflating performance in their organizations.

Unlike the findings for role conflict and the possibility of cheating variable already discussed, the data show an enhanced differentiation between high role conflict respondents and their respective views on cheating. In the first cheating variable, for instance, the difference in opinion was split almost evenly between the respondents. For this particular variable, a majority of high role conflict respondents indicate they do not think others in their organization engage in artificially inflating performance levels.

Even more surprising is the distribution of responses for those reporting low levels of role conflict. For this definitional construct of cheating, low role conflict respondents were more likely to report that they are aware of others who cheat in comparison to the possibility of cheating definition used previously. These findings are intriguing in that there is an indication of real differences in opinion on the issue of cheating depending on the way it is constructed.

These findings are inconsistent with the underlying hypothesis suggesting that higher role conflict would result in increased reporting of others. Instead, it appears that the majority of high role conflict respondents do not think their colleagues engage in inflating performance, while low role conflict respondents tend to think that they do.

Job Satisfaction and Awareness of Others Cheating

The variable for job satisfaction was found to be statistically significant in relation to the respondents awareness of others cheating. Table 7.9 presents the survey questions used to construct the job satisfaction scale. For those reporting low levels of job satisfaction, the majority of responses indicate they are not aware of others cheating. A similar conclusion is arrived at for those indicating medium levels of job satisfaction. However, for those indicating high levels of job satisfaction, the responses are extremely mixed. Table 7.10 demonstrates the results of the analysis.

Interestingly, over half (56 percent) of respondents who reported low job satisfaction indicated that they were not aware of others cheating in their organizations. This finding is somewhat inconsistent with what was expected under the guise of principal agency theory. However, nearly a third (31 percent) of low job satisfaction respondents either strongly agreed or agreed that cheating occurred. A similar distribution of responses occurred for those reporting moderate levels of job satisfaction. While this findings may not be consistent with the theory, the responses for suspicion of others cheating is representative of the overall results from the survey regarding cheating in general. With that said, the real surprise in the data came from those reporting high levels of job satisfaction, which was over half of all the respondents for the survey. For

Table 7.9. Survey questions pertaining to job satisfaction scale

39. All in all, I am satisfied with my job.
40. In general, I like working for this agency.

Table 7.10. Effect of job satisfaction on awareness of others cheating- All states

Others Cheating	Job Satisfaction Low		Medium		High		Total	
Low	51	56.0%	69	58.5%	170	43.5%	290	48.3%
Medium	12	13.2%	22	18.6%	64	16.4%	98	16.3%
High	28	30.8%	27	22.9%	157	40.2%	212	35.3%
Total	91	100%	118	100%	391	100%	600	100%

$\chi^2 = 14.760$ p = .005
tau b = .001

those high job satisfaction respondents, the data demonstrated a dramatic division concerning the issue of cheating.

Forty-four percent of high job satisfaction respondents either strongly disagreed or disagreed with the assertion that others cheated. On the other hand, 40 percent reported others were artificially inflating their performance levels. Once again, the data suggest findings of a split nature regarding how high job satisfaction respondents view the substantive issue of cheating. Analysis of other variables from the survey did not result in a reason to explain the divergent results for high job satisfaction respondents.

The overwhelming majority of survey respondents suggested that cheating, regardless of how it was defined, did not occur within their organizations. Yet , the data demonstrated some very interesting dichotomies in terms of respondents views on role conflict, job stress, and job satisfaction in comparison with their opinions on cheating. While the data do not appear to provide any specific insights into why these discrepancies existed, the mere fact they emerged provides fodder for further discussion of how these

variables interrelate with cheating. The following chapter, which is a companion piece to the discussion that has taken place here, explores whether the trends identified in this chapter continue when the analysis uses state level data.

CHAPTER 8

PART TWO: INFLUENCING VARIABLES ON CHEATING— ANALYSIS OF STATE LEVEL RESPONDENTS

This chapter extends the analysis begun in Chapter 7. While the previous chapter examined the aggregate data from all survey respondents, this section focuses on the state-level responses from the four state level child support agencies that participated in this study. In terms of organization for this chapter, each state program is presented separately. The expectations of the analysis suggested differences would emerge on issues of cheating between the four state programs based upon the level each state earned in incentive dollars. This expectation did not prove to hold true as Tables 8.1 and 8.2 depict. These tables portray a scenario where different independent variables were

Table 8.1- Summary table of significant variables for the possibility of cheating

Independent Variables	State A	State B	State C	State D	All States
Role Ambiguity					
Role Conflict			X		X
Job Satisfaction	X				
Supervision			X		
Job Stress					X
Strategizing		X			
Knowledge of Performance Appraisal					

Table 8.2. Summary table of significant variables for awareness of others cheating

Independent Variables	State A	State B	State C	State D	All States
Role Ambiguity				X	
Role Conflict			X		X
Job Satisfaction		X	X		X
Supervision					
Job Stress					
Strategizing					
Knowledge of Performance Appraisal				X	

statistically significant in different states depending upon the way in which cheating was operationalized. The discussion of the findings for each state follows.

Findings for Cheating- State A

State A was identified as a "high incentive" state (see Chapter 4 for a detailed explanation of how the participating states' incentive status was determined). While State A represented earning high incentives, the participation rate for the survey was the lowest among all the participating states. Because of the low number of participants, the chi-square analysis used to determine the significance of the independent variables upon cheating should be met with some degree of caution. While any conclusions based upon the data for State A are questionable, the analysis provided some insight into how job satisfaction and strategizing were associated with the respondent's perspective of the possibility of cheating within their organizations. (None of the variables for the analysis of others cheating was found to be statistically significant for State A).

State A- Job Satisfaction and Possibility of Cheating

The analysis of the responses for State A (shown in Table 8.3) suggested that job satisfaction was statistically significant when compared against the scale measuring the possibility of cheating within State A's child support program. The tau-b measure of .546 suggested a moderately strong relationship between the two variables, although these findings need to be tempered because of the small number of participants.

Because of the small number of participants, the findings here were only applicable in discussing the unique case of State A, and should not be applied to the other state programs. Most of the respondents from State A had a high rate of job satisfaction (nearly 62 percent) and almost 81 percent of respondents reported either high or medium levels of job satisfaction. In terms of deciding whether cheating was possible, the findings suggested the plurality of all respondents (42 percent) reported low levels of cheating.

Among high job satisfaction respondents, however, the results were slightly different in that half reported medium levels of cheating. When adding in the low respondents, 81 percent of high job satisfaction respondents reported medium to low

Table 8.3. Effect of job satisfaction on possibility of cheating- State A

	Job Satisfaction							
Possibility of Cheating	Low		Medium		High		Total	
Low	4	80.0%	2	40.0%	5	31.3%	11	42.3%
Medium	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	8	50.0%	8	30.8%
High	1	20.0%	3	60.0%	3	18.8%	7	26.9%
Total	5	100%	5	100%	16	100%	26	100%

$\chi^2 = 9.666$ p = .046
tau b = .546

levels of cheating. This finding suggests that increased job satisfaction responses among State A employees resulted in medium to low levels of reporting on the possibility of cheating. These findings are not out of line with what would reasonably be expected under the guise of the theory being tested here.

State A was the only one to report any statistically significant findings for the variable of job satisfaction when cheating was defined as "possibility of cheating" [Of note, however, is that job satisfaction was found to be significant for two states when cheating was defined as "others cheating." These findings are presented later in this chapter]. Strategizing was also found to be significant when cheating was constructed as being possible in the agency. These findings are presented in the next section.

State A- Strategizing and Possibility of Cheating

Strategizing among employees and organizations was one of the variables of utmost interest in terms of the variables hypothesized to have a link with cheating. The idea was that the more employees engaged in strategy-making initiatives to improve performance, the likelihood of cheating would subsequently increase. In addition, another hypothesis in this study suggested that high incentive states, such as State A, would report higher levels of strategizing than lower performing states. After analyzing the data, it appears that with the sole exception of State A, none of the other participating states showed any links with strategizing and reported incidents of cheating, regardless of how cheating was defined.

The tabular analysis (depicted in Table 8.4) for strategizing and cheating demonstrated that the majority of respondents from State A reported medium levels of strategizing within their child support program. Over half of the respondents (52 percent) indicated medium levels of cheating. Another 44 percent reported high levels of strategizing. These findings suggest the overwhelming number of respondents from State A self-reported medium to high levels of strategizing to improve performance. This finding is consistent with the underlying hypothesis that strategizing would be greater among higher performing states, like State A.

In terms of cheating, however, the findings indicated that medium and high strategizing respondents tended to report medium to low levels of cheating (when cheating was defined as the possibility of cheating). While that trend is consistent, there is an interesting finding in the data suggesting polarized responses in regard to cheating, particularly among those in the medium strategizing response set. While 50 percent of respondents reported low levels of cheating, nearly 42 percent indicated a high likelihood of the possibility of cheating. In contrast, bifurcated results did not appear among the high strategizing response set, with the overwhelming majority of responses suggesting

Table 8.4- Effect of strategizing and possibility of cheating- State A

	Strategizing			
Possibility of Cheating	Low	Medium	High	Total
Low	0 0.0%	6 50.0%	3 30.0%	9 39.1%
Medium	0 0.0%	1 8.3%	6 60.0%	7 30.4%
High	1 100%	5 41.7%	1 10.0%	7 30.4%
Total	1 100%	12 100%	10 100%	23 100%

$\chi^2 = 9.529$ p = .049
tau b = .508

lower levels of cheating.

In conclusion, the findings from the State A dataset need to be tempered because of the small number of responses to the survey. While the number of respondents was low, the results found that two variables (job satisfaction and strategizing) were statistically significant depending upon the way cheating was characterized. The findings regarding job satisfaction indicated that most were satisfied with their jobs, but suggested moderate levels of the possibility of cheating. In terms of strategizing, respondents from State A also reported medium to high levels of strategizing to improve performance. When compared against the variable for the possibility of cheating, the findings suggested low to moderate levels of cheating being reported.

While these findings are unique to State A, they do provide some insight into a high performing child support agency. While the small number of respondents casts a shadow over the ability to apply these findings to other states, the findings support some of the tenants of principal-agent theory.

Findings for Cheating—State B

The number of responses for States B, C, and D, were large enough that the response rate was not a concern as it was for State A. In the case of State B, a medium-high level incentive state, only one variable (job satisfaction) was statistically significant when compared against the awareness of others cheating dependent variable. The chi-square value for job satisfaction and awareness of others cheating was .040 with a tau-b significance value of .016, suggesting a relatively weak relationship between the variables. The tabular results for this relationship are shown in Table 8.5.

Table 8.5- Effect of job satisfaction and awareness of others cheating- State B

Possibility of Cheating	Strategizing Low		Medium		High		Total	
Low	8	66.7%	10	90.9%	21	42.9%	39	54.2%
Medium	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	5	10.2%	5	6.9%
High	4	33.3%	1	9.1%	23	46.9%	28	38.9%
Total	12	100%	11	100%	49	100%	72	100%

$\chi^2 = 10.015$ p = .04
tau b = .016

State B-- Awareness of Others Cheating and Job Satisfaction

The majority of respondents from State B indicated high levels of job satisfaction. Sixty-eight percent of respondents reported high job satisfaction levels in response to the questions in the survey. In terms of reporting being aware of others cheating, the majority of respondents (54 percent) supported the notion that there was a low likelihood of others cheating. However, nearly 39 percent suggested high levels of others cheating in their organization. Only 7 percent reported medium levels of cheating.

Low and medium job satisfaction respondents reported low levels of others cheating. However, when the results from the high job satisfaction respondents were examined, another divided result set emerged (see Table 8.5). The plurality of responses (47 percent) from the high job satisfaction category reported high levels of awareness of others cheating. Conversely, 43 percent reported low levels of cheating. Only 10 percent indicated moderate levels of cheating in the same category. Once again, the reasons for these widely different results are not immediately clear. The underlying hypothesis of this study suggesting that a state's incentive level being a good predictor of cheating did

not hold true, and now the data present divergent results from high job satisfaction workers within the same state regarding cheating.

While the reasons behind these differing perspectives on cheating remain unclear, the fact remains that there is a wide split between workers on this substantive issue. This represents a noteworthy pattern in the response set that seems to reappear throughout the results from other state workers participating in this study. While the reason for this divergent results set is unclear, its existence seems to be of some importance.

It is also important to recognize the relevance the variable for job satisfaction presents for this study. Job satisfaction emerged as a statistically significant variable in two of the states (States B and C) and was an important factor in the overall analysis of all of the respondents discussed in Chapter 7. As reported previously, the overwhelming number of staff from all states reported high levels of job satisfaction, regardless of the state in which they worked. State B respondents were no different in this regard. However, the distinct split in responses from high job satisfaction respondents regarding their views on others cheating remains an intriguing mystery that is unfortunately not resolved here.

Findings for State C

The analysis for State C respondents was striking given the similarities in data patterns in comparison to some of the findings previously presented. State C exemplified a medium-low incentive state among the state programs participating in this study. Of more interest, however, was the consistency in responses, particularly with the variable for role conflict that was found regardless of the way cheating was defined. Role conflict was a statistically significant variable for both definitional constructs for cheating. This

section focuses on the results first for the dependent variable regarding the possibility of cheating and is followed by a discussion focusing on the awareness of others cheating variable.

State C—Role Conflict and the Possibility of Cheating

Respondents from State C exhibited moderate to high levels of role conflict. The plurality of respondents, 48 percent, identified themselves as experiencing moderate levels of role conflict. In addition, nearly one-third (32 percent) of State C respondents suggested they experienced high levels of role conflict. Only 20 percent said they experienced low levels of role conflict. These findings indicated that the majority of survey respondents from State C either reported moderate or high levels of role conflict while accomplishing their daily duties.

Keeping those findings in mind, the majority of respondents reported a low likelihood of others cheating. Nearly 44 percent of State C workers reported low levels concerning the possibility of cheating within their organizations in contrast to 34 percent who suggested high levels of cheating. Only 23 percent suggested moderate levels of cheating. These findings are presented in Table 8.6.

Of particular interest was the response rate concerning cheating for those who self-reported moderate levels of role conflict. The distribution of responses was nearly equal across all three levels of cheating. This contrasts dramatically with low role conflict respondents who overwhelming reported lower levels of cheating while higher role conflict participants were split between low levels of cheating (44 percent), and higher cheating levels (42 percent).

Table 8.6. Effect of role conflict on possibility of cheating- State C

Possibility of Cheating	Role Conflict: Low		Medium		High		Total	
Low	38	66.7%	44	33.1%	39	44.3%	121	43.5%
Medium	7	12.3%	45	33.8%	12	13.6%	64	23.0%
High	12	21.1%	44	33.1%	37	42.0%	93	33.5%
Total	57	100%	133	100%	88	100%	278	100%

$\chi^2 = 27.94$ p = .000
tau b = .017

These findings are intriguing given there appears to be a significant difference in opinion in the way respondents viewed the possibility of cheating in comparison to the degree of conflict they felt in doing their jobs. Those who self-reported low levels of conflict also tended to report lower scores regarding the possibility of cheating. As role conflict increased, these views shifted dramatically. While the reasons explaining these differences in the distributional responses were not readily apparent, the findings suggested for State C respondents that role conflict issues had an impact on the way they viewed the possibility of cheating within their organizations. Interestingly, the variable for role conflict was also found to be statistically significant for State C respondents when cheating was defined in terms of being aware of others cheating. These data are presented later in this chapter.

State C—Supervision and the Possibility of Cheating

The variable for supervision has been, at least theoretically, an important one for this study, particularly in light of the importance the concept poses for principal-agent theory. It is reasonable to expect, given the constructs of principal-agent theory, that more intense levels of supervision result in lower levels of cheating. The data gathered

for State C respondents appeared to support this theoretical construct. State C respondents who self-reported lower levels of supervision reported significantly higher rates of cheating than those who reported higher levels of supervision.

Most of the respondents from State C reported moderate to high levels of supervision. Nearly 47 percent of respondents reported moderate supervision levels, while 40 percent reported high supervision and monitoring of behavior. Only 13 percent of responses indicated experience with low levels of supervision. These findings suggest moderate to high levels of supervision as being the norm within State C's child support program. These findings are presented in Table 8.7.

As mentioned previously, the data suggested significant differences in the way State C respondents perceived issues of supervision and how it interacted with their views of cheating within their organizations. Table 8.7 portrays those reporting low levels of supervision also reported high levels of cheating. Fifty-three percent of low supervision respondents indicated high levels of cheating. Conversely, 32 percent of low supervision respondents reported low levels of cheating. When examining the medium and high supervision respondents, significant differences in opinion regarding

Table 8.7. Effect of supervision on possibility of cheating- State C

Possibility of Cheating	Supervision: Low		Medium		High		Total	
Low	12	31.6%	62	45.6%	53	45.3%	127	43.6%
Medium	6	15.8%	23	16.9%	34	29.1%	63	21.6%
High	20	52.6%	51	37.5%	30	25.6%	101	34.7%
Total	38	100%	136	100%	117	100%	291	100%

$\chi^2 = 13.033$ p = .011
tau b = .031

cheating began to emerge. For example, 46 percent of medium supervision respondents reported low levels of cheating, while 38 percent indicated high levels of cheating. High supervision respondents overwhelmingly reported low levels of cheating. Nearly 46 percent reported low levels of cheating, while 26 percent reported high levels of cheating among high supervision respondents.

In sum, the findings regarding the relationship between supervision and the possibility of cheating appears to be of some significance. This finding is important in that for State C respondents, the theoretical expectation that more supervision resulted in fewer reports of cheating seemed to hold true in the majority of cases. Similarly, role conflict also emerged as a statistically significant variable for State C respondents when cheating was defined as being possible within the IV-D agency. Low role conflict respondents reported lower levels of cheating in comparison to their medium and high role conflict colleagues. Of particular note was the way in which high role conflict respondents were split in their responses regarding the possibility of cheating. While the data do not provide an explanation for this phenomenon, the variable for role conflict emerged as one of significance across the states participating in this study. The following pages provide some additional detail regarding the way in which the relationship between role conflict and being aware of others cheating emerges for State C respondents.

State C—Role Conflict and the Awareness of Others Cheating

The scale for role conflict was statistically significant when compared against the construct measuring the respondent's awareness of others cheating. The chi-square value for this relationship was 20.284, which is significant at the .001 level. However the tau-b measure (.000) suggests an extremely weak relationship between the variables. The role

conflict construct was interesting because it emerged as one of significance for State C respondents using both constructs for cheating. Table 8.8 presents the bivariate table for the relationship between these two variables.

As discussed in the previous section, the majority of State C respondents reported medium to high levels of role conflict. The data suggested that low role conflict respondents were likely to report high levels of others cheating (45 percent). Of more interest, however, was the response among medium and high role conflict respondents. Sixty percent of medium role conflict participants and 67 percent of high role conflict respondents reported low levels of others cheating.

These findings were particularly interesting when compared to the same analysis for role conflict using the first definition of cheating. In the first analysis, medium and high role conflict respondents were much more likely to report high levels of the possibility of cheating than they were for actually being aware of others cheating. This finding is intriguing given it demonstrates the differences that develops depending on the way cheating is defined.

It is also important to recognize how this finding aligns with the theoretical

Table 8.8. Effect of role conflict on awareness of others cheating- State C

	Role Conflict							
Awareness of Cheating	Low		Medium		High		Total	
Low	19	32.8%	80	59.7%	51	67.1%	150	56.0%
Medium	13	22.4%	14	10.4%	12	15.8%	39	14.6%
High	26	44.8%	40	29.9%	13	17.1%	79	29.5%
Total	58	100%	134	100%	76	100%	268	100%

$\chi^2 = 20.284$ p = .000
tau b = .000

expectations one expects when looking at cheating through the lens of principal-agent theory. The theory suggests that as role conflict is minimized, agents will have a better understanding of their role and will be more likely to accomplish the tasks given by the principal. In this case, that assertion does not appear to be the case. Instead, State C respondents reported relatively high levels of role conflict. Given the theoretical underpinnings described previously, it would be reasonable to expect higher levels of cheating. This expectation simply does not hold true for reports for the variable for awareness of others cheating among State C respondents.

While the variable for role conflict was statistically significant for both dependent variables for cheating, the data suggest divergent results. This finding is noteworthy primarily for the realization that much of this analysis is highly dependent upon the way in which cheating is defined. The results clearly demonstrated very different outcomes that were dependent upon the way cheating was actually constructed.

State C- Job Satisfaction and Awareness of Others Cheating

The variable for job satisfaction was also found to be statistically significant ($p<.05$) when compared against the others cheating variable for State C. The tau-b measure of .003 suggests a weak relationship between the two variables. Table 8.9 presents these findings in tabular form. As the table suggests, the vast majority of respondents from State C reported high levels of job satisfaction. Nearly 57 percent of respondents reported job satisfaction at high levels. In contrast, only 18 percent indicated low job satisfaction rates.

Table 8.9. Effect of job satisfaction on awareness of others cheating- State C

Awareness of Cheating	Job Satisfaction Low		Medium		High		Total	
Low	33	63.5%	45	66.2%	49	30.8%	127	45.5%
Medium	7	13.5%	10	14.7%	84	52.8%	101	36.2%
High	12	23.1%	13	19.1%	26	16.4%	51	18.3%
Total	52	100%	68	100%	159	100%	279	100%

$\chi^2 = 9.825$ p = .043
tau b = .003

Concerning cheating, the plurality of the total responses indicated low levels of others cheating (46 percent). Of particular interest was the response from low and medium job satisfaction respondents on cheating. Sixty-four percent of low job satisfaction respondents reported low levels of cheating. Similarly, 66 percent of those demonstrating moderate job satisfaction rates also reported low levels of cheating. The majority of high job satisfaction respondents, however, tended to report moderate levels of cheating (53 percent) with another 31 percent indicating low levels of cheating.

Job satisfaction was one of those variables that did not fit easily into the theoretical construct of principal-agent theory. The hypothetical expectation was that as job satisfaction levels decreased, reports of cheating would increase. This particular conclusion was not supported by the data. In fact, the opposite seemed to hold true for low and medium level job satisfaction respondents. Curiously, another unexpected change among those reporting high levels of job satisfaction came to life from the analysis. Again, it seemed somewhat logical to expect that people experiencing high levels of job satisfaction would report lower levels of cheating. While this expectation held true to some degree, the fact that a majority of high job satisfaction respondents

reported moderate cheating levels is surprising given the theoretical expectations previously discussed.

In conclusion, the analysis of responses from State C child support workers demonstrated a number of statistically significant variables regarding cheating. Of more importance, however, was the finding that the significance of these variables was highly dependent upon the way in which the variable for cheating was constructed. This finding seems somewhat germane, but is important nonetheless. These conclusions emphasize the idea that the way variables are constructed has a distinct bearing on the way respondents answer questions. For this study, the variable for cheating, was defined in two different ways and the level of significance of the independent variables appeared to be highly dependent upon the manner in which cheating was constructed in the survey instrument.

Findings for State D

State D represented the lowest of incentive states among those participating in this study. While its incentive status was low, the response rate to the survey was relatively high in comparison to the other states. The analysis of the data suggests that none of the independent variables was statistically significant for State D respondents when using the "possibility of cheating" dependent variable. However, when the analysis focused on the "awareness of others" cheating variable, two variables emerged as significant: role ambiguity and knowledge of performance appraisal.

State D—Role Ambiguity and Awareness of Others Cheating

The respondents from State D reported high levels of role ambiguity, suggesting that for many workers their job duties are unclear. Nearly 78 percent of respondents from State D reported high levels of role ambiguity. This particular finding is consistent with principal-agent theory on the basis that State D is a low incentive (and thus low performing) state. Given the theoretical construct this study is operating under, the finding that role ambiguity is an issue among workers in this environment was not particularly surprising.

The analysis also found that State D respondents who identified low levels of role ambiguity, also reported high levels of cheating. Table 8.10 presents these findings in more detail. Forty-six percent of those reporting low levels of role ambiguity reported high levels of others cheating, while 36 percent reported low levels of cheating. Different results emerged for those reporting moderate and high levels of role ambiguity. For those reporting medium levels of role ambiguity, 41 percent indicated moderate levels of cheating, and another 32 percent indicated low levels of cheating. This pattern changes, once again, when the high role ambiguity respondent's answers were analyzed.

Table 8.10. Effect of role ambiguity on awareness of others cheating- State D

	Role Ambiguity							
Awareness of Cheating	Low		Medium		High		Total	
Low	4	36.4%	11	32.4%	63	40.1%	78	38.6%
Medium	2	18.2%	14	41.2%	27	17.2%	43	21.3%
High	5	45.5%	9	26.5%	67	42.7%	81	40.1%
Total	11	100%	34	100%	157	100%	202	100%

$\chi^2 = 9.968$ p = .041
tau b = .776

Among this category, the plurality (43 percent) reported high levels of cheating, while an almost equal proportion (40 percent) indicated low levels of cheating.

The relationship for role ambiguity in comparison to the awareness of others cheating variable was not consistent across the categories of the independent variable (role ambiguity). The analysis demonstrates differences in opinion on cheating depending upon the category of role ambiguity the respondent fell in. While it is notinconsistent to expect higher reports of cheating among low role ambiguity respondents, the fact that the data demonstrate more moderate to low levels of cheating for medium role ambiguity respondents was not expected.

Even more surprising, however, was the bifurcated result found among high role ambiguity respondents from State D. The hypothetical expectations really did not explain why the respondents were split nearly equally on the issue of cheating. Why is it that nearly the same proportion of high role ambiguity respondents viewed cheating from almost polar opposite perspectives? While this analysis really does not answer the question, the fact that these polarized responses to many of the variables seems to indicate other variables are having some influence on these decisions.

State D—Knowledge of Performance Appraisal and Awareness of Others Cheating

Given that State D was considered a low incentive state in this study, it was not surprising to find that only 18 percent of respondents reported a high level of understanding how their performance appraisal system works within their organization. Conversely, 29 percent reported low levels of understanding and 54 percent indicated

medium levels of understanding. The data suggested low to moderate levels of knowledge regarding how employee performance was rated.

Another noteworthy finding was that the scale measuring knowledge of the performance appraisal system was found to be statistically significant (chi-square 9.622, $p<.05$). The relationship between knowledge of performance appraisal and others cheating was relatively strong (tau-b = .845). State D was the only participating state where this particular variable appeared to be of some importance. With that said, the pattern within the data (as shown in Table 8.11) indicated more polarized results regarding cheating, depending upon the category of the independent variable (knowledge of performance appraisal).

Among low knowledge respondents, the plurality of responses indicated low levels of others cheating (45 percent). Conversely, 40 percent of low knowledge respondents indicated high levels of cheating with only 15 percent falling somewhere in between. Regarding more moderate knowledge respondents, the data suggested a relatively equal distribution in the responses with a high of 39 percent reporting high levels of cheating, as opposed to 33 percent who reported low levels (27 percent

Table 8.11. Effect of knowledge of performance appraisal on awareness of others cheating—State D

	Knowledge of Performance Appraisal							
Awareness of Cheating	Low		Medium		High		Total	
Low	24	45.3%	33	33.3%	18	54.5%	75	40.5%
Medium	8	15.1%	27	27.3%	2	6.1%	37	20.0%
High	21	39.6%	39	39.4%	13	39.4%	73	39.5%
Total	53	100%	99	100%	33	100%	185	100%

$\chi^2 = 9.622$ p = .047
tau b = .845

indicated medium levels of cheating).

Again, of most interest were those reporting high knowledge of how the performance appraisal system works. Once again, the data demonstrated somewhat polarized responses for cheating in this category of respondents. For high knowledge workers in State D, the majority of responses (55 percent) fell within the low cheating area. This particular finding meant that the majority of employees who self-reported high levels of understanding of how their performance was measured did not feel others artificially inflated performance in their organizations. Interestingly, 39 percent of these same respondents felt otherwise, indicating high awareness levels of others cheating. Very few (6 percent) fell somewhere between the two extreme views.

Respondents identifying high levels of understanding of the performance rating system were important in that, hypothetically speaking, it was reasonable to expect to find higher levels of cheating being reported from this group. The basis for this line of thinking was that those who really understood how performance was measured might be more likely to know of methods that could be used to increase performance. The findings from the data suggest otherwise for State D respondents. When the majority of high knowledge participants suggest low levels of cheating, the hypothetical expectation was turned on its proverbial ear a bit.

The reasons behind these findings could be numerous. It may be that the performance appraisal system was created in such a way that manipulation of performance was not possible. While this conclusion may be true, the finding that 39 percent feel others are cheating makes it highly unlikely. The reasons behind this split in thinking remain unclear. However, there was a definite difference of opinion among high

knowledge respondents regarding the issue of others cheating. Further research is warranted in order to fully understand these reasons more clearly.

This chapter analyzed the issue of cheating by focusing on survey results from each participating state's perspective. The findings presented here demonstrated a dramatically different perspective from those identified in Chapter 7, which focused on the responses from all of the states combined. In order to summarize these differences, Tables 8.1 and 8.2 identified those variables that emerged as statistically significant at the individual and aggregate level for each of the two definitional categories for cheating.

As these two tables present, there appears to be little in the way of logical patterns associated with which variables were significant and which ones were not at the state level. One of the hypotheses this research was testing dealt specifically with expectations of responses in accordance to the level of incentives each state earned. Chapter 6 demonstrated little differences between respondents from each of the participating states regarding knowledge of the incentive system and cheating.

While these findings present some interesting conclusions, the underlying explanation for significance among the variables remains unknown. Of particular interest was the wide-ranging views of similarly minded respondents on many of the independent variables concerning their views on cheating. The findings presented here acknowledge wide discrepancies in the responses. These divergent viewpoints require further examination and research in order to gain an improved understanding of why these responses were so varied in nature.

In terms of advancing this study, the findings presented in Chapters 7 and 8 are used to construct the basis of a regression model that will seek to further clarify the role these variables have on cheating. This model is presented in the following chapter.

CHAPTER 9

FEELING PRESSURE TO CHEAT: A PREDICTIVE MODEL

The previous chapters examined how child support workers viewed the issue of cheating in terms of whether: 1) it was possible to cheat on performance levels, and 2) if others within their organizations engaged in efforts to inflate individual performance. These two aspects of "cheating" attempted to get at the issue of cheating, without directly implicating survey respondents regarding the potentially controversial subject matter.

The most direct question related to cheating asked respondents if they had felt any pressure from someone in their organization to manipulate their caseload within the past year. [This was the most pointed question in the survey pertaining to the issue of cheating.] This construct for cheating acted as the dependent variable for the analysis conducted in this chapter. In order to build a predictive, multivariate model to describe whether respondents answered "Yes" to this question, binary logistic regression was used to explore this aspect of cheating further. The findings from Chapters 7 and 8 serve as the foundation for deciding which variables to include in the development of this multivariate regression model.

Dependent Variable: Pressure to Cheat

The dependent variable used in this model is the response results from the question asking if participants felt pressure to cheat. A minority of respondents (a little

more than 11 percent) indicated they had felt pressure to cheat within a year prior to completing the survey. This particular finding is consistent with what has been reported in previous chapters that cheating (at least as construed in the survey) was relatively low within the four child support programs studied here.

In order to construct the model, the dependent variable was recoded as a dummy variable with "Yes" responses coded as a "1" and all other responses a "0". Using binary logistic regression, the affirmative responses to the questions were the ones of particular interest (because they indicated the respondent has felt pressure to cheat) and coding the cheating variable in this way allowed the regression method to be more easily used and interpreted.

Independent Variables

A number of independent variables were used to construct the multivariate model. First, the scaled responses measuring job satisfaction and role conflict were included in the model because each was identified as statistically significant in the analysis conducted in chapters seven and eight. Each of these two variables was constructed as dummy variables. The construction of the dummy variables was done so that those respondents who self-identified with "high" levels on the job satisfaction and role conflict scales were coded with a "1" and all other scores with a "0." Any missing data were not included in the construction of the original scaled items.

The second substantive variable added to the model was the response to the question of whether organizations could receive additional funding for outstanding performance. It seemed reasonable to include this variable as it provided a measure for the respondent's knowledge level regarding the potential for agencies to receive funding

for good performance levels. As Chapter 6 reported, a small number of respondents from all the states appeared to be unaware that they could earn incentive funds for high performance levels. This variable was included, as it seemed reasonable to expect that those indicating high knowledge levels of incentive funding might demonstrate a higher propensity to engage in cheating activities. This variable was coded as a dummy variable with a "1" for "yes" responses and a "0" for either "no" or "don't know" responses. Given the theoretical underpinnings of this study, the variable could potentially have an impact on respondents' notions of cheating.

Third, the variable measuring whether respondents felt that performance levels could be inflated was also added to the model. It made sense that those who indicated it was possible to manipulate performance might be more likely to say that they themselves felt pressure to cheat. Like the previous variables, this response set was also added as a dummy variable with "strongly agree" responses coded as a "1" and all other responses as a "0". This was done so that those who were the most adamant in their responses on this question were included in the regression model. "Don't know" responses were not included in the construct of the dummy variable.

A fourth variable added to the model was the issue of worker experience. This variable resulted from responses to how many years respondents had worked in their current position. The range of responses to this question varied from zero to thirty-five years. The mean score was a little over six years, with a standard deviation of 5.677. Any missing responses for this question were discarded, although there were only seven respondents who chose not to answer this question.

The experience variable was included for two reasons. First, it seemed that job tenure needed to be addressed somewhere in the model. While there was nothing substantive in the literature discussing the impact tenure had on cheating activities, it seemed that those with more experience would have a better understanding of how performance could potentially be manipulated. Second, and perhaps more importantly, the variable was included in the analysis because it added an interval level variable to the regression equation. While a variable like age might have also served this purpose, the variable for years of experience had a significantly higher number of responses, unlike the question inquiring into the respondent's age. The addition of the experience variable, in addition to the aforementioned dummy variables, resulted in a more methodologically robust model from which the research question regarding cheating could be pursued.

Finally, a number of demographic variables, including the respondents' gender, race, and state of residence provided baseline characteristics for the model. Each of these variables was also coded as dummy variables. For gender, male was coded as a "1" and female a "0". The respondents' race was coded a "1" for Caucasian and a "0" for all other responses. Finally, the respondents' state was coded as a "1" for State D (the lowest incentive state) and all others were coded with a "0." This was done primarily to view the relationship of how being a member of a low performing state impacted the dependent variable of cheating.

Findings

Of the possible 755 cases in the dataset, 559 (74 percent) were included in the binary logistic regression analysis. The model demonstrated a pseudo R square value of .187. While the pseudo R square value is relatively weak, the model improved the odds

of successfully predicting a "Yes" response to the question of whether respondents felt pressure to cheat. While the odds are relatively low for accurately predicting how a respondent would answer the questions the variables in the model increased those odds to some degree. Table 9.1 presents the logistic regression coefficients, the Wald chi-square test results, and the probability values for each of the predictor variables used in the construction of the model.

Analysis of the model suggested that three variables were of particular importance: job satisfaction, role conflict, and responses indicating it was possible to inflate performance. All three variables were significant when employing a .05 criterion for statistical significance. These results are consistent with the data presented in previous chapters of this dissertation. The variables for gender, race, state, knowledge of incentives, and years of experience contributed to the overall model but were not statistically significant variables in the analysis.

Table 9.1. Logistic regression predicting pressure to cheat from: Gender, race, state, job satisfaction, role conflict, possible to inflate performance, and awareness of incentives

Independent Predictor Variable	B	Exponentiated B	Wald χ^2	Probability
Job Satisfaction	-1.383	0.251	16.546	0.000
Role Conflict	0.81	2.248	6.779	0.009
Possible to Inflate Performance	1.074	2.926	6.012	0.014
Knowledge of Incentives	-6.21	0.537	2.009	0.156
Gender	0.092	1.096	0.054	0.817
Race	-0.075	0.928	0.044	0.834
State D	-0.334	0.716	0.924	0.336
Years Experience	0.006	1.006	0.047	0.828

N = 559
Pseudo R^2 = .187

Job Satisfaction and Feeling Pressure to Cheat

The results from the binary logistic regression analysis demonstrated that job satisfaction was negatively associated with the variable measuring pressure to cheat. This substantively means that as levels of job satisfaction increase, respondents were less likely to report cheating (beta = -1.383) when controlling for the effects of the other independent variables in the model. The chi-square test also indicates that the relationship between these variables was statistically significant at the .001 probability level.

This particular finding is noteworthy, because it suggests satisfaction levels that come from engaging in work, in this case the child support enforcement program, have a subsequent effect on whether one self-reported pressure to artificially inflate performance levels. While the conclusion from this finding does not go so far as to suggest that respondents gave into the pressure, it does indicate that those feeling higher levels of job satisfaction were less likely to say that they felt pressure to engage in questionable activities.

Of more importance, however, was the way in which job satisfaction levels incorporate within the concept of principal-agent theory. It seems logical that this particular finding falls in line with what would be expected under the constructs of the theory. It was not particularly surprising to find that the analysis suggested knowing the level of job satisfaction helped in successfully predicting whether respondents reported their involvement with cheating-types of behaviors. This result is consistent with a variety of theories, and does not exclusively reside within the tenants of principal-agent theory.

In sum, the concept of job satisfaction was reported by others in the literature to be an important variable when studying cheating. This study confirms that notion in the analysis of child support professionals and their experience in conducting their work. It is important to recognize that this analysis only asked respondents if they felt pressure from someone to engage in these behaviors and not whether they actually participated in these types of activities. Nonetheless, the data suggest that lower levels of job satisfaction result in higher probabilities of self-reporting of incidents of pressure to cheat.

Role Conflict and Feeling Pressure to Cheat

Like job satisfaction, role conflict was another variable of importance within the literature related to the issue of cheating. Given the conclusions reached in previous chapters of this study, it was not surprising to find that role conflict emerged as an important variable in the regression model developed here. The results from the logistic regression analysis suggests that as respondents report increased levels of role conflict, they are more likely to report that have felt pressure to cheat when the effects of the independent variables in the model are controlled for. The logistic regression coefficient for role conflict in the model was .810, which suggested it was positively associated with predicting "yes" responses for feeling pressure to cheat. In addition, the chi-square value for role conflict was statistically significant at the .05 level.

This particular finding fits very nicely within the constructs of principal agency theory. It was not surprising to find that those feeling higher levels of role conflict significantly aided the model in predicting "yes" responses to the question at hand. The previous chapters in this study suggested that those expressing higher levels of role

conflict viewed cheating differently from those reporting lower levels of conflict. The fact that this variable became significant in this analysis was not surprising given what was previously presented in this dissertation.

More importantly was that the data suggested that issues pertaining to role conflict are of some importance when discussing the issue of cheating. It makes sense to conclude that those child support professionals who felt high levels of role conflict may have also felt pressure to engage in activities that could be construed as cheating. Responses to the questions that provide the basis for the scale construction of role conflict (see Appendix C) all suggest that respondents who scored high on this scale strongly feel conflicted as they carry out their duties. This sense of conflict may result in a sense of acceptance when it comes to issues of cheating within the workplace. This finding is important for administrators to not only recognize the detrimental effects poorly constructed job duties and roles can pose for their workers, but more importantly, what it means for the possibility of unethical behavior. The findings presented here demonstrated that not only was role conflict an issue at the individual level, but it may have a systemic impact on work processes generally, and cheating in particular.

Possible to Inflate Performance and Feeling Pressure to Cheat

The final statistically significant variable in the model was the respondents' report of whether it was possible to inflate performance in their respective agencies. The findings of the logistic regression model suggest that survey participants who reported that it was possible to inflate performance were more likely to report that they had felt pressure to cheat when the model controlled for the effects of the other independent variables.

This variable was included in the model because it made sense to try to incorporate the effects of respondents' ideas of whether it was possible to cheat (or not). As a result, it was not a surprise to find that reporting higher levels of agreement on the issue of whether inflating performance was possible appeared to impact the successfully prediction of "yes" responses for feeling pressure to inflate performance. It seemed logical that one's knowledge, for lack of a better term, that performance could be manipulated was, in part, because respondents felt pressure to cheat by someone in their organization. If that is the case, the next question is one of causal direction. Does feeling pressure to cheat precipitate respondents' understanding of cheating, or vice versa? Unfortunately, the data gathered do not answer this question, and further research is necessary to develop a clearer understanding of this issue.

The model constructed for this dissertation is only partially successful in predicting whether survey participants answered affirmatively regarding whether they felt pressure to cheat in their organizational settings. The overall pseudo r-square value of .187 suggested that additional variables beyond those included in the model are necessary to full explain the dependent variable.. This study acknowledges this inherent weakness in the model.

With those weaknesses acknowledged, however, the findings that role conflict, job satisfaction, and ideas about the possibility of cheating provide additional insight into the nature of cheating. These findings, for the most part, are consistent with the tenets of principal-agency theory previously presented in this dissertation and are important, not only because they support the underlying theory this study is based upon, but also

because they provide real evidence public administrators can use as they develop and enhance performance-based evaluation tools in child support agencies.

The findings provide additional evidence of the importance clearly defined job roles and functions can have on potentially reducing unethical behaviors among employees. The evidence, as presented here, found a link between inadequate role definitions and one's personal sentiments regarding feeling pressure to cheat. While the study does not answer whether these individuals gave in to that pressure, it does suggest that increased clarity of job functions can result in a work environment where questionable activities, such as cheating, can be reduced.

In conclusion, these findings provide evidentiary value for child support administrators to improve the work environment of their staff. This dissertation has reported that the overwhelming number of participants in the study reported that cheating was not an issue in their organizations. However, a significant minority of respondents suggested these problems did exist. Child support administrators would be wise to implement efforts to try to improve employee job satisfaction and reduce role conflict, because tangible results can emerge regarding the issue of cheating within organizations. Taking steps to address these issues, in addition to regular training regarding ethical considerations in child support agencies, could greatly enhance efforts to further reduce the likelihood of cheating within organizations. Reducing the likelihood of cheating within organizations is a worthwhile goal that child support professionals should strive to achieve.

CHAPTER 10

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

At the onset of this study, the author acknowledged the importance the nation's child support program plays in the welfare system. The role of the child support program has evolved dramatically throughout the years, but the fact remains that regular, steady payment of child support results in consistent economic resources for families which, in turn, helps increase the likelihood of self-reliance and decreases the need for dependence upon the state for financial assistance. Given these facts, performance of state and local child support programs has become of increased importance to help realize the goals of promoting responsibility for noncustodial parents and their children.

Because the child support program deals primarily with collecting money, it has become a relatively simple task to track and monitor the performance levels of child support agencies within the IV-D program. This ability to monitor performance, combined with the growing acknowledgement of the aforementioned positive outcomes for public assistance programs has resulted in a performance-driven mission for the child support program. Performance-based incentives have emerged to act as an inducement for child support agencies to improve performance in order to receive additional funding for programs. Given this reliance upon the use of performance-based incentive monitoring, the child support program seemed an obvious choice to study the impact of

cheating within organizations. This study has resulted in some interesting and important insights regarding the issue of cheating. It is important to note that the scope of this study focused on four child support agencies. The methodology employed by the study successfully allowed for the four participating child support agencies to represent high, moderate, and low performing agencies providing child support services. Each of the four programs was administered by the state in which they resided. While the findings and conclusions presented here provide important data for child support administrators to consider, they should also note the limited nature of the methodology employed in this study. Furthermore, additional comprehensive research surrounding the issue of cheating needs to be conducted among the fifty-four IV-D programs that comprise the child support program in the United States.

The four participating state programs allowed their staff to answer questions covering a wide range of subject matter. Of primary interest to this study were the respondent's feelings about cheating within their organization. Cheating was constructed as one's ability to artificially inflate performance. Respondents were asked whether it was possible to inflate performance, if they were aware of others who actually inflated their performance levels, and whether they themselves felt pressure to inflate performance.

In addition to these questions, respondents were asked a battery of questions pertaining to their work tasks, knowledge and understanding of performance-based incentives, supervision levels within their organizations, job satisfaction, and role conflict and ambiguity. These questions were used to construct scales for each of the items and

bivariate and regression analysis was used to explore their impact on the issues of cheating.

While the scope of this study was limited, it has produced important findings that warrant further consideration regarding the issue of cheating. The following pages summarize the key findings of this study, along with a brief discussion each poses for the theoretical constructs upon which this study is based, along with the practical results child support professionals can draw from the conclusions of the study.

Finding #1—Performance Matters for Child Support Professionals

The respondents from the four states participating in this study indicated strongly that they felt their individual performance contributed to their organization's overall performance level. This finding supports the notion that respondents identified with the idea that their performance mattered and that their individual efforts contributed to their organization's overarching missions. Respondents from all of the participating states suggested that they worked with their supervisors primarily and co-workers secondarily in strategizing to find ways to improve their performance.

While respondents were prone to respond that performance matters, there was a general finding that this search for finding ways to improve performance was limited to the worker-supervisor relationship. There was a general agreement from respondents of all states that their respective organizations did not contribute to a sense of developing strategies to improve performance. This finding suggests some level of disconnect between front-line workers and their larger organizational structure. This particular finding is important because it exposes differences in goals and organizational purposes

between different levels of an organization, something that principal-agent theory does not account for.

Whether the organizations studied here played a role or not in implementing measures to improve performance is moot for this discussion. What is important to recognize is that there was a general finding from all of the participating child support programs that front-line workers felt their organizations did not play an active role in developing methods to improve performance.

Unfortunately, the method employed in this study cannot verify if this lack of organizational involvement actually exists. However, it is important to recognize that most workers felt that the organizational whole was not an active participant in developing ways to improve performance. If the organizational unit is as uninvolved as workers say, it may be a causal reason for the second significant finding of this study: workers were unaware of performance-based incentives for their agencies.

Finding #2—Unawareness of Incentive System

While the actual role of the organization remains unclear, a significant finding of this study was that the overwhelming majority of survey participants was not aware of a child support incentive system. When specifically asked, only 20 percent of respondents correctly reported that their agency could receive additional funds for outstanding performance. This percentage varied slightly between the states, but not by much. More importantly, over half of the total respondents indicated that they were unaware if their agency could earn additional funding for good performance. In a similar vein, only one-third of respondents incorrectly reported that their organization was incapable of earning additional funding based on performance.

In sum, the overall finding regarding knowledge of incentives was very low among front-line child support workers. While it appears evident that knowledge of incentives was low, a secondary question inquiring into the possibility of penalties for poor performance brought about significantly different results. When asked about the consequences for poor performance, over three-fourths of all respondents indicated their organizations were subject to penalties for not meeting adequate performance standards. When analyzed at the state-level, this overall trend did not vary much from the aggregate totals.

This finding poses some interesting discussion points for the issue of awareness of incentives. Among those states participating in the study, workers appeared to have a lack of understanding of what I will call the "positive" aspects of the child support incentive program, but understood all too well the "negative" consequences that could result from poor organizational performance. The reasons for this bifurcated understanding between the positive and negative components of incentives remain unclear, but certainly warrant further research to improve understanding of how child support workers differentiate between the two aspects of the incentive system. Of particular importance would be to improve understanding of how organizational interactions with workers impact the way positive and negative inducements are perceived by workers.

When the survey instrument was developed, careful attention was paid to developing a secondary process through which worker knowledge of the incentive system could be measured. The reasoning for this was that it was possible that workers might not understand the overall concept of the incentive system, but might be able to readily

identify specific tasks used to construct the performance measures associated with the incentive program. Workers were given a list of tasks, some of which included the components comprising the incentive measures and others that did not.

Workers from all four state programs identified incentive and nonincentive tasks almost equally. This finding supports the idea that child support workers do not demonstrate a high level of knowledge of the incentive program regardless of whether it was constructed abstractly as a concept of incentives, or whether it is broken down into tasks that makeup the incentive structure. Either way, workers did not identify them as such.

These findings were somewhat surprising. Child support agencies throughout the country have complained vocally about the cut in funding in relation to federal matching dollars for incentives that resulted from passage of the Deficit Reduction Act of 2005. The finding that workers were unaware of incentives or incentives tasks is somewhat inconsistent with the importance many IV-D directors have attributed to these funds.

This study is incapable of answering the question of why these discrepancies exist. However, future research would help obtain a better understanding of why these incentive-funding issues do not resonate with front-line workers. The bottom line is that child support workers participating in this study demonstrated a poor understanding of the nature of incentives.

Finding #3—Understanding Cheating Within the Child Support Context

For the purposes of this study, cheating was defined as being able to artificially inflate performance levels. Because this study placed an emphasis on cheating, it was

important to try to find a way to conceptualize the idea of cheating in a way survey respondents would understand. Three questions were used to develop a construct for the issue of cheating. The first question asked respondents if it was possible to artificially inflate performance, the second inquired more specifically if the respondent was aware of others who artificially inflated performance, and the last question asked if the respondent had felt pressure from someone else to artificially inflate performance.

Each of these questions attempted to find a slightly different angle into the issue of cheating. The first was quite vague, only asking respondents to share their feelings of whether it was possible to cheat. The second became more specific in that respondents were asked if they suspected others of engaging in these types of behavior. The last was the most specific and asked respondents if they themselves felt pressure to cheat. In order to pass IRB scrutiny, none of the questions followed up with the obvious question of whether the respondents actually engaged in cheating behaviors. While this ultimately would be the question to ask, ethical considerations prohibited it from being included in the survey.

Regardless of which question was asked, the overwhelming majority of respondents reported that cheating did not occur in their organizations. This was true among high, medium, and low performing organizations alike. The aggregate survey results for the question measuring awareness of others cheating had the highest agreement rate (34.5 percent), while the affirmative responses concerning feeling pressure to cheat was staggeringly low (less than 10 percent). These findings did not differ much when analyzed at the state level.

These findings were not consistent with the expectations of this study. At the onset of the study, it was felt that cheating, as constructed through the idea of artificially inflating performance, would be greater among high performing states. This hypothesis was supported by the idea that high performing states (and workers) would be more willing to cheat in order to maximize the amount of incentive dollars the state earned. This relationship between cheating and the performance (or incentive) level of the state did not emerge. There was essentially no difference on the cheating measures between the four state programs. This finding presented a real surprise to the researcher and brings into question the incentive-based assumptions of the principal-agent model.

In order to develop further understanding into the issue of cheating, bivariate cross-tabulations were used to explore the relationship between cheating and eight independent variables (organizational performance, job stress, strategizing, supervision, job satisfaction, role ambiguity, role conflict, and understanding of performance appraisal methods). These eight independent variables were included in the analysis on the basis that they were identified in the literature as important concepts in relation to the issue of cheating.

While there were some differences between the state programs, two variables emerged as statistically significant in relation to the constructs for cheating (possibility of cheating and awareness of others cheating). These variables were job satisfaction, and role conflict, both of which constituted the basis for the fourth significant finding of the study: the importance of role conflict and job satisfaction in regard to cheating.

Finding #4—The Importance of Role Conflict and Job Satisfaction with Cheating

One of the most significant findings of this study was that job satisfaction and role conflict were directly linked with cheating when defined as artificially inflating performance levels. In the cross-tabulation analysis, both role ambiguity and job satisfaction were found to be statistically significant. Using principal-agent theory as a foundation, it was not surprising to find that role conflict was linked with cheating. Role conflict suggests respondents experienced degrees of confusion by not having their job duties and responsibilities clearly defined. Principal-agency theory posits that in order to have agents comply with the desires of principals, roles should be clearly defined. When these roles are not clearly defined, agents are free to pursue their own self-interest.

Given the underpinnings of principal-agent theory, it was not a surprise to find that low role conflict respondents were likely to report low and moderate levels of cheating (both for the possibility of cheating measure as well as the awareness of others cheating measurement). This finding is clearly in line with the constructs of principal-agency theory. The importance of these findings were enhanced by the results from logistic regression analysis that found that knowing role conflict levels increased the results of successfully predicting "yes" respondents for feeling pressure to cheat.

The second variable that emerged as significant in the analysis was job satisfaction. Job satisfaction was found to be linked with the awareness of others cheating variable. However the data demonstrated an interesting dichotomy between the variables. While one would reasonably expect to find high job satisfaction levels resulting in lower levels of reported cheating, the data demonstrated an almost equal split between high and low awareness levels among high job satisfaction respondents. This

pattern in the data did not present itself among medium and low job satisfaction respondents.

When analyzed at the state level, similar statistically significant relationships emerged between job satisfaction and awareness of others cheating among the two moderate incentive states. In relation to these variables, the analysis demonstrated similar bifurcated results for both State B and C respondents as was reported in the aggregate analysis of the data. This polarized response set among high job satisfaction respondents remain unresolved by this analysis. Unfortunately, the data do not provide any additional insights into why this pattern continually emerged.

However, when the variable of job satisfaction was placed in the regression model, it emerged as being negatively related to successfully predicting "yes" responses to the question regarding the respondent's feeling pressure to cheat. The negative value suggested that decreases in job satisfaction rates correlated with higher successful predictions of yes responses in the model.

Regardless of the context, one of the conclusions of this study is that job satisfaction rates are related to different dependent variables used to describe cheating. This is an important finding because it demonstrates the importance job satisfaction levels can have for cheating behaviors. What remains unclear is the reason behind the split response rates regarding cheating among high job satisfaction respondents. The split nature of the response set warrants further academic inquiry to see if these patterns are normal, or if they are peculiar to the states participating in this research project.

Finding #5—Respondent's Ideas About the Possibility of Cheating Are Related to Feeling Pressure to Cheat

The regression analysis found that responses to the question that asked respondents if it was possible to inflate performance was a statistically significant predictor of "yes" responses for individuals feeling pressure to cheat. This finding suggests a mild, but important, link between the way one thinks about being able to cheat and if they actually felt pressure to cheat. The analysis suggests that higher responses regarding the possibility of cheating result in significantly increased odds in successfully predicting one's feelings of pressure to cheat.

This discovery is important in that it demonstrates the idea that if one thinks it is possible to inflate performance, they may also feel pressure to act upon that behavior. The study is incapable of following up on this important question, but what emerges is the idea that one's perceptions of cheating may result in one's feeling pressure to cheat. Whether that pressure is real, or perceived, the fact remains that identifying with the idea of being able to cheat may also influence one's sense of feeling pressure to cheat. Unfortunately, the survey tool does not provide a method through which to explore this issue further. However, this idea of how perceptions of cheating may be a precursor to other aspects of cheating warrants future research consideration.

Finding #6—Limitations of the Principal-Agent Model

The most significant finding of this research is the limitation of the applicability of the principal-agent model in the four cases studied here. Because of the availability of incentive dollars for programs, it seemed reasonable at the onset of the study that front-

line workers would have a clear sense of the incentive tasks that would result in increased dollars for each state's respective program. In addition, the expectation that respondents from higher incentive earning states would report more incidents of organizational cheating to enhance those incentives was a rational conclusion of the principal-agent model. Neither of these expected outcomes emerged from the study.

While this study was modest in its conception, it does demonstrate some limitations with the principal-agent model. While principal-agent theory dismisses more altruistic approaches that explain behavior, the fact that such potential motivators as job satisfaction were found to have an impact on cheating is an important finding in and of itself. Future inquiries into the issue of cheating might find it beneficial to adopt alternative models as the basis of their studies.

Future Research

In this conclusion, several suggestions have been made concerning areas meriting future consideration as part of a comprehensive research agenda on the issue of cheating. A couple of additional ideas deserve some attention regarding this matter. First, this study was limited in nature by the relatively small number of state programs that agreed to participate. While this study has provided important insights and ideas concerning cheating, a more comprehensive approach to studying the issue of cheating within the child support program is deserved.

The fact that the child support program is designed around quantitative performance measures makes it an excellent source for studying the issue of cheating. The fact that the program has adopted a comprehensive incentive system that rewards state programs for good performance only enhances the idea that the program operates

within an environment that could produce continued insight into the issues of cheating. While this study focused on four state programs representing different performance levels, improved conclusions could be reached if more state programs were examined further.

In a related issue, this study focused solely on state administered child support programs. While there is no prescribed method for administering child support programs by the federal government, each state is left to decide whether the state should directly oversee the day-to-day operations of the program, or allow local county governments to carry out this task. In addition, there is a growing presence of privately contracted companies that provide full child support services on behalf of state and county governments.

It is reasonable to expect to find important differences between state operated and county managed child support programs in regard to cheating activities. These differences deserve further attention and could certainly further improved understanding of how cheating activities differ based upon the way a program is administered. Of particular interest, however, is how cheating activities vary among privately operated child support programs. These privately contracted businesses and corporations operate on the basis of a profit motive. This underlying motivation to maximize profits would be of particular interest in studying the issue of cheating and would provide an interesting venue to explore the issues of principal-agency theory further.

Finally, this study operationalized the dependent variable of cheating in terms equating to being able to artificially inflate performance levels. Defining cheating in this way allowed the study to focus on a relatively well-understood concept and resulted in a

good way to analyze the issue of cheating. However, cheating is not always construed in such an obvious manner. The author suggests that cheating is frequently a more nuanced subject matter.

In order to fully understand the issue of cheating, further research needs to focus on less subtle ways of cheating. For instance, OCSE has provided detailed regulatory instruction to states regarding the issue of case closure (45 CFR 303.11). While the categories given to states attempt to be as clear as possible, they remain open to some interpretation on the part of states. When it comes to performance measurement, it makes sense to try to close cases where payments are not being made. States may have made policy decisions to try to reduce the number of "bad cases" by broadly interpreting these federal regulations. As a result, front-line workers may be engaging in "cheating," but may not realize it because they are following their organization's policy. In conclusion, cheating is a complex and nuanced subject matter. Further research should recognize these complexities and attempt to address them appropriately.

In a republican form of government, citizens should, and do, have high expectations for the government programs that exist because of taxpayers funds. We all expect our government agencies to operate efficiently, effectively, and fairly. In order to achieve these goals, monitoring of performance is essential. However, performance measures and incentives have a dark side that warrants even more scrutiny to ensure these programs are operating both fairly and effectively. This study has attempted to focus on the issue of cheating in an effort to understand one of the unintended consequences that can result from using these types of systems.

Child support professionals have a long-standing tradition of viewing their work in terms of helping children and families obtain a reliable stream of financial resources which they are entitled to receive. The sense of pride and accomplishment in their work was something this study was able to clearly measure among the four states that participated in this study. Child support workers feel that their work is important and that they contribute to society in meaningful ways.

The overwhelming number of these workers also felt that cheating, or efforts to artificially inflate performance, was not rampant in their organizations. However, a small minority reported to the contrary of this idea and suggested that cheating, to some degree, was possible, and they themselves felt pressure to cheat. This small minority was the primary focus of this study.

The conclusions reached here provide valuable knowledge for child support administrators specifically and generally for the public administration literature to consider. The findings suggesting the role job satisfaction and role conflict play in predicting increased likelihoods of cheating is important to recognize. While continued oversight to discourage these unethical practices should be encouraged, the data presented here suggest that administrators can also take proactive measures to help reduce incidents of cheating within their organizations.

Performance management of government agencies is not going to go away. If anything, President Obama's promise to make government more transparent will only exacerbate the need to measure performance objectively. The media, elected officials, and most importantly, citizens demand that agencies find a way to measure their successes (and failures). However, we all should recognize the "dark side" of

performance management and realize that the use of performance measures and incentives is not an end in itself. Developing a better understanding of the negative consequences (as well as their relevance to worker effectiveness) of these types of systems will aide public administrators in their efforts to improve performance while, at the same time, doing so in a transparent and ethical manner.

APPENDIX A

STATE “A” PROFILE DATA

Managed: Administered Centrally by the State
Orders:
PEP Method: Statewide Measure
Percent of 2006 Budget Comprised of Federal Incentives:

	1999	**2000**	**2001**	**2002**	**2003**	**2004**	**2005**	**2006**
Number of FTEs	237	256	267	256	256	248	247	247
Caseload Size	46,806	47,008	46,405	46,385	46,387	46,543	45,259	44,989
Total Collections	$77,696,981	$80,565,137	$87,170,029	$90,406,771	$91,662,934	$92,130,442	$93,943,460	$89,948,499
Collections per FTE	$327,835	$314,708	$326,480	$353,151	$358,058	$371,494	$380,338	$364,164
PEP Score (IV-D)	n/a	79.80%	77.00%	80.70%	113.80%	132.80%	94.50%	95.40%
PEP Score (State)	n/a	99.10%	87.80%**	89.60%**	89.10%	91.80%	104.80%	98.00%
Obligation Rate	77.60%	78.50%	78.70%	82.90%	82.84%	86.80%	92.40%	92.20%
Current Support %	47.99%	49.20%	51.20%	53.80%	55.70%	55.50%	54.96%	54.90%
Arrears Percentage	63.60%	65.10%	68.50%	67.40%	67.60%	66.60%	67.50%	66.50%
Cost Effective Ratio	$4.41	$3.89	$4.14	$4.49	$4.24	$4.50	$4.54	$4.27

* Failed Data Reliability Audits
** Score Does Not Meet Minimum Incentive Standards

APPENDIX B

STATE “B” PROFILE DATA

Managed: Centrally by the State
Orders:
PEP Method: IV-D Measure
Percent of 2006 Budget Comprised of Federal Incentives:

	1999	**2000**	**2001**	**2002**	**2003**	**2004**	**2005**	**2006**
Number of FTEs	1,610	1,604	1,605	1,595	1,579	1,659	1,659	1,691
Caseload Size	489,350	504,174	461,948	426,096	417,936	409,041	405,706	410,399
Total Collections	$895,492,604	$432,456,835	$509,821,267	$516,190,069	$541,756,357	$577,602,255	$613,436,219	$629,918,294
Collections per FTE	$556,207	$269,611	$317,646	$323,630	$343,101	$348,163	$369,763	$372,512
PEP Score (IV-D)	n/a	61.50%* **	81.60%**	84.40%**	91.00%	93.30%	96.40%	97.70%
PEP Score (State)	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Obligation Rate	53.90%	56.60%	65.80%	73.20%	76.35%	78.80%	80.88%	81.05%
Current Support %	59.80%	59.20%	60.40%	61.30%	61.80%	62.70%	64.50%	65.60%
Arrears Percentage	48.10%	70.70%	69.30%*	60.30%	58.40%	61.00%	62.20%	63.40%
Cost Effective Ratio	$2.93	$3.86	$4.04	$4.43	$4.99	$5.01	$5.10	$4.97

*Failed Data Reliability Audits
** Score Does Not Meet Minimum Incentive Standards

APPENDIX C

STATE "C" PROFILE DATA

Managed: Centrally by the State
Orders:
PEP Method: Statewide Measure
Percent of 2006 Budget Comprised of Federal Incentives:

	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
Number of FTEs	556	629	613	620	577	590	606	650
Caseload Size	139,831	143,163	148,423	140,798	137,115	151,410	166,320	174,065
Total Collections	$109,503,070	$120,078,595	$129,628,049	$146,408,283	$152,298,459	$167,819,695	$194,828,277	$222,953,925
Collections per FTE	$196,948	$190,904	$211,465	$236,142	$263,949	$284,440	$321,499	$343,006
PEP Score (IV-D)	n/a	32.70%	45.10%	46.60%	49.40%	58.60%	61.00%	65.50%
PEP Score (State)	n/a	81.40%**	86.30%**	80.70%**	92.60%	104.60%	112.40%	122.10%
Obligation Rate	60.40%	61.90%	63.60%	69.70%	70.80%	69.50%	69.09%	69.63%
Current Support %	42.50%	44.30%	45.10%	46.50%	48.40%	48.60%	50.10%	52.70%
Arrears Percentage	56.00%	52.20%	53.80%	56.80%	57.40%	57.50%	55.20%	59.90%
Cost Effective Ratio	$3.37	$2.83	$2.90	$2.80	$3.12	$3.64	$3.79	$3.99

*Failed Data Reliability Audits
**Score Does Not Meet Minimum Incentive Standards

APPENDIX D

STATE "D" PROFILE DATA

Managed: Centrally by the State
Orders:
PEP Method: Statewide Measure
Percent of 2006 Budge Comprised of Federal Incentives:

	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
Number of FTEs	1,273	1,307	1,403	1,308	1,283	1,001	1,041	930
Caseload Size	362,156	371,804	386,360	390,538	383,780	383,021	377,390	367,901
Total Collections	$320,786,071	$374,637,687	$410,254,564	$449,078,457	$481,019,369	$505,638,189	$530,679,551	$549,731,451
Collections per FTE	$251,992	$286,639	$292,412	$343,332	$374,918	$505,133	$509,779	$591,109
PEP Score (IV-D)	n/a	81.30%	83.60%	86.00%	88.90%	72.80%	89.10%	106.10%
PEP Score (State)	n/a	91.10%	86.70%**	79.70%**	85.50%**	88.90%**	92.50%	92.90%
Obligation Rate	71.10%	73.80%	76.10%	78.90%	79.48%	80.70%	81.63%	82.81%
Current Support %	43.20%	47.80%	49.20%	50.70%	52.70%	53.30%	54.70%	55.70%
Arrears Percentage	45.30%	47.30%	47.30%	50.00%	50.08%	51.60%	52.10%	53.40%
Cost Effective Ratio	$3.26	$3.37	$3.81	$4.63	$4.95	$5.40	$5.41	$5.58

*Failed Data Reliability Audits
** Score Does Not Meet Minimum Incentive Standards

APPENDIX E

CHILD SUPPORT SURVEY

Child Support Professionals Survey

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey. The purpose of this survey is to explore the attitudes, beliefs, and practices of child support professionals from around the country. Your responses to this survey will help develop data that will be used to improve the field of child support enforcement. Your participation in this survey is voluntary, and you are not required to answer these questions. If you choose to respond to the survey, please identify the response that best represents your own viewpoints. Your responses will remain anonymous, although the aggregate (total) data results may be shared with interested states from around the country. Again, thank you for your service to the children in your area and taking the time to respond to this survey.

1. How many years have you been in your current position? (DEMOGRAPHIC)

2. How many years have you worked in the area of child support enforcement? (DEMOGRAPHIC)

3. How many years have you worked in the public sector? (DEMOGRAPHIC)

4. I receive adequate training to accomplish the job tasks that are expected from me. (TRAINING)
    a. STRONGLY AGREE
    b. AGREE
    c. SOMEWHAT AGREE
    d. SOMEWHAT DISAGREE
    e. DISAGREE
    f. STRONGLY DISAGREE
    g. DON'T KNOW

5. My agency receives additional funding for outstanding organizational performance. (INCENTIVE AWARENESS)
    a. YES
    b. NO
    c. DON'T KNOW

6. My agency can be penalized for failing to perform in certain areas. (INCENTIVE AWARENESS)
    a. YES
    b. NO
    c. DON'T KNOW

7. My agency has been penalized in the past for poor organizational performance. (INCENTIVE AWARENESS)
    a. YES
    b. NO
    c. DON'T KNOW

8. Please rate how important each of the following is for your agency using a scale of 1-10, with one being the least importance and ten being the highest importance, please rate the degree of importance the following issues are for your agency. (INCENTIVE AWARENESS)
    a. IV-A (TANF) COLLECTIONS
    b. PATERNITY ESTABLISHMENT
    c. RESPONSIVENESS TO CUSTOMERS
    d. ESTABLISHING CHILD SUPPORT ORDERS
    e. COST CONTROLS
    f. MANAGEABLE CASELOAD SIZES
    g. CURRENT SUPPORT COLLECTIONS
    h. PAST DUE SUPPORT COLLECTIONS
    i. COST EFFECTIVENESS
    j. TOTAL COLLECTIONS
    k. FEDERAL TIMEFRAMES
    l. DON'T KNOW

9. My individual performance impacts my organization's overall performance. (INCENTIVE AWARENESS)
    a. STRONGLY AGREE
    b. AGREE
    c. NEITHER AGREE OR DISAGREE
    d. DISAGREE
    e. STRONGLY DISAGREE
    f. DON'T KNOW

10. I have spent time discussing strategies with my co-workers to improve my individual performance. (INCENTIVE STRATEGY)
    a. STRONGLY AGREE
    b. AGREE
    c. NEITHER AGREE OR DISAGREE
    d. DISAGREE
    e. STRONGLY DISAGREE
    f. DON'T KNOW

11. I have spent time discussing strategies with my supervisor to improve my individual performance. (INCENTIVE STRATEGY)
    a. STRONGLY AGREE
    b. AGREE
    c. NEITHER AGREE OR DISAGREE
    d. DISAGREE
    e. STRONGLY DISAGREE
    f. DON'T KNOW

12. My organization spends a lot of time developing strategies to increase performance in key areas. (INCENTIVE STRATEGY)
    a. STRONGLY AGREE
    b. AGREE
    c. NEITHER AGREE OR DISAGREE
    d. DISAGREE
    e. STRONGLY DISAGREE
    f. DON'T KNOW

13. It is possible to take actions in my caseload that will inflate my individual performance levels. (MANIPULATION)
    a. STRONGLY AGREE
    b. AGREE
    c. NEITHER AGREE OR DISAGREE
    d. DISAGREE
    e. STRONGLY DISAGREE
    f. DON'T KNOW

14. I am aware of others in my organization who take actions to inflate their individual performance levels. (MANIPULATION)
    a. STRONGLY AGREE
    b. AGREE
    c. NEITHER AGREE OR DISAGREE
    d. DISAGREE
    e. STRONGLY DISAGREE
    f. DON'T KNOW

15. In the past year, I have felt pressure from someone in my agency to manipulate my caseload to improve performance. (MANIPULATION)
    a. YES
    b. NO
    c. DON'T KNOW

16. If I make a mistake in my work, it is likely to be noticed by someone and I will be held accountable for the mistake. (MONITORING)
    a. STRONGLY AGREE
    b. AGREE
    c. SOMEWHAT AGREE
    d. SOMEWHAT DISAGREE
    e. DISAGREE
    f. STRONGLY DISAGREE
    g. DON'T KNOW

17. It is important to enter accurate information into the computer system. (ACCURACY/QUALITY)
    a. STRONGLY AGREE
    b. AGREE
    c. SOMEWHAT AGREE
    d. SOMEWHAT DISAGREE
    e. DISAGREE
    f. STRONGLY DISAGREE
    g. DON'T KNOW

18. The quality of my work is closely monitored. (ACCURACY/QUALITY)
    a. STRONGLY AGREE
    b. AGREE
    c. SOMEWHAT AGREE
    d. SOMEWHAT DISAGREE
    e. DISAGREE
    f. STRONGLY DISAGREE
    g. DON'T KNOW

19. My agency emphasizes quantity of work over the quality of work. (QUALITY)
    a. STRONGLY AGREE
    b. AGREE
    c. SOMEWHAT AGREE
    d. SOMEWHAT DISAGREE
    e. DISAGREE
    f. STRONGLY DISAGREE
    g. DON'T KNOW

20. There is a need to reduce some parts of my job* (ROLE OVERLOAD)
    a. STRONGLY DISAGREE
    b. DISAGREE
    c. NEITHER DISAGREE OR AGREE
    d. AGREE
    e. STRONGLY AGREE
    f. DON'T KNOW

21. I feel overburdened in my job* (ROLE OVERLOAD)
    a. STRONGLY DISAGREE
    b. DISAGREE
    c. NEITHER DISAGREE OR AGREE
    d. AGREE
    e. STRONGLY AGREE
    f. DON'T KNOW

22. I have been given too much responsibility* (ROLE OVERLOAD)
    a. STRONGLY DISAGREE
    b. DISAGREE
    c. NEITHER DISAGREE OR AGREE
    d. AGREE
    e. STRONGLY AGREE
    f. DON'T KNOW

23. My workload is too heavy* (ROLE OVERLOAD)
    a. STRONGLY DISAGREE
    b. DISAGREE
    c. NEITHER DISAGREE OR AGREE
    d. AGREE
    e. STRONGLY AGREE
    f. DON'T KNOW

24. The amount of work I have to do interferes with the quality I want to maintain* (ROLE OVERLOAD)
    a. STRONGLY DISAGREE
    b. DISAGREE
    c. NEITHER DISAGREE OR AGREE
    d. AGREE
    e. STRONGLY AGREE
    f. DON'T KNOW

25. I have clear planned goals and objectives for my job* (ROLE AMBIGUITY)
    a. STRONGLY DISAGREE
    b. DISAGREE
    c. NEITHER DISAGREE OR AGREE
    d. AGREE
    e. STRONGLY AGREE
    f. DON'T KNOW

26. I know exactly what is expected of me* (ROLE AMBIGUITY)
    a. STRONGLY DISAGREE
    b. DISAGREE
    c. NEITHER DISAGREE OR AGREE
    d. AGREE
    e. STRONGLY AGREE
    f. DON'T KNOW

27. I know what my responsibilities are* (ROLE AMBIGUITY)
    a. STRONGLY DISAGREE
    b. DISAGREE
    c. NEITHER DISAGREE OR AGREE
    d. AGREE
    e. STRONGLY AGREE
    f. DON'T KNOW

28. I feel certain about how much responsibility I have* (ROLE AMBIGUITY)
    a. STRONGLY DISAGREE
    b. DISAGREE
    c. NEITHER DISAGREE OR AGREE
    d. AGREE
    e. STRONGLY AGREE
    f. DON'T KNOW

29. My responsibilities are clearly defined* (ROLE AMBIGUITY)
    a. STRONGLY DISAGREE
    b. DISAGREE
    c. NEITHER DISAGREE OR AGREE
    d. AGREE
    e. STRONGLY AGREE
    f. DON'T KNOW

30. I often get involved in situations in which there are conflicting requirements* (ROLE CONFLICT)
    a. STRONGLY DISAGREE
    b. DISAGREE
    c. NEITHER DISAGREE OR AGREE
    d. AGREE
    e. STRONGLY AGREE
    f. DON'T KNOW

31. I receive incompatible requests from two or more people* (ROLE CONFLICT)
    a. STRONGLY DISAGREE
    b. DISAGREE
    c. NEITHER DISAGREE OR AGREE
    d. AGREE
    e. STRONGLY AGREE
    f. DON'T KNOW

32. I have to do things that should be done differently under different conditions* (ROLE CONFLICT)
    a. STRONGLY DISAGREE
    b. DISAGREE
    c. NEITHER DISAGREE OR AGREE
    d. AGREE
    e. STRONGLY AGREE
    f. DON'T KNOW

33. My Supervisor always seems to be around checking on my work* (SUPERVISION CONTROL)
    a. STRONGLY DISAGREE
    b. DISAGREE
    c. SOMEWHAT DISAGREE
    d. NEITHER DISAGREE OR AGREE
    e. SOMEWHAT AGREE
    f. AGREE
    g. STRONGLY AGREE
    h. DON'T KNOW

34. My supervisor tells me what shall be done and how it shall be done* (SUPERVISION CONTROL)
    a. STRONGLY DISAGREE
    b. DISAGREE
    c. SOMEWHAT DISAGREE
    d. NEITHER DISAGREE OR AGREE
    e. SOMEWHAT AGREE
    f. AGREE
    g. STRONGLY AGREE
    h. DON'T KNOW

35. My supervisor never gives me a chance to make important decisions on my own* (SUPERVISION CONTROL)
    a. STRONGLY DISAGREE
    b. DISAGREE
    c. SOMEWHAT DISAGREE
    d. NEITHER DISAGREE OR AGREE
    e. SOMEWHAT AGREE
    f. AGREE
    g. STRONGLY AGREE
    h. DON'T KNOW

36. My supervisor leaves it up to me to decide how to go about doing my job* (SUPERVISION CONTROL)
    a. STRONGLY DISAGREE
    b. DISAGREE
    c. SOMEWHAT DISAGREE
    d. NEITHER DISAGREE OR AGREE
    e. SOMEWHAT AGREE
    f. AGREE
    g. STRONGLY AGREE
    h. DON'T KNOW

37. In choosing which daily tasks I do each day, I often choose tasks because I know my agency keeps track of them rather than choosing the task which I believe to be the most important. (TASK PRIORITIZATION)
    a. STRONGLY DISAGREE
    b. DISAGREE
    c. SOMEWHAT DISAGREE
    d. NEITHER DISAGREE OR AGREE
    e. SOMEWHAT AGREE
    f. AGREE
    g. STRONGLY AGREE
    h. DON'T KNOW

38. All in all, I am satisfied with my job.* (JOB SATISFACTION)
    a. STRONGLY DISAGREE
    b. DISAGREE
    c. SOMEWHAT DISAGREE
    d. NEITHER DISAGREE OR AGREE
    e. SOMEWHAT AGREE
    f. AGREE
    g. STRONGLY AGREE
    h. DON'T KNOW

39. In general, I like working for this agency. * (JOB SATISFACTION)
    a. STRONGLY DISAGREE
    b. DISAGREE
    c. SOMEWHAT DISAGREE
    d. NEITHER DISAGREE OR AGREE
    e. SOMEWHAT AGREE
    f. AGREE
    g. STRONGLY AGREE
    h. DON'T KNOW

40. I understand the standards of performance my employer expects. *(PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL)
    a. STRONGLY DISAGREE
    b. DISAGREE
    c. SOMEWHAT DISAGREE
    d. NEITHER DISAGREE OR AGREE
    e. SOMEWHAT AGREE
    f. AGREE
    g. STRONGLY AGREE
    h. DON'T KNOW

41. My supervisor and I concur on the meaning of the criteria used in the performance appraisal system. * (PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL)
    a. STRONGLY DISAGREE
    b. DISAGREE
    c. SOMEWHAT DISAGREE
    d. NEITHER DISAGREE OR AGREE
    e. SOMEWHAT AGREE
    f. AGREE
    g. STRONGLY AGREE
    h. DON'T KNOW

42. My employer clearly communicates to me the objectives of the performance appraisal system. * (PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL)
    a. STRONGLY DISAGREE
    b. DISAGREE
    c. SOMEWHAT DISAGREE
    d. NEITHER DISAGREE OR AGREE
    e. SOMEWHAT AGREE
    f. AGREE
    g. STRONGLY AGREE
    h. DON'T KNOW

43. Procedures regarding the performance appraisal system are not generally understood by the employees in my organization. * (PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL)
    a. STRONGLY DISAGREE
    b. DISAGREE
    c. SOMEWHAT DISAGREE
    d. NEITHER DISAGREE OR AGREE
    e. SOMEWHAT AGREE
    f. AGREE
    g. STRONGLY AGREE
    h. DON'T KNOW

44. What is your gender? (DEMOGRAPHIC)
    a. MALE
    b. FEMALE

45. What year were you born? (DEMOGRAPHIC)

46. What is your race?
    a. CAUCASIAN
    b. AFRICAN AMERICAN
    c. ASIAN
    d. HISPANIC
    e. NATIVE AMERICAN
    f. DON'T KNOW/CHOOSE NOT TO ANSWER

47. I am either a custodial or non-custodial parent on a child support case. (DEMOGRAPHIC)
    a. YES
    b. NO
    c. DON'T KNOW

48. What is your annual salary? (DEMOGRAPHIC)
    a. LESS THAN $20,000 PER YEAR
    b. BETWEEN $20,000 AND $29,999 PER YEAR
    c. BETWEEN $30,000 AND $39,999 PER YEAR
    d. BETWEEN $40,000 AND $49,999 PER YEAR
    e. BETWEEN $50,000 AND $59,999 PER YEAR
    f. MORE THAN $60,000 PER YEAR
    g. DON'T KNOW/CHOOSE NOT TO ANSWER

49. What is the highest level of education you have completed? (DEMOGRAPHIC)
    a. LESS THAN A HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATE
    b. HIGH SCHOOL/GED
    c. SOME COLLEGE
    d. COLLEGE
    e. GRADUATE SCHOOL
    f. DOCTORATE
    g. DON'T KNOW/CHOOSE NOT TO ANSWER

50. Is there anything else you would like to share regarding your work performance? (QUALITATIVE)

*- Scaled Item

APPENDIX F

SCALE QUESTIONS AND CONSTRUCTION

Scale	Survey Question and Number	Original Scale Range	Recoded Collapsed Scale
Role Ambiguity	26. I have clear planned goals and objectives for my job. 27. I know exactly what is expected of me 28. I know what my responsibilities are. 29. I feel certain about how much responsibility I have. 30. My responsibilities are clearly defined.	1-11	1-3 = Low 4-8 = Medium 9-11 = High
Role Conflict	31. I often get involved in situations in which there are conflicting requirements. 32. I receive incompatible requests from two or more people. 33. I have to do things that should be done differently under different conditions.	1-7	1-2 = Low 3-5 = Medium 6-7 = High
Job Satisfaction	39. All in all, I am satisfied with my job. 40. In general, I like working for this agency.	1-5	1-2 = Low 3 = Medium 4-5 = High
Supervision	17. If I make a mistake in my work, it is likely to be noticed… 19. The quality of my work is closely monitored. 34. My supervisor always seems to be around checking on my work. 35. My supervisor tells me what shall be done and how it shall be done.	1-9	1-3 = Low 4-6 = Medium 7-9 = High
Job Stress	23. I have been given too much responsibility. 24. My workload is too heavy. 25. The amount of work I have to do interferes with the quality I want to maintain.	1-11	1-3 = Low 4-8 = Medium 9-11 = High

Scale	Survey Question and Number	Original Scale Range	Recoded Collapsed Scale
Strategy	11. I have spent time discussing strategies with my co-workers to improve my individual performance. 12. I have spent time discussing strategies with my supervisor to improve my individual performance. 13. My organization spends a lot of time developing strategies to increase performance.	1-7	1-2 = Low 3-5 = Medium 6-7 = High
Knowledge of Performance Appraisal System	41. I understand the standards of performance my employer expects. 42. My supervisor and I concur on the meaning of the criteria used in the performance appraisal system. 43. My employer clearly communicates tome the objectives of the performance appraisal system.	1-7	1-2 = Low 3-5 = Medium 6-7 = High

WORKS CITED

Arrow, K.J. 1985. The economics of agency. In *Principals and Agents: The Structure of Business,* ed. J.W. Pratt and R. J. Zechauser, 37-51. Boston: Harvard Business School Press.

Barnard, C.I. 1938. *The Functions of the Executive.* Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Behn, R.D. 2001. *Rethinking Democratic Accountability.* Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press.

Bohte, J., and K. Meier. 2000. Goal displacement: Assessing the motivation for organizational cheating. *Public Administration Review* 60: 173-82.

Bouckaert, G. 1995. Improving performance management. In *The Enduring Challenges in Public Management: Surviving and Excelling in a Changing World,* ed. A. Hlachmi and G. Bouckaert, 379-412. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Brady, R.H. 1978. MBO goes to work in the public sector. In *Public Budgeting: Program Planning and Evaluation* 3d ed., ed. F.J. Lyden and E.G. Miller, 198-213. Chicago: Rand McNally.

Brehm, J., and S. Gates. 1997. *Working, shirking, and sabotage: Bureaucratic response to a democratic public.* Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press.

Broom, C., S. Caudle, E.T. Jennings, Jr. and K. Newcomer. 2002. Meeting the challenges of performance-oriented government. In *Meeting the Challenges of Performance-Oriented Government* ed. K. Newcomer, E.T. Jennings, Jr., C. Broom, and A. Lomax, 1-12. Washington, D.C.: American Society for Public Administration.

Brown, R.L. 1981. Beyond zero-base budgeting. *Journal of Accountancy* (March): 44-52.

Burke, J.P. 1986. *Bureaucratic Responsibility.* Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press.

Cammann, C., M. Fichman, D. Jenkins and J. Klesh. 1983. Assessing the attitudes and perceptions of organizational members. In *Assessing Organizational Change: A Guide to Methods, Measures and Practices,* ed. S. Seashore, E. Lawler, P. Mirvis and C. Cammann, 71-138. New York: John Wiley.

Cassetty, J.H., and R. Hutson. 2005. Effectiveness of federal incentives in shaping child support enforcement outcomes. *Children and Youth Services Review* 27: 271-289.

Coggburn, J.D., and S.K. Schneider. 2003. The quality of management and government performance: An empirical analysis of the American states. *Public Administration Review* 63: 206-13.

Code of Federal Regulations. 2001. 45 CFR 305.2 Performance Measures.

Coser, L.A. 1977. *Masters of Sociological Thought.* 2d ed. Fort Worth: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich College Publishers.

De Lancer, P., and M. Holzer. 2001. Promoting the utilization of performance measures in public organizations: An empirical study of factors affecting adoption and implementation. *Public Administration Review* 61: 693-708.

De Woolfson, B.H. 1975. Public sector management by MBO and PPB: Cross fertilization in management systems. *Public Administration Review* 35: 387-95.

Deming, W.E. 1986. *Out of the Crisis.* Cambridge: Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Center for Advanced Engineering Study.

Downs, A. 1967. *Inside Bureaucracy.* Prospect Heights, IL: Waveland Press, Inc.

Drucker, P.F. 1954. *The Practice of Management.* New York: Harper & Brothers Publishers.

Feldman, M.S., and A.M. Khademian. 2002. To manage is to govern. *Public Administration Review* 62(5): 541-554.

Gardiner, K., M. Fishman, A. Glosser and J. Tapogna. 2003. *Interim report: Study of the implementation of the performance-based incentive system: Prepared for the Office of Child Support Enforcement.* The Lewin Group and ECONNorthwest.

Garfinkel, I., D.R. Meyer, and S.S. McLanahan. 1998. A brief history of child support policies in the United States. In *Fathers Under Fire: The Revolution of Child Support Enforcement,* ed. I. Garfinkel, S.S. McLanahan, D.R. Meyer and J.A. Seltzer, 14-30. New York: Russell Sage Foundation.

Garvey, G. 1995. False promises: The NPR in historical perspective. In *Inside the Reinvention Machine: Appraising Governmental Reform,* ed. D.F. Kettl and J.J. DiIulio, 87-106. Washington, D.C.: The Brookings Institution.

Gore, A. 1993. *From Red Tape to Results: Creating a Government that Works Better and Costs Less. The report of the national performance review.* New York: Plume.

Gosling, J.J. 2002. *Budgetary Politics in American Governments.* 3d ed. New York: Routledge.

Gulick, L. 1937. Notes on the theory of organization. In *Classics of Public Administration.* 4th ed., ed. J.M. Shafritz, A.C. Hyde 81-9. Fort Worth: Harcourt Brace College Publishers.

Hammond, T.H., and G.J. Miller. 1985. A social choice perspective on expertise and authority in bureaucracy. *American Journal of Political Science.* 29(1): 1-28.

Heinrich, C.J. 2002. Outcomes-based performance management in the public sector: Implications for government accountability and effectiveness. *Public Administration Review* 62: 712-25.

_____ . 2003. Measuring public sector performance and effectiveness. In *Handbook of Public Administration,* ed. B.G. Peters and J. Pierre, 25-37. London: Sage.

Huang, C.C., I. Garfinkel, and J. Waldfogel. 2004. Child support enforcement and welfare caseloads. *The Journal of Human Resources* 39 (1): 108-134.

Hughes, O.E. 1994. *Public Management and Administration: An Introduction.* New York: St. Martin's Press.

Krabchuk, R.S. and R.W. Schack. 1996. Designing effective performance-management systems under the government performance and results act of 1993. *Public Administration Review* 56: 348-58.

Lauth, T.P. 1985. Performance evaluation in the Georgia budgetary process. *Public Budgeting & Finance* (Spring): 67-82.

Lynn, L.E. 1996. *Public Management as Art, Science and Profession.* Chatham NJ: Chatham House Publishers, Inc.

Mead, L.M. 2005. Research and welfare reform. *Review of Policy Research* 22(3): 401-21.

Mechanic, D. 1962. Sources of power of lower participants in complex organizations. *Administrative Science Quarterly* 7 (3): 349-64.

Miller, G.J. 1990. Managerial dilemmas: Political leadership in hierarchies. In *The Limits of Rationality*, ed. M. Levi and K. Cook, 324-48. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Mihm, J.C. 2001. Implementing GPRA: Progress and challenges. In *Quicker, Better, Cheaper? Managing Performance in American Government,* ed. D.W. Forsythe, 101-111. Albany: The Rockefeller Institute Press.

_____ . 2002. Beyond plans, promises and good intentions: Instilling results-oriented management in federal agencies. In *Meeting the Challenges of Performance-Oriented Government,* ed. K. Newcomer, E.T. Jennings, Jr., C. Broom and A. Lomax, 37-48. Washington, D.C.: American Society for Public Administration.

Moe, R.C. 1994. The "reinventing government" exercise: Misinterpreting the problem, misjudging the consequences. *Public Administration Review* 54: 111-22.

Nathan, R.P. 2001. Introduction. In *Quicker, Better, Cheaper? Managing Performance in American Government,* ed. D.W. Forsythe, 3-34. Albany: The Rockefeller Institute Press.

Nelson, L.S., M.D. Robbins and B. Simonsen. 1998. Introduction to the special issue on governance. *The Social Science Journal* 35: 477-91.

Oldham, G.R., and A. Cummings. 1996. Employee creativity: Personal and contextual factors at work. *Academy of Management Journal*, 39(3): 607-634.

Osborne D. and T. Gaebler. 1993. *Reinventing government: How the entrepreneurial spirit is transforming the public sector*. New York: Plume.

Peterson, M.F. et al. 1995. Role conflict, ambiguity, and overload: A 21-nation study. *Academy of Management Journal*, 38(2): 429-452.

Perrow, C. 1972. *Complex Organizations: A Critical Essay.* Glenview, IL: Scott Foresman & Co.

Poister, T.H. 2003. *Measuring Performance in Public and Nonprofit Organizations.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Pollitt, C. 1993. *Managerialism and the Public Services: Cuts or Cultural Change in the 1990s?* 2d ed., Cambridge: Blackwell.

Pratt, J.W., and R.J. Zechauser. 1985. Principals and agents: An overview. In *Principles and Agents: The Structure of Business,* ed. J.W. Pratt and R.J. Zechauser, 1-35. Boston: Harvard Business School Press.

Rosenbloom, D.H., and R.S. Kraychek. 2002. *Public Administration: Understanding Management, Politics, and Law in the Public Sector*, 5th ed., Boston: McGraw Hill.

Schick, A. 1966. The road to PPB: The stages of budget reform. *Public Administration Review* 26: 243-58.

Simon, H.A. 1945. *Administrative Behavior*, 4th ed., New York: The Free Press.

Sorenson, E., and A. Hill. 2004. Single mothers and their child-support receipt: How well is child-support enforcement doing? *The Journal of Human Resources* 29(1): 135-54.

Steiss, A.W., and G.A. Daneke. 1980. *Performance Administration: Improved Responsiveness and Effectiveness in Public Service.* Lexington, MA: LexingtonBooks.

Stone, D. 2002. *Policy Paradox: The Art of Political Decision Making*. rev. ed. W.W. Norton & Co.: New York.

Taylor, F.W. 1912. Scientific management. In *Classics of Public Administration.* 4th ed., ed. J.M. Shafritz, A.C. Hyde 30-2. Fort Worth TX: Harcourt Brace College Publishing.

The History of Child Support and its Partners (Human Technology, Inc., August 2003). Office of Child Support Enforcement. Videotape.

Thompson, J.D. 1967. *Organizations in Action: Social Science Bases of Administrative Theory*. New York: McGraw-Hill Book Co.

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services: Office of Child Support Enforcement. 1984. *Child Support Enforcement: 9th Annual Report to Congress for the Period Ending September 30, 1984*. Washington, D.C.

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services: Office of Child Support Enforcement. 1989. *Child Support Enforcement: Fourteenth Annual Report to Congress for the Period Ending September 30, 1989.* Washington, D.C.

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services: Office of Child Support Enforcement. 1996. *Child Support Enforcement: Twenty-First Annual Report to Congress for the Period Ending September 30, 1996.* Washington, D.C.

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. 1997. *Secretary's Report on the PRORAct DC-97-15.* Washington, D.C.

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services: Administration for Children and Families: Office of Child Support Enforcement. 2005. Downloaded on March 18, 2006. Child support handbook: Answers to questions. http://www.acf.dhhs.gov/programs/cse/pubs/2005/handbook_on_case.pdf

Weber, M. 1945. *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology,* ed. H.H. Gerth, C.W. Mills. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Williams, J.R., and P.E. Levy. 1992. The effects of perceived system knowledge on the agreement between self-ratings and supervisor ratings. *Personnel Psychology,* (45) pp. 835-847.

Wood, B.D., and R.W. Waterman. 1994. *Bureaucratic Dynamics: The Role of Bureaucracy in a Democracy.* Boulder, CO: Westview Press.