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Reputation Management in Public Organizations

PhD dissertation

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A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mette ØR', written in a cursive style.

Mette Østergaard Pedersen

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Since the turn of the new millennium, the concept of bureaucratic reputation and the reputation-conscious behaviour of public organizations has become a central perspective in the study of public administration. Key notions of the bureaucratic reputation framework are that a strong reputation enables public organizations to claim a unique and distinct contribution to society; that the nature of organizational reputation is multifaceted and multidimensional; and that public organizations have multiple audiences with multiple and often conflicting expectations.

The purpose of this PhD dissertation is to position the concept of reputation management as a management behaviour within a framework of bureaucratic reputation theory, and to provide a framework for understanding and studying how public managers perform reputation management to affect the reputation of their organization. This is achieved by answering the research questions:

How can we conceptualize and measure (public) reputation management? How can reputation management affect external audiences and employee outcomes?

Theoretically, the dissertation builds on literature about bureaucratic reputation and public management while also drawing on insights from more generic research on e.g., corporate reputation and auto-communication. A quantitative approach employing panel data is used to answer the research questions. Empirically, the research questions are studied in the context of three Danish agencies. These agencies are the Danish Health Authority, the Danish Veterinary and Food Administration and finally an anonymous agency. The findings of the PhD dissertation are presented in this summary and four research papers.

To answer the first research question, the dissertation suggests that we conceptualize reputation management as the managerial intent to affect how external audiences perceive the organization's reputation. This ambition is reflected in three behaviours that are logical parts of the managerial efforts to create a favourable reputation: the manager's attempt to identify perceptions and expectations held by audiences, to prioritize between different audiences (and expectations), and to communicate the vision of the organization to these (specific) audiences. The conceptualization is empirically validated in a measurement scale that enables measuring both manager-intended and employee-perceived reputation management behaviours, and managers' and employees' assessments of reputation management behaviours performed at the organizational level (Paper I).

To answer the second research question, the dissertation investigates how reputation management relates to external audiences' beliefs about the organization's reputation and employee outcomes, respectively.

The dissertation is not able to provide a clear answer to how reputation management relates to external audiences as these findings reveals mixed results (Paper III).

This does not mean that we should stop caring about reputation management. The dissertation discloses how reputation management matters for employee outcomes e.g., that reputation management is positively, and significantly related to employee outcomes (Paper II-III). The dissertation also sheds light upon how employees' perception of their organization's reputation relates to their job satisfaction and (although less pronounced) their organizational identification (Paper IV).

Theoretically, the conceptualisation of reputation management and associated scale is an important contribution to the literature on bureaucratic reputation. Empirically, the dissertation provides insights on how reputation management is performed by public managers and how this type of management behaviour matters for employee outcomes. The main contribution of the dissertation to the public management literature is thus to suggest that externally oriented management (and leadership) approaches should not be investigated in isolation in relation to their intended external effects, because these approaches may also be of relevance for employee and organizational outcomes.

In relation to how the dissertation may be of relevance for practice, I hope that public managers will assess the value of reputation management, also in terms of its potential, positive effects on employees. Leadership approaches directed towards employees such as transformational leadership are often time intensive and more effective when relying extensively on a face-to-face communication with employees. I suggest that public managers consider supplementing these efforts with efforts to convey the vision to external audiences. This, of course, means that it becomes even more relevant for public managers to come across as credible both internally and externally by aligning what they communicate internally with what they communicate to external audiences.

Et positivt og stærkt omdømme er værdifuldt for offentlige organisationer fordi deres ressourcer, magt, autonomi og legitimitet kan afhænge af deres omdømme. Når organisationer kommunikerer, afhænger modtagelsen af denne information blandt andet af organisationens omdømme. Det har betydning for offentlige organisationer, som anvender information som et centralt redskab i den styring der udøves, hvad enten det er regulering eller formulering af anbefalinger eller vejledninger. Det er også nemmere for organisationer med et godt omdømme at tiltrække nye medarbejdere.

En organisations omdømme er et resultat af omgivelsernes opfattelser af organisationen. Faktisk skelner man i litteraturen mellem flere dimensioner af omdømme, som offentlige organisationer kan have. Offentlige organisationer kan have et omdømme for hvorvidt/hvordan de udfører deres opgaver (dvs. et omdømme for performance), agerer ærligt, hensynsfuldt og under varetagelse af borgernes interesser (moralsk omdømme), følger relevante regler og love (et proceduralt omdømme) samt et omdømme for deres færdigheder og kompetencer (et teknisk omdømme). Derudover har offentlige organisationer et mere generaliseret omdømme, som er en mere overordnet vurdering af organisationen. De forskellige interessenter i organisationens omgivelser kan have forskellige eller endda modstridende opfattelser af, samt forventninger til, de forskellige dele af omdømmet. Det er derfor en vigtig, men kompleks opgave for offentlige ledere at være opmærksomme på deres omgivelser og på de forventninger, som centrale aktører i omgivelserne stiller til dem.

Formålet med denne Ph.d.-afhandling er at positionere begrebet omdømmeledelse som en distinkt ledelsesadfærd, samt at præsentere en teoretisk ramme for at forstå og studere, hvordan offentlige ledere udøver omdømmeledelse for at påvirke deres organisations omdømme.

Formålet indfries ved at besvare forskningsspørgsmålene: *Hvordan kan vi begrebsliggøre og måle omdømmeledelse i en kontekst af offentlige organisationer? Og hvordan kan omdømmeledelse påvirke henholdsvis eksterne interessenter og medarbejdere?*

Teoretisk bygger afhandlingen på litteratur om bureaukratisk omdømme samt offentlig ledelse. Derudover trækker afhandlingen på indsigter fra forskning om bl.a. virksomheders omdømme samt teori om autokommunikation. Forskningsspørgsmålene besvares ved brug af en kvantitativ tilgang bestående af to runder af spørgeskemaundersøgelser blandt ledere og medarbejdere i tre danske styrelser samt blandt et repræsentativt borgerudsnit og et udvalg af styrelsernes centrale interessenter. De tre styrelser er Sundhedsstyrelsen, Fødevarestyrelsen samt en styrelse, som er anonym i afhandlingen.

I afhandlingens forståelse er ambitionen med omdømmeledelse at forsøge at identificere og påvirke omgivelsernes opfattelser af organisationen. Denne ambition er reflekteret i tre

kernehandlinger: forsøg på at *identificere* interessenters opfattelser og forventninger til organisationen, *prioritere* mellem forskellige interessenter og forventninger samt at *kommunikere* organisationens vision (og i bredere forstand organisationens unikke bidrag til samfundet) til disse interessenter.

Afhandlingen udvikler en skala til at måle offentlige ledelse og validerer den blandt både ledere og medarbejdere i de tre undersøgte styrelser.

Afhandlingen undersøger hvordan omdømmeledelse relaterer sig til organisatorisk omdømme (eksterne interessenters opfattelser og holdninger til organisationen) samt forhold blandt medarbejderne. Den empiriske undersøgelse finder blandede resultater vedrørende interessenternes opfattelse af styrelserne omdømme, og kan derfor hverken be- eller afkræfte hvorvidt der er en sammenhæng mellem ledernes omdømmeledelse og organisationens omdømme. Til gengæld finder afhandlingen, at omdømmeledelse er positivt relateret til blandt andet (I) medarbejdernes opbakning til organisationens vision, (II) medarbejdernes oplevelse af overensstemmelse mellem egne værdier og organisationens værdier samt (III) medarbejdernes opfattelse af organisationens omdømme.

Den teoribaserede konceptualisering af omdømmeledelse udgør afhandlingens hovedbidrag. Den er et bidrag til litteraturen om offentlige organisationers omdømme, fordi den belyser at omdømmeledelse er en ledelsesadfærd som udøves af offentlige ledere og ikke kun – som hidtidig begrebsliggjort – er en adfærd, som udøves af organisationer som sådan. Empirisk bidrager afhandlingen med undersøgelser af hvordan omdømmeledelse, som egentlig er en eksternt rettet ledelsesadfærd, også kan have relevans internt i organisationen i form af medarbejderne. Hovedbidraget til litteraturen om offentlig ledelse er således at afhandlingen viser, at eksternt rettet ledelsesadfærd ikke bør undersøges i isolation i relation til de intenderede eksterne konsekvenser, fordi disse typer ledelsesadfærd også kan være af relevans for medarbejdernes opfattelser, holdninger og adfærd.

Jeg håber, at afhandlingen dermed også kan have relevans for ledere, som bedriver ledelse i den offentlige sektor. Ledelse som er rettet imod medarbejderne, så som eksempelvis transformationsledelse, er ofte meget tidskrævende og mest effektiv når den udøves ansigt-til-ansigt med (helst ikke for mange) medarbejdere. Offentlige ledere kan overveje at supplere disse bestræbelser med handlinger, der retter sig imod at kommunikere organisationens vision, værdier og bidrag til samfundet eksternt til organisationens forskellige målgrupper/interessenter. Dette betyder naturligvis, at det bliver endnu mere relevant for offentlige ledere at fremstå som troværdige både internt og eksternt ved at afstemme det, de kommunikerer internt, med det, de kommunikerer til eksterne målgrupper.

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CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

“

*One helpful aspect of a reputation-based perspective on regulatory organizations, then, is that it allows students to decompose these agencies and think about (and perhaps predict) the varying behaviour of individuals within them”
(Carpenter 2010, 48-49)*

1.1. Motivation and Research Questions

When it comes to the study of the bureaucracy, reputation has become a dominant perspective in public administration key to our understanding of the role and behaviour of public organizations (Carpenter & Krause 2012; Maor 2016; Overman, Busuioc & Wood 2020). Central to the reputation-based perspective is that a strong reputation is a “valuable political asset, that can be used to generate public support, to achieve delegated authority and discretion from politicians, to protect the organization from political attack, and to recruit and retain valued employees” (Carpenter 2002, 491). According to Carpenter (2010, 33), organizational reputation can “expand and deflate” the autonomy, authority and bureaucratic power of public organizations necessary to operate. Thus, a strong reputation has instrumental value and implications for the ability of public organizations to fulfil their mission and perform their core tasks.

Consider a few practical examples from the dissertation’s empirical context. The Danish Health Authority is the supreme health authority in Denmark according to the Danish Health Care Act (2022). One of the main tasks of this agency is to promote the health of the Danish population through preventive measures. Of course, there are legal provisions that regulate what people, organizations and companies can and cannot do, but the agency’s ability to perform its main tasks to a very high extent depends on professional authority and legitimacy. Do the different stakeholders in the health- and eldercare sector believe what the Danish Health Authority communicates? And do they agree and comply with the agency’s recommendations? When parents consider whether their child should follow the childhood vaccination program recommended by the Danish Health Authority, their choice likely depends to some extent on the authority and reputation of the agency. Likewise, during the Covid-19 pandemic, legislation and regulations were imposed to regulate the behaviour of citizens, organizations and companies, but so were also a lot of new guidelines and recommendations by, among others, the Danish Health Authority. Whether in relation to hygiene, social distancing, cancellations of birthdays and Christmas parties, working-from-home policies or, as before,

choice regarding vaccination, the reputation of the agency mattered. The agency's ability to influence behaviour and induce (voluntary) compliance is influenced by whether and how we perceive and evaluate the Danish Health Authority as an authority.

As another example, the Danish Veterinary and Food Administration is responsible for food safety and health from 'farm to fork' in Denmark. They formulate rules and regulations in relation to e.g., animal health, animal welfare, food safety and food quality. They also produce guidelines and recommendations in these areas and in relation to diet and nutrition. When employees from the agency conduct inspections or control visits at farms, slaughterhouses or restaurants, it is important that stakeholders such as consumers, companies or export markets trust the agency to have the general capacity to conduct inspections, actually does perform high-quality inspections, and that the agency follows just procedures and behaves morally correct while doing so. Likewise, when consumers make dietary or nutrition choices for themselves and their families, the extent to which they consider different labelling schemes (e.g., "The Keyhole Label", "Whole Grain Logo" or the "Smiley Scheme") or follow the Official Dietary Guidelines is, at least partly, influenced by whether consumers believe what the agency communicates and the extent to which they consider the agency a professional authority.

The purpose of this dissertation is to provide a framework for understanding and studying how public managers perform reputation management to affect the reputation of their organization.

Within the bureaucratic reputation framework, reputation is defined as "a set of beliefs about the unique and separable capacities, roles and obligations of an organization, where these beliefs are embedded in audience networks" (Carpenter 2010, 33). An audience (or stakeholder: the two concepts are used interchangeably within this line of research) is any actor or group of actors that observe an organization and can monitor it e.g., political principals, clients, citizens, interest groups, professions, peer organizations or media (Blom-Hansen & Finke 2020). From an audience perspective, organizational reputation is an important informative signal that acts as a mechanism for them to evaluate the risk of engaging with the organization. As such, reputation can be regarded as an indication of the trustworthiness of an organization (Verhoest, Rommel & Boon 2015) which influences the level of political and societal support of the organization. For example, in a study of the Flemish electricity and gas regulator, Verhoest and colleagues (2015) found that reputation acted as a trust-building mechanism that increased the organization's de facto policy autonomy and resulted in deeper forms of collaborations. In a study of the Cypriot Water Authority, Capelos and colleagues (2016) found that reputation positively affected citizens' voluntary cooperation and compliance, while also reducing complaints. Within corporate reputation research, reputation has also been found to influence the attractiveness of organizations as a workplace with implications for the ability to attract new staff at employee- and senior management-level (Petkova 2012). According to Abolafia

and Hatmaker (2013) reputation also holds potential to affect how employees perceive themselves and their organization, and shape the attitudes, motivation and behaviour of public employees.

Research departing from the bureaucratic reputation theory has convincingly demonstrated the value of a reputational approach to the study of public organizations, including how reputational concerns explain regulatory and decision making behaviour (Carpenter 2001; Moffitt 2010; Maor & Sulitzeanu-Kenan 2013), autonomy building (Carpenter 2001) strategic communication responses to reputational threats in the form of negative media coverage (Maor, Gilad & Bloom 2013; Gilad, Maor & Bloom 2015; Rimkutė 2020, Müller & Braun 2021) bureaucratic corporation (Busuioc 2016) and turf protection practices (Maor 2010; Busuioc & Lodge 2016).

However, while research on the reputation-conscious behaviour of public organizations has indeed surfaced, there are at least three observations that warrant scholarly attention for the further development of reputation management within bureaucratic reputation theory. First, most reputation-based research on the behaviour of public organizations investigates reactive (rather than proactive) communication behaviour. This means that while both theoretical and empirical developments have been made towards uncovering different types of reactive, strategic communication responses in relation to reputation threats aimed at reputation protection, there has been a blind spot within this line of research in relation to theorizing more proactive reputation management strategies intended to cultivate a strong reputation (see Müller & Braun 2021). Second, existing research has generally treated the organizational level as the unit of analysis. This means that we have little knowledge about endogenous aspects of public organizations' reputation-oriented behaviour. We lack systematic theorizing with respect to the managerial behaviours behind, e.g., communicative responses to protect let alone to cultivate positive reputations. We also lack empirical investigations of the intra-organizational behaviour, i.e., the actors who are deciding and performing the strategic communication.

Third, although being an externally oriented managerial behaviour intended to affect external audiences' perceptions of the organization, reputation management may also be of relevance for employee outcomes which is partly due to the auto communicative nature of external communication such as reputation management. In reputational terms, the media provides one of the channels through which public organizations signal their reputation uniqueness (e.g., via communicating their vision or broader contribution to the public good) to their manifold audiences and these institutional intermediaries used by external audiences—and potentially also by the organizations themselves—to make sense of what the organization is, what it aspires to be, and its positive impact on society more broadly. Employees are argued to be among the most—if not *the* most—attentive listeners of organizational messages directed towards external audiences (Morsing 2006; Christensen 2018). Because reputation management also reaches organizational members, it is argued to serve a self-

confirming and self-reproducing function (Lotman 1990) with potential to define, alter and shape how employees perceive the organization (Christensen 2018).

It is therefore highly relevant to shed light on how public managers engage in activities to manage the reputation of their organization. The dissertation does so by bridging the bureaucratic reputation framework with public management literature thus contributing to the conceptual development of reputation management as a managerial behaviour within a framework of bureaucratic reputation theory. Bridging these two streams of literature can contribute to the research on bureaucratic reputation and public management, respectively. The literature on bureaucratic reputation can benefit from a measure that allows investigations of the managers within the organizational hierarchy who perform reputation-conscious behaviour not merely of a reactive but also of a proactive nature, how they do so and with which effects in relation to organizational reputation and internal organizational and employee-level outcomes. That is, theorizations of the behavioural aspects of reputation management as they are performed at the individual level.

Likewise, the public management literature can benefit from the dissertation's focus on an externally oriented aspect of public management, i.e., management behaviours performed by public managers as they attempt to affect how their organization is perceived by external audiences. Within public management research, attention has primarily been directed towards internal, downwards aspects of public management, i.e., management behaviour directed at employees (e.g., O'Toole & Meier 2011, 55; Orazi et al. 2013; Van Wart 2013; 't Hart 2014; Vogel & Masal 2015; Tummers & Knies 2016) vis-à-vis management behaviour directed towards the environment. However, as noted by Montgomery van Wart (2003, 221), core public management behaviours are a mix of providing technical performance, internal direction to followers (leading downwards), and external organizational direction aimed at aligning the organization with its environment (leading outwards). Public managers thus "spend a considerable amount of time scanning their organization's environment for threats and opportunities and dealing with external actors to gain information and political support" (Fernandez 2005, 202–203). The public management literature may thus benefit from directing attention towards externally oriented aspects of the behaviour of public managers, which may also be of relevance for organizational outcomes.

The dissertation provides a framework for understanding how public managers engage in activities to affect how their organization is perceived and judged by external audiences, thus contributing to the conceptual development of reputation management as a managerial behaviour within a framework of bureaucratic reputation theory.

For the dissertation's conceptualization of reputation management to be theoretically relevant, it should clarify the distinct theoretical grounds of the concept, outline its core behaviours and describe how the concept differs from other, related management or leadership concepts. Additionally, it is essential that the concept is measurable and possible to apply in empirical studies. Furthermore, for

the conceptualization of reputation management to have practical relevance, it should capture management behaviours that public managers perform in practice in their attempts to influence how their organization is perceived by external stakeholders. Finally, for reputation management to have both *theoretical* and *practical* relevance, the concept must prove relevant for organizational reputation and potentially also for other desirable outcomes at employee or organizational level.

To achieve this, the dissertation poses the following research questions:

1. How can we conceptualize and measure (public) reputation management?
2. How can reputation management affect external audiences and employee outcomes?

The research questions are somewhat explorative because there is limited theoretical and empirical knowledge to build on. Reputation management is conceptually and theoretically underdeveloped within corporate communication (Carroll 2018) and corporate reputation (Ravasi et al 2018) research, and in particular in relation to public organizations (Maor 2015; 2016). We therefore need a theoretical point of departure that enables a robust and systematic approach capable of ensuring the empirical validation of the concept, its causes and effects.

1.2. Theoretical and Empirical Relevance

Theoretically, the dissertation draws on different strands of literature. To conceptualize reputation management, theory of bureaucratic reputation is combined with literature on corporate reputation and the management thereof, as well as insights from the literature on public management. To theorize how reputation management can affect a) external audiences' perceptions of the organization and b) employee outcomes, the dissertation draws on literatures such as auto-communication, self-persuasion and mirroring theories when investigating the hypotheses proposed in the different papers.

In the dissertation, I argue that the distinctive theoretical trait of reputation management is the managerial intent to create a favourable perception of the organization among its audiences. I further suggest that we conceptualize reputation management as consisting of three behaviours that are logical parts of the managerial efforts to create a favourable reputation: The manager's attempts to *identify* perceptions and expectations held by audiences, to *prioritize* between different audiences (and expectations), and to *communicate* the vision of the organization to these (specific) audiences.

Investigating how reputation management relates to external audiences and employee outcomes can improve our understanding of the concept and its scope as well as guide theoretical expectations about performance effects, which are ultimately the end goals of this management approach. In terms of external audiences, I investigate how reputation management relates to organizational reputation as perceived by two types of external audiences.

Because external audiences play a key role within bureaucratic reputation theory, internal audiences (i.e. employees), have up until recently been a blind spot because attention has almost exclusively been directed towards external audiences relative to employees (Abolafia & Hatmaker 2013; Rho, Lee & Yun 2015). The reputation literature therefore tends to overlook how organizational reputations reside in “a network of internal and external audiences” (Bustos 2021, 734), and therefore also overlook the potential impact of reputation management and organizational reputation on individual level outcomes. It is therefore timely and relevant to expand the empirical domain of bureaucratic reputation research and also direct attention towards employees and investigate employee outcomes. In the dissertation, I study how reputation management relates to mission valence, value congruence, employee perceived organizational reputation and employee advocacy. Mission valence has been argued to hold a motivational potential vis-à-vis employees (Goodsell 2011) and therefore attracted scholarly interest within the public management literature as an important lever that public managers can pull when cultivating the motivational aspects of their employees, enhancing employee work efforts, and ultimately improving organizational performance (Wright, Moynihan & Pandey 2012). Value congruence has been suggested as an important mechanism through which public managers can influence employee mission valence. The mediating effect of value congruence was first noted by Callier (citing Paarlberg & Lavigna 2010) when investigating the relationship between transformational leadership and mission valence (2016, 229). Employee advocacy refers to employee communication behaviour in terms of promoting the organization to external audiences (Kim & Rhee 2011). Corporate reputation research has established that employee advocacy can be positively related to employee outcomes e.g., employee identification with, for example, the organization vision as well as to employee motivation and engagement (Fombrun & van Riel 2004; Men 2014). I also explore how reputation management relates to employee perceived organizational reputation, i.e., the perceptions that employees have about how their organization is perceived and judged by its external audiences. Recently, research has begun to focus on how forces (both actual and as perceived by employees and managers) in the external environment of public organizations may relate to employee outcomes such as employee engagement (Dhir & Shukla 2019; Hameduddin & Lee 2021; Hameduddin 2021), organizational identification and commitment (Rho, Yun & Lee 2015; Gilad, Bloom & Assouline, 2018). The dissertation builds on this recent research and contributes to expanding the empirical domain of bureaucratic reputation theory by investigating how employee perceptions about organizational reputation relates to job satisfaction, public service motivation and organizational identification.

Empirically, the research questions are studied in the context of three Danish agencies. These agencies are the Danish Health Authority (DHA), the Danish Veterinary and Food Administration (DVFA) and finally an agency which has requested anonymity. I refer to this agency as Agency X throughout the dissertation including the four papers, and I will thus also not bring examples in

relation to this agency. I focus on reputation management in regulatory agencies, because reputation is argued to be of special importance for regulatory agencies within the political science approach to reputation (Carpenter 2010, 10; Wæraas & Maor 2015; Overman, Busuioc & Wood 2020, 416). As such, their reputational awareness expectedly is relatively high, and they and their managers can be assumed to be more reputation-sensitive and prone to engage in reputation management behaviours (Boon et al 2019a).

Inspired by most-likely and exemplary sampling approaches to case selection (Eckstein 1975; Bronk 2012; Linneberg, Trenca & Noerrekli 2021), I consider regulatory agencies a suited context to validate the dissertation's conceptualization and measurement scale of reputation management as well as to investigate how reputation management relates to employee outcomes and organizational reputation. The three agencies are chosen based on their common features with the aim of ensuring as much comparability as possible. The agencies all have a primarily regulatory function. They are among the most media-salient agencies within a Danish context and have been so for the last 15-20 years. Further, the three agencies are comparable in the sense that they have all experienced multiple periods with intensive negative media coverage during that time period. As such, I have chosen regulatory agencies where I have reason to expect that managers engage in reputation management behaviours to a high degree relative to managers in other (and less reputation-conscious types of) public organizations. The rationale for doing so is that a context where reputation management can be considered likely to be performed is a good first test of the application and practical relevance of this newly established management concept and to investigate how this reputation management relates to external audiences and employee outcomes.

A panel design employing two rounds of surveys is used to answer the research questions. I use the first round of surveys to validate the reputation management measurement scale, and a balanced panel from the two surveys conducted with a year and a half between the data collections to study how reputation management relates to external audiences and employee outcomes. A panel consists of repeated measurements at different points in time of the same individual units (Jacobsen & Andersen 2014). Panel designs are – compared to cross sectional designs - often better aligned with the underlying theoretical arguments and mechanisms, perhaps especially when investigating how perceptions and attitudes are affected by e.g., leadership (Oberfield 2014; Stritch 2017), because repeated measures allow the investigation of changes over time in the focal constructs and their relations: whether reputation management can affect e.g., employee mission valence or other employee outcomes. The panel design also effectively controls for the fact that individuals tend to answer surveys in a way that conforms to social norms, thus reducing the potential common source bias problem relating to the issue of using employee assessments of e.g., managerial behaviour and employee outcomes. Descriptive analyses are also included because they allow investigations of how e.g.,

reputation management, organizational reputation and employees' perceptions hereof may vary between the three agencies at the two survey moments.

As I will address in chapter 8 when discussing the future of reputation management, other levels within the bureaucracy are also relevant for understanding the concept and scope of reputation management, and how public managers attempt to affect how their organization is perceived by external audiences. In line with research drawing on an organizational approach to reputation, I will argue that reputation is also important for agencies with non-regulatory tasks such as redistribution or service delivery, and for public organizations at lower government levels. For example, when parents are considering which school to enrol their child in, the reputation of the different schools in the local area expectedly plays a role in their decision making. And when citizens decide which municipality or local area they would like to live in, the reputation of that municipality or area presumably influences their settlement choice.

1.3. Dissertation Outline

The dissertation consists of this summary and four papers covering the different research elements. Table 1. provides an outline of the full title of each paper, their status and which of the two overall research questions they each address. How can we conceptualize and measure (public) reputation management is addressed in Paper I. How reputation management can affect external audiences and employee outcomes is investigated in Paper II-IV.

Table 1. Papers in the dissertation and the research questions that they address

	Research Question
Paper I. Pedersen, M. Ø. & H.H. Salomonsen (2022) Conceptualizing and measuring (public) reputation management. R&R in <i>Perspectives on Public Management and Governance</i>	1
Paper II. Pedersen, M. Ø. & H.H. Salomonsen (2022) How transformational leadership and reputation management relate to employee mission valence: A two-wave study of mission valence in public agencies R&R in <i>Public Administration</i>	2
Paper III. Pedersen, M. Ø., K. Verhoest & H.H. Salomonsen (2022) Does reputation management matter for regulatory agencies' reputations as perceived by their external and internal audiences? R&R in <i>Regulation & Governance</i>	2
Paper IV. Pedersen, M. Ø. (2022) How employee perceived organizational reputation relates to employee outcomes: Looking in the organizational mirror, what do I see? In preparation for submission	2

In paper I, I develop a conceptualization and validate a measurement scale of reputation management using survey responses from 499 employees and 59 managers. The paper investigates four specifications of reputation management: as managers' self-assessments, as managers' assessment

of the organization's reputation management, as employee ratings of their immediate manager's reputation management and finally as employee ratings of the organizational reputation management, i.e., the vision. For each specification the factor structure was tested and validated using confirmatory factor analysis. Additionally, the paper finds that reputation management correlates with, but also discriminates from transformational leadership. Transformational leadership is one of the most pronounced leadership approaches within the context of public organizations, and at the same time a type of leadership that share a central common feature with reputation management. Testing reputation management against transformational leadership thus provides for a conservative test of discriminant validity of reputation management. Although the linked by an appreciation of the organizational vision, they are also different in the sense that communicating the vision in reputation management is done with the aim of affecting external audiences' perceptions of the organization whereas the purpose in transformational leadership is to transform or influence employees to transcend self-interest and work to realize organizational goals.

Paper II examines how reputation management relates to employee outcomes; more specifically by investigating the relationship between reputation management and transformational leadership, respectively, and mission valence. This paper also investigates the potential mediating effect of value congruence on the proposed relationships between the two leadership concepts, respectively, and mission valence. Panel analyses using repeated measures of 193 employees show that both reputation management and transformational leadership are positively related to mission valence. Additionally, the paper finds that the positive relationships between the two leadership/management constructs and mission valence are partially mediated by value congruence, i.e., the extent to which employees perceive alignment between their own values and the organizational values.

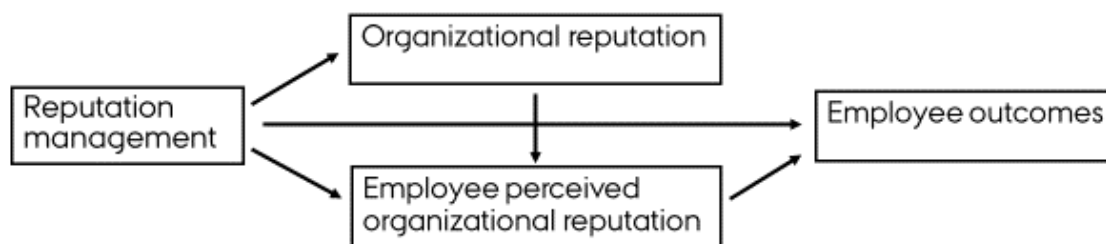
Paper III investigates whether reputation management is related to organizational reputation and employee perceived organizational reputation. Organizational reputation refers to external audiences' beliefs about an organization's reputation whereas employee perceived organizational reputation captures employees' own perceptions of these beliefs. This paper also examines whether reputation management relates to employee advocacy behaviour. The paper finds mixed results when investigating the relationship between reputation management and organizational reputation. The main finding is that although the paper does not find a clear relationship between reputation management and external audiences' beliefs about the organization, panel analyses do show a positive and significant relationship between reputation management and how employees perceive the organizational reputation. Moreover, employee advocacy partially mediates that relationship.

Finally, Paper IV explores the relationship between employee perceived organizational reputation and three employee outcomes: job satisfaction, public service motivation, and organizational identification. These outcomes have been established as important antecedents of individual and organizational performance. Using panel analyses, the main finding of this paper is that the perceptions

that employees have of their organization's reputation relates to their job satisfaction, and to a lesser extent also to their organizational identification. By identifying how employee perceived organisational reputation relates to employee outcomes, the paper points to the dual nature of organizational reputation as also residing in internal audiences, although existing research has had a tendency to overlook internal audiences relative to external audiences.

Figure 1. gives an overview of the overall project model and main concepts of the dissertation as well as the specific links between the main concepts. In each paper, additional theories, concepts and mechanisms are also examined.

Figure 1. Project model and main concepts



The dissertation is structured in three main parts. The first part consists of the first three chapters including this introductory chapter. The next chapter describes the conceptualization of reputation management and presents the theoretical underpinnings and expectations of the dissertation. Chapter 3 elaborates the research designs and case selection of the dissertation. The second part of the dissertation are chapters 4-7 which contain the four research papers of my PhD project. The final part, Chapter 8, concludes on the answers to the research questions based on the findings in the four papers. In this chapter, I also evaluate the strengths and limitations of the dissertation, reflect upon critical perspectives of reputation management and suggest possible avenues for future research. Finally, the chapter ends with a discussion of implications for practice.

CHAPTER 2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This chapter is mainly devoted to presenting the dissertation's definition and conceptualization of reputation management within a framework of bureaucratic reputation theory, as well as positioning reputation management as a public leadership behaviour. This part builds on the conceptual framework developed in Paper I (Chapter 4). Additionally, the chapter outlines the theoretical arguments for expecting why reputation management can influence external audiences and employee outcomes. I also theorize how employee perceived organizational reputation relates to employee outcomes. The subsequent section begins by presenting the conceptual framework of organizational reputation and introducing some of the key notions of bureaucratic reputation theory.

2.1. Organizational Reputation

Within research departing from bureaucratic reputation theory, most scholars adhere to the definition of organizational reputation as “a set of symbolic beliefs about the unique or separable capacities, intentions, roles, obligations, history and mission of an organization that are embedded in a network of multiple audiences” (Carpenter 2010, p. 33). Although the importance of reputation for public organizations is also discussed in classic public administration literature, including Simon, Smithburg and Thomsen (1950) and Wilson (1989), a systematic, theoretical and empirical focus did not emerge before Daniel Carpenter's (2001; 2010) pioneering works on reputation within the context of US agencies (Carpenter & Krause 2012). Since then, bureaucratic reputation has become a dominant perspective in the study of public sector organizations and their behaviour (Overman, Busuioc & Wood 2020). As argued by Carpenter and Krause (2015), studying public organizations through a reputation-centred lens builds on a transactional understanding of bureaucratic authority rather than a hierarchical understanding and thus provides an alternative explanation to more traditional principal-agent models of bureaucratic politics. In a transactional understanding, the principal-agent relationship reflects a ‘power sharing arrangement’ between politicians and bureaucrats. As such, a strong organizational reputation is a source of bureaucratic power that can provide a protective shield against hostile audiences in the environment and secure the organization's autonomy and authority vis-à-vis its political principals (Carpenter 2001).

In a review of organizational reputation in corporate reputation research, Lange, Lee and Dai (2011, 155) found that reputation within this line of research is conceptualized as either *being known* (generalized awareness, visibility or prominence of the organization), *being known for something* (perceived predictability of organizational outcomes and behaviour relevant to specific audience interests), *generalized favourability* (perceptions and judgements of the organization as overall good,

appropriate and attractive) or any combination of the three aspects. In corporate reputation research, reputation signals a competitive advantage linked primarily to fiscal performance (Hall 1993; Ryan 2007). For public organizations, performance plays a key role for organizational reputation, but so do also e.g., moral and procedural aspects of their functioning, scope and objectives (Loumaho 2007; Bustos 2021). Bureaucratic reputation scholars thus argue that conceptualizations of corporate reputation are too narrowly focused for their applicableness in a public sector context (Wæraas & Byrkjeflot 2012, 189; Overman, Busuioc & Wood 2020; 415).

Within a bureaucratic reputation framework, reputation is conceptualized as a multi-dimensional construct consisting of four dimensions: a performative (can the agency do its job and fulfil its core task?) a technical (does the organization have the technical skills and capacity to reach goals, outputs, and/or outcomes, regardless of actual performance?), a procedural (are the procedures and processes performed by the organization just?) and a moral (is the agency behaving morally and ethically correctly when doing its job?) (Carpenter & Krause 2012, 27; Overman, Busuioc & Wood 2020, 3). The four dimensions reflect different types of public values characterizing different principles for modes of governance in organizational design (Beck Jørgensen & Vrangbæk 2011; Andersen et al. 2012). These values include effectiveness, transparency, legality and equity (van Ryzin 2011; Boon, Salomonsen & Verhoest 2021).

Bridging the multidimensional conceptualization by bureaucratic reputation theory and Fombrun's (2012) conceptualization of corporate reputation as "a collective assessment of an organization's attractiveness", Lee and van Ryzin (2019, 179) suggest that audiences of public organizations form beliefs about the reputational dimensions as well as a more general belief reflecting the general favourability of the organization. Following Lee and van Ryzin (2019), organizational reputation in the dissertation refers to (specific) external audiences' beliefs about an organization based on their perceptions and evaluative judgements about the different reputational dimensions as well as their overall evaluation of the organization.

2.2. Theorizing Reputation Management

According to Carpenter's definition, audiences form beliefs about the organization's uniqueness referring to the demonstration by an organization that it can create solutions and provide services that no other agency in the polity offers (Carpenter (2001, 5). This idea resembles the idea of "distinctive competence" by Selznick (1957) who argued that it is the role of an organization's managers to advance and protect such competencies and their underlying resources. The managerial aspects of reputation management remain, however, relatively unexplored in the public management and bureaucratic reputation literatures, and research on reputation management in the context of public organizations is still in its infancy (Maor 2016).

In order to advance reputation management as a specific type of management behaviour, I develop a conceptualization of (public) reputation management in Paper I. In the initial stages of developing a such conceptualization, I conducted a systematic search in nine top-level public management journals and found 19 relevant articles which could be divided into three overall groups (for further details please see Paper I).

In the first (and smallest) group, reputation management is linked to corporate branding without further conceptual distinctions. Sataøen and Wæraas (2015) focusing on Norwegian public hospitals and Wæraas (2014) focusing on US government agencies both point to reputation management as relating to external communication reflecting the vision of the organization and as such also its core values. In the second group, reputation management is theorized and examined as a primarily reactive communication strategy or response aimed at protecting the organization's reputation when exposed to reputational threats (e.g., Maor, Gilad & Bloom 2013; Gilad, Maor & Bloom 2015; Alon-Barkat & Gilad 2017). Agencies at state or EU level as well as central banks make up the empirical setting within this research. Moschella and Pinto (2019) identify communication strategies based on the US Federal Bank's reputational concerns about policy reversals and argue that organizations must balance multiple issues and emphasize some issues at the expense of others. Finally, in the third group reputation is conceptualized as a communication strategy that can also be proactive and which consists of an organization's self-presentation on its website or through tweets that highlight aspects relating to the different reputational dimensions. For example, Christensen and Gornitzka (2019) examine how four Norwegian regulatory agencies over a 10-year period use communication on their websites to appeal to different audiences. Christensen and Lodge (2018, 121) argue that reputation management "involves issues about the core mission of an agency, reflecting on the agency's historical path, its main resources and competences, and its outputs and outcomes" and examine how government agencies across five European countries manage their reputation through the way they present themselves on their websites.

Summing up, I found that many of the articles point to reputation management reflecting communication of core mission, vision and/or values aimed at affecting external audiences' perception of the organization. Further, while primarily conceived as a reactive strategy, some also point to the proactive nature of reputation management as well as emphasize the need for prioritizing what to communicate, and to whom. In all three groups, reputation management is conceptualized as an organizational-level activity.

Thus, this line of research lacks systematic conceptualizations of reputation management as a managerial behaviour as well as theorizations of the behavioural aspects of reputation management as it is performed at the individual level.

In the conceptualization, I apply the framework for conceptualizing leadership behaviours developed in Jensen et al. (2019) to address previous criticisms of leadership concepts conceptualized by

their effects (Judge & Piccolo, 2004; van Knippenberg & Sitkin, 2013), and outline the distinctive theoretical trait of reputation management and its three associated behaviours. I argue that the core ambition of reputation management is the managerial intent to convey a positive portrayal of the organization and to foster a positive perception among the (primarily) external audiences of an organization in terms of the organization's contribution to society. It follows from this understanding of management, that managers do not always succeed in affecting audience perceptions in a favourable direction, but that reputation management behaviours are characterized by the *intention* to create a favourable perception of the organization among its audiences (Paper I).

I argue that (public) reputation management consists of three behaviours that are logical parts of the managerial ambition to create a favourable reputation: The manager's attempts to *identify* the perceptions and expectations held by external audiences, to *prioritize* between different audiences, expectations and reputational aspects, and to *communicate* the vision of the organization to these (specific) audiences. With my conceptualization of reputation management as consisting of three core behaviours, I aim to develop a construct with a focused and limited scope. I do not include specific actions such as press releases, speeches, stakeholder analyses, or advertising, nor do I attempt to develop an exhaustive list of reputation management activities. Instead, I focus on the three core behaviours, which I argue are central aspects of managers' attempts to create a favourable reputation in the eyes of external stakeholders (Paper I).

Before going into more detail about the core ambition of reputation management and the associated behaviours, I will first further clarify the underlying theoretical understanding of management on which I built this conceptualization.

2.2.1. Reputation Management as Public Management Behaviour.

In the dissertation, I argue that communicating the organizational vision is a central mechanism in public managers' attempts to create a favourable reputation in the eyes of their external stakeholders. Like Tummers and Knies (2016, 435), I acknowledge the existence of an ongoing scholarly debate about the potential differences and overlaps between leadership and management strategies and behaviours. I appreciate this difference, and by so doing acknowledge that applying a vision is more aligned with definitions of leadership vis-à-vis management (e.g., as suggested by Bass 2008: 654). Still, I use the term "reputation management" to describe managerial behaviours intended to affect external audiences' perceptions of the organization, because this term is widely used within the fields of corporate and bureaucratic reputation research. By doing so, I build on related work in public administration and corporate reputation research.

Because the behavioural aspects of reputation management are more aligned with leadership vis-à-vis management, I have drawn on Yukl's (2006, 8) broad description of leadership as "the process of influencing others to understand and agree about what needs to be done and how to do it, and the

process of facilitating individual and collective efforts to accomplish shared objectives” in my conceptualization of reputation management. First, his understanding of leadership emphasizes leadership as a ‘process’ and not as a trait or a person. I apply this processual understanding of leadership in my conceptualization of reputation management when I identify a group of behaviours with the shared ambition to influence external audiences’ perceptions about the organization. The processual understanding allows me to avoid confounding reputation management and its effects. Second, Yukl’s understanding of leadership focuses on ‘influencing’ others to agree about what to do and facilitating their efforts to accomplish shared objectives. Leadership is thus about influencing perceptions as well as facilitating others to accomplish a certain outcome. Although the core theoretical trait of reputation management is the ambition to influence perceptions, this management type does not align completely with Yukl’s understanding in relation to facilitating others’ efforts to achieve shared goals. Reputation management is not characterized by an ambition to influence behaviour, at least not primarily. Third, the focus on ‘others’ emphasizes how leadership takes place in relations between the leader and some other actors; there must be someone to influence. This understanding of leadership does not define who these other actors are, nor that leadership necessarily takes place in an intra-organizational context towards employees or other managers, that is downwards or upwards; leadership can thus also be directed outwards as is the case with reputation management where the intent of the leadership is to influence the perceptions of external audiences. This multiplicity of directions in which management and leadership can be performed is also highlighted by e.g., Moore (1995, 2013), van Wart (2013) and 't Hart and Tummers (2019). Managers in regulatory agencies and other types of public organizations can lead outwards to engage actively with external audiences e.g., peer organizations or citizens with the purpose of creating valuable outcomes collaboratively, and/or purposefully seek the organization’s key audiences, e.g., formal accountability forums; the media; politicians in an attempt to obtain support for the organization’s mission, resource needs and ways of operating ('t Hart & Tummers 2019, 33).

In principle, leadership can be understood as behaviours that various individuals can perform independently of their position within the managerial hierarchy and even also without formal leadership or managerial responsibility. The primary focus in this dissertation is on reputation management as it is exercised by managers towards (primarily) the external audiences of an organization. As I discuss in Chapter 8, it may be that the performance of reputation management is more pronounced at some hierarchical levels compared to others, e.g., that reputation management is a managerial behaviour performed at the upper echelons of the managerial hierarchy, or that front-level managers engage more in reputation management than do midlevel managers. The degree to which employees take part in this behaviour is also relevant to address. Additionally, as also validated in Paper I and investigated in Paper III, reputation management may be a managerial behaviour also relevant to study as an organizational-level behaviour.

Additionally, Yukl emphasises that leadership is also about ensuring that the organization is “prepared to meet future challenges” (2012, 23), which is also an inherent aspect of reputation management e.g., because the successful cultivating of a strong and favourable reputation is argued to provide the organization with a protective shield against hostile audiences in the environment and to secure the organization’s autonomy and authority, not least vis-à-vis its political principals.

Finally, Yukl describes a holistic approach to leadership where the leadership behaviours are performed in combination. This understanding of leadership behaviours is helpful when conceptualizing the core behaviours of reputation management and the structure of the concept. In line with Yukl (2012, 76), I thus argue that effective patterns of behaviour often involve multiple aspects woven together into a complex pattern. For example, identification is expected to be useful to gain insights into the perceptions and expectations of external audiences, but identification will hardly contribute to effective reputation management unless these insights are used in both the prioritization of messages/audiences/reputational aspects and in the communication to (specific) audiences. I therefore argue that each behaviour is more effective when combined with the other two behaviours.

2.2.2. Three Core Reputation Management Behaviours

The dissertation’s understanding of reputation management and its core behaviours is inspired by the Fombrun and Rindova (1998) conceptualization of reputation management in generic research but adjusted to the characteristics and context of public organizations and building on insights from bureaucratic reputation theory.

In Paper I, I argue that the ambition of reputation management is the managerial intent to affect how external audiences perceive the organization’s reputation. This ambition is reflected in three behaviours that are logical parts of the managerial efforts to create a favourable reputation: the manager’s attempt to *identify* perceptions and expectations held by audiences, to *prioritize* between different audiences (and expectations), and to *communicate* the vision of the organization to these (specific) audiences.

Attempts to identify how external audiences perceive the organization as well as their expectations towards the organization takes place actively and continuously. Identification is an integral aspect of (public) reputation management behaviour because public organizations are sensitive to their audiences as they can exercise greater control over public organizations relative to their corporate counterparts (Van Slyke & Alexander 2006). I therefore expect public managers to pay attention to the expectations and demands of their external audiences to ensure the organization’s ability to perform its core tasks. This expectation follows the argument by Maor (2015, 29) that reputation-sensitive organizations “hear, see, and feel the public” and Carpenter and Krause (2012, 27) that although not all audiences are of equal importance for the organization “at least some of them (more than one) are being watched explicitly and implicitly by public administrators for the purposes of

accurately gauging expectations regarding external demands placed on them". Further, according to O'Toole and Meier (2015, 245), it is even a managerial responsibility to monitor their organization's environment, especially for managers working in organizations with complex environments. Identification is also inspired by the two dimensions of "listening" and "seeing" from Frombrun and Rindova's (1998) conceptualization. They argue that listening is needed to a) ensure that the organization is heard, and messages accepted b) narrow the gap between key stakeholders' perceptions and the organization's world view c) understand how the organization's viewpoints are different from the views of central stakeholders and d) improve the ability of the organization to meet these expectations. Seeing refers to the organization's "ability to monitor their stakeholders' expectations and to anticipate unexpected events that might threaten the organization's reputation" (Fombrun & Rindova 1998, 205-206).

Attempts to prioritize between reputational dimensions and audiences is a core reputation management behaviour, because in practice it is not feasible to enhance all four dimensions of the organizational reputation and satisfy all audiences at the same time. A key notion of bureaucratic reputation theory is that public organizations are complex and have multiple, complex and often ambiguous tasks and goals (Carpenter & Krause 2012). They also have a multiplicity of audiences with different expectations towards the organization and how it should perform its tasks (Boon et al. 2019a). It is therefore necessary for public managers to balance diverse audiences, functional areas and reputational dimensions regarding what they communicate and to whom (Maor, Gilad & Bloom 2013; Busuioc & Lodge 2016; Christensen & Lodge 2018; Christensen & Gornitzke 2019; Boon et al. 2019a). Audiences also differ in relation to their importance for the organization's stability and survival (Boon, Salomonsen & Verhoest 2021). Prioritization therefore means that when public managers attempt to influence the reputation of their organization, they have to decide which reputational dimension to stress to a specific audience (Maor 2015, 32).

Finally, attempts to communicate refers to efforts to affect how audiences perceive what the organization is, what it strives to be, and its positive impact on society more broadly which is largely based on targeted communication of the organization's vision to its external audiences. This understanding of communication as a behavioural aspect of reputation management is similar to Fombrun and Rindova's (1998) conceptualization. As argued by Ingenhoff (2018, 3) reputation is an "attitudinal, multidimensional construct that is socially constructed in continuous, predominantly mediated communication and perception processes between the reputation bearer and its key constituents." Communicating the organization's vision, thereby conveying what the organization is, what it strives to be, and its positive impact on society more broadly, thus plays a key role when external audiences form beliefs about the organization. I argue that the three behaviours together comprise the managerial efforts to consciously and continuously create and cultivate a favourable reputation, and not just to protect the reputation during times of public criticism.

2.3. Reputation Management, External Audiences and Employee Outcomes

This section presents the theoretical arguments for how reputation management can be expected to be related to external audiences' beliefs about the organization and employee outcomes, respectively.

2.3.1. Organizational Reputation as External Audiences' Beliefs.

An organization's reputation resides in the beliefs held by multiple audiences of the organization (Carpenter 2010, 45). In the dissertation, I suggest that we think of these beliefs as consisting of external audiences' perceptions and evaluative judgements of the organization. This understanding points to the multifaceted (both in relation to audiences and reputational dimensions) and subjective nature of public organizations' reputation. Audiences' beliefs can be based on direct experiences, more or less frequent contact with the organization (Overman, Busuioc & Wood 2020, 4), institutional intermediaries such as news media (Rindova & Martens 2012) as well as their evaluation of prior experiences with the organization. For government agencies, which are the context of the empirical investigation in the dissertation, audiences' beliefs are often based on either directed, unmediated communication or communication mediated by e.g., institutional intermediaries such as news media (Müller & Braun 2021, 672; Maor 2020).

The dissertation's theoretical arguments for expecting that reputation management can influence external audiences' beliefs about the organization builds on the conceptual framework of reputation management discussed in this chapter. Thus, I expect that reputation management behaviours intended to identify perceptions and expectations held by audiences, to prioritize between different audiences (and expectations), and to communicate the vision of the organization to these (specific) audiences, will in fact affect external audiences' beliefs about the organization. That public organizations and their managers can strategically craft their communication with external audiences and shape audiences' beliefs is shown by e.g., Alon-Barkat and Gilad (2017) who found that how agencies communicate promotional symbols can shape citizen attitudes. Additionally, Barrows et al. (2016) found that public organizations' communication of performance information shaped citizens perceptions of the organizations (Paper III).

2.3.2. Employee Outcomes

While the dissertation conceptualizes reputation management as an externally oriented leadership behaviour intended to influence external audiences' perceptions, there are theoretical arguments for why reputation management can also relate to employee outcomes. Specifically, the dissertation theorizes that reputation management may affect employee mission valence, value congruence, employee perceived organizational reputation and employee advocacy.

2.3.2.1. Mission Valence and Value Congruence

Starting with mission valence and value congruence, the theoretical arguments for expecting that reputation management can affect these employee outcomes draw heavily on auto-communication theory. According to this theory, external communication always entails elements of auto-communication meaning that when public managers communicate to/with external audiences they simultaneously communicate to their employees. Christensen (1997) argues that auto-communication has the potential to define, alter and shape how employees perceive the organization, and that employees are more likely to take organizational messages seriously, when they are communicated to attentive external audiences (Christensen 1997, 2018). When an organization conveys important messages such as its vision externally (e.g., through external media), it lends status and authority to the message, and also - if only temporarily - obligates the organization itself to take the message seriously (Christensen 1995). Building on these insights from auto-communication theory, the dissertation argues that when public managers convey important messages such as the organization's vision, mission and its positive impact on society to external audiences, they simultaneously communicate these messages to their employees, who will become more attracted to the vision. As an example, Morsing (2006) shows that auto-communication can build organizational identification, and although organizational identification and mission valence differ, both constructs reside in the emotional side of employees (Paper II).

Further, the dissertation expects that public managers, when they communicate and convey the organizational vision externally, will have the potential to create an alignment of values between the organizational values and the values of their employees. Paarlberg and Lavigna (2010, 711) note that value congruence may be fostered through a process of value internalization. The dissertation argues that when public managers convey the vision externally, employees are more likely to appreciate the importance of realizing the vision and will therefore align their values with those reflected in the vision. An alignment of values can also induce employees to see the attractiveness of the vision (Guerero & Chênevert 2020) thereby also contributing to increased mission valence. Although not being prior investigated in the context of public organizations, the theoretical expectation finds support in marketing studies. For example, Celsi and Gilly (2010, 521) find that organizational communication in the form of advertising has effects on employees' experience of collectively working toward the common goal of serving customers. Thus, the dissertation argues, as also noted by Paarlberg and Lavigna (2010), that the alignment of employee values and organizational values can foster mission valence among employees because the value congruence renders the mission more salient and attractive (Paper II).

2.3.2.2. Employee Perceived Organizational Reputation and Employee Advocacy

In relation to how reputation management can affect employee perceived organizational reputation, the dissertation suggests that employee perceived organizational reputation can be affected by both reputation management and external audiences' beliefs about the organization, i.e., the organization's reputation. For employee perceived organizational reputation to be affected by reputation management the dissertation bases the theoretical argument on auto-communication theory as described above. Briefly put, due to auto-communicative elements of reputation management, managerial behaviours intended to affect the beliefs held by external audiences can potentially also shape how employees think that external audiences perceive and judge the organization (Christensen 2018). For organizational reputation to affect employee perceived organizational reputation, the dissertation draws on the psychological 'mirroring-effect' theorized by Dutton and Duckerich (1991). The mirroring-effect refers to a process whereby employees' self-concepts and identifications are influenced by how they believe others view their organization (Dutton & Duckerich 1991, Dutton et al. 1994). According to this line of theory, employees make judgements and act in part based on socially constructed perceptions about how outsiders judge their organization. These perceptions can come from observing or interacting with external audiences but are not necessarily accurate reflections of external audiences' actual beliefs about the organization. Nevertheless, the dissertation argues that external audiences' beliefs about the organization (which are, to some extent, influenced by reputation management) can affect employees' perceptions hereof.

Further, the dissertation theorizes that the relationship between reputation management and employee perceived organizational reputation is partly mediated by employee advocacy. The argument is that reputation management behaviours have potential cascading effects, meaning that employees who witness and/or experience their immediate manager and/or the organization as engaging in such behaviours to cultivate a favourable reputation for their organization, are more likely to imitate such role-modelling behaviours (Boem et al. 2015, 159) and engage in employee advocacy themselves. And further, that when employees engage in activities to cultivate a favourable reputation for their organization, they will influence their own perceptions while doing so. The theoretical argument draws on the theory of self-persuasion. Self-persuasion occurs when individuals, while trying to convince another person, end up convincing themselves in the process (Bellé 2014, 113).

2.3.2.3. Employee Perceived Organizational Reputation and Employee Outcomes

Besides theorizing how reputation management can influence mission valence, value congruence, employee perceived organizational reputation and employee advocacy, the dissertation also theorizes that employee perceived organizational reputation might also be of relevance for employee outcomes. As such, the dissertation contributes to recent research within the bureaucratic reputation framework, which has begun to shed light upon how – both perceived and actual – forces in the

external environment of public organizations can influence employee outcomes such as employee engagement (Dhir & Shukla 2019; Hameduddin & Lee 2021; Hameduddin 2021), organizational identification and commitment (Rho, Yun & Lee 2015; Gilad, Bloom & Assouline, 2018). Building on this research, the dissertation argues that employee perceived organizational reputation is related to employees' job satisfaction, public service motivation and organizational identification.

For the relationship between employee perceived organizational reputation and job satisfaction and public service motivation, respectively, I draw on self-determination theory's (SDT) argument of internalization of external motivation (Ryan & Deci 2000; Baard, Deci & Ryan 2004; Gagné & Deci 2005). SDT has primarily been used to argue that employees can internalize external regulations or interventions. I extend this argument by arguing that employees may also internalize external beliefs (as they are perceived by the employees), and that the internalization occurs when employees mirror themselves in the positive beliefs that external audiences have of the organization. I argue that employees may, by being part of an organization, and by observing and experiencing how this organization is perceived and evaluated positively by external audiences, eventually internalize these perceptions and evaluations of the organization and come to see a positive organizational reputation as a reflection of their own competences and as a proxy of their actions.

For the relationship between employee perceived organizational reputation and organizational identification, I draw on Social Identity Theory (SIT). March and Simon (1958) originally formulated the idea that people are more likely to identify with a social group when they feel that the group is held in high esteem by people outside the group. By applying SIT to membership in organizations, Ashforth and Mael (1989) proposed that the extent to which individuals define themselves in terms of the organization is reflected in the concept of organizational identification; the perceived oneness or belongingness to an organization (Ashforth & Mael, 1989).

Drawing on SIT, I argue that when employees perceive that their external audiences' have positive beliefs about the organization, they tend to feel a greater sense of attachment or belongingness to their organization (Paper IV).

CHAPTER 3. METHODS AND DATA

This dissertation seeks to answer the questions of 1) how we can conceptualize and measure (public) reputation management, and 2) how reputation management can affect external audiences and employee outcomes. In this chapter, I will primarily address challenges relating to providing causal answers to the latter question, and how I have addressed these challenges in Papers II-IV. I will also provide a more in-depth discussion of case choice than is included in the individual papers. How we can measure reputation management is thoroughly addressed in Paper I (Chapter 4) but will be introduced in this chapter as it is the main concept in my dissertation. Details are available in the individual papers regarding their methodology as well as the measurement of the remaining concepts. I begin the chapter with an introduction to the overall research designs applied in the different papers.

3.1. Research Designs and Methods

I adopt an approach consisting of quantitative research elements to answer the dissertation's two research question. Table 2. provides a brief overview of the designs of the four papers in my dissertation. For research question 1, I have collected survey data on reputation management in surveys with managers and employees in three regulatory agencies. These surveys constitute the primary data foundation in the work to validate the reputation management measurement scale.

The work to conceptualize reputation management and the associated behaviours has to a large extent been theory-driven. I describe this process in the following section (section 3.2). I also conducted exploratory interviews with the Agency Heads and two-three senior managers from each agency (and an interview with the Agency Head of an additional agency). These qualitative insights have helped qualify the relevance of the concept as well as my understanding of the behavioural aspects of reputation management.

The second research question asks the causal question of how reputation management can affect external audiences and employee outcomes, and I would not be able to investigate this question using cross-sectional data as I will discuss in the following. I start by briefly describe the different research designs applied to answer how reputation management can affect external audiences and employee outcomes, after which I discuss the advantages of panel data (repeated measurements at different points in time of the same individual units) relative to cross-sectional data in relation to the research question. I also address challenges of the adopted approach.

I apply a panel design using a respondent-level fixed effects approach on a balanced panel of 193 employees from the three agencies to investigate the hypotheses posed in paper II and IV. In paper III, I use panel data to explore the relation between reputation management and both external and internal perceptions of organizational reputation. In the paper, the analysis is split in two; in the first

part I investigate the relationship between reputation management and organizational reputation as perceived by citizens and regulatees (organizations or companies subjected to regulation by the agencies). Given that the study consists of three agencies, I rely on a descriptive approach, where I compare averages and look for tendencies: Did reputation management and organizational reputation develop in the same direction for the agencies? In the second part, I use the respondent-level fixed effects design on the balanced panel of employees to investigate the relation between reputation management and employee perceived organizational reputation.

Table 2. Overview of papers, design, data and main variables.

Paper	Independent variable(s)	Dependent variable(s)	Design	Data
I: Concept and measurement	-	Reputation management	Cross-sectional	Surveys with managers and employees from the three agencies. N = 59 managers, 495 employees
II: Mission valence	Reputation management Transformational leadership	Mission valence	Panel (balanced)	Survey of employees from the three agencies. N = 193
III: Reputation	Reputation management	Organizational reputation Employee perceived organizational reputation	Panel (balanced/unbalanced)	Survey of citizens and regulatees. N= approx. 300 representative citizens, and 244 (in 2019) and 228 (in 2020) regulatees. Survey of employees from the three agencies. N = 193
IV: Mirroring	Employee perceived organizational reputation	Job satisfaction Public service motivation Organizational identification	Panel (balanced)	Survey, balanced panel of employees from the three agencies. N = 193

The dissertation makes comparisons within individuals over time in order to answer how reputation management can affect employee outcomes, and to investigate how employee perceived organizational reputation relates to employee outcomes. I use panel data for the following reasons. First, a clear advantage of panel data is that assessing the relationship between, for example, changes in reputation management and changes in mission valence ensures a more rigorous control strategy relative to cross-sectional designs where data from a single point may reveal covariation, but where the result would be conditioned on observed control variables and unobserved confounders. For example, that individuals tend to answer surveys in a way that conforms to social norms. It may thus be that the individual employees provide the responses that they consider “proper” instead of

providing their genuine assessments. Repeated measures effectively control for this social desirability bias because the tendency to conform to social norms is a stable trait (Jensen 2016). The individual-level fixed effects estimation controls for this potential bias, and also for all other factors, observed and unobserved, that do not change between survey moments. This applies to both micro, meso and macro-level factors (Allison 2009) and this is a clear advantage of panel designs relative to cross-sectional designs.

Second, repeated measures capture any variation that occur over time in the dependent and independent variable(s) (Wooldridge 2020) and are often more aligned with the underlying theoretical arguments and mechanisms, perhaps especially when investigating how perceptions and attitudes are affected by leadership (Oberfield 2014, Stritch 2017; Nielsen et al. 2019, 419).

Additionally, by using a panel design the dissertation also responds to recent calls within public management research for using panel studies to test individual-level phenomena and theories (Stritch 2017; 221). Most multi-wave studies within public management research focus on organizational-level phenomena, perhaps because of availability of data due to transparency expectations and reporting requirements (Stritch 2017, 232) whereas individual-level panel studies hold more challenges in terms of e.g., data availability and attrition. Existing studies within the framework of bureaucratic reputation theory have primarily relied on cross-sectional or qualitative case studies (Overman, Busuioc & Wood 2020), and this dissertation is the first within this line of research to apply an individual-level panel design. Two-wave panel designs are considered a common form of longitudinal design within public management research when the unit of analysis is the individual employees (see e.g., Brænder & Andersen 2013; Kjeldsen & Jacobsen 2013; Stritch 2017, 224).

With a two-wave panel I can investigate that e.g., employees' mission valence not only changes over the two survey moments, but it also changes in a systematic way that is positively related to a change in their perception of their managers' use of reputation management. Still, I cannot rule out potential endogeneity threats, e.g., that managers adjust their behaviour as a response to employee mission valence.

A disadvantage of panel designs relative to cross-sectional designs, is that they yield smaller sample due to attrition, which has implications to the statistical power of the analysis and for the representativity of the sample.

Finally, although no experimental variation was introduced between the survey moments to generate expected variation in the independent variables across the three agencies as part of the dissertation, the first wave of the Covid-19 pandemic hit Denmark about the same time as the second survey for the agencies was planned (March 2020). This survey was thus postponed half a year (October-November 2020). The pandemic affected the agencies in different ways. The Danish Health Authority was involved in handling the pandemic from the beginning and onwards, while the Danish Veterinary and Food Administration became involved at a later stage in relation to their regulation of

the Danish mink sector, which was shut down as a result of a large outbreak of a mutated Covid-19-variant at various Danish mink farms, resulting in the culling of large numbers of mink within a short period of time and under much controversy. The decision to cull all mink was presented by Prime Minister Mette Frederiksen at a press conference on November 4th, 2020 (*Statsministeriet* 2020), a month after the second round of surveys was sent to the agencies (this had almost ended at the time of the press conference) and two months before the second survey round was sent to external audiences. The third agency, Agency X, was not directly involved in handling the pandemic. The implications of the empirical context and the Covid-19 pandemic for the generalizability of the results will be discussed in Chapter 8.

In the following section, I will present the measurement of reputation management. The chapter ends with a discussion of case choice.

3.2. Reputation Management Measure

In this section, I will present the measure of reputation management, which is developed and validated in Paper I, and used as an independent variable in Paper II and Paper III.

The process of developing a conceptualization of reputation management as a leadership concept within the framework of bureaucratic reputation theory is addressed in Chapter 2. Paper I describes how I selected the survey items based on a literature review of the bureaucratic reputation literature, different public leadership roles and also Fombrun and Rindova (1998), and how I revised and tested the psychometric properties of the items. Before beginning the process of generating items, I conducted introductory, qualifying conversations or interviews with the Head of Danish Meteorological Institute (where I also conducted a small survey pilot study with two managers and four employees, and a qualitative follow up afterwards), the Agency Head from each of the three agencies as well as a few senior managers from each agency (e.g., the Press Officer, Communications Director or Office Head). This is not data that tab directly into the empirical analyses, but insights that have helped qualifying the relevance of reputation management as a leadership behaviour as well as my understanding of the behavioural aspects of reputation management within the context of these organizations.

I validated the seven-item measure across the different agencies, different raters (managers and employee), as performed by managers and organizations and by examining whether the measurement model was consistent across the three organizations when investigated separately. The seven items are presented in table 3. The items capture each of the three core behavioural aspects of reputation management and are carefully formulated so that they do not confound the leadership behaviours with the intended effects following Jensen and colleagues' (2019) recommendation.

Table 3. Measure of reputation management

Dimension	Leader version	Employee version
	As a leader I... My organization...	My leader... My organization...
<i>Communication</i>	...strive(s) to increase the outside world's knowledge of [the organization's] vision.	...strives to increase the outside world's knowledge of [the organization's] vision.
<i>Identification</i>	...make(s) an ongoing effort to gain insights into how our surroundings perceive [the organization].	...makes an ongoing effort to gain insights into how our surroundings perceive [the organization].
<i>Identification</i>	...make(s) an ongoing effort to gain insights into which expectations our surroundings have towards [the organization].	...makes an ongoing effort to gain insights into which expectations our surroundings have towards [the organization].
<i>Communication</i>	...try(/ies) to clarify [the organization's] positive impact on society to the outside world.	...tries to clarify [the organization's] positive impact on society to the outside world.
<i>Prioritization</i>	...strive(s) to target what [the organization] communicates to the outside world.	...strives to target what [the organization] communicates to the outside world.
<i>Prioritization</i>	...strive(s) to target [the organization's] messages to selected stakeholders in our surroundings.	...strives to target [the organization's] messages to selected stakeholders in our surroundings.
<i>Prioritization</i>	...strive(s) to highlight specific aspects of [the organization] in my communication to the outside world.	...strives to highlight specific aspects of [the organization] in his/her/its communication to the outside world.

Note: "The organization" is replaced by the name of the agency

There are advantages and disadvantages to measuring leadership as perceived by the managers themselves and by their employees. It is, however, often not possible to observe such behaviours directly, and researchers therefore often rely on indirect observations of leadership behaviour through the perceptions of the managers themselves or their employees. It is well described in the literature that managers have a tendency to overrate their own leadership behaviour, especially in relation to leadership types with positive connotations, relative to how employees perceive the same managers' behaviour (Jacobsen & Andersen 2015; Jensen & Jacobsen 2016). This is usually ascribed to social desirability bias, or an observation also found within psychology that individuals have a tendency to evaluate their own traits and actions overly positively (Carter & Dunning 2008). In some situations, relying on employee ratings are therefore preferable, also because only employee perceived leadership can be expected to influence employee attitudes and behaviour (Wright & Nishii 2007; Jacobsen & Andersen 2015). The disadvantages of relying on employee assessments relate to common source bias and potential halo bias. While the former is a larger threat in cross-sectional designs, the latter poses a risk in relation to the dissertation because employees' overall impressions

of their managers may influence their evaluations of the leadership behaviours, especially so because reputation management is an externally/outwards oriented leadership behaviour. I therefore analysed interrater reliability and interrater agreement in Paper I as part of the validation process. Although not allowing to completely rule out halo bias, these analyses showed that employees within the same group (that is: sharing the same manager) were in agreement in their assessments of their manager's reputation management behaviour. Additionally, analyses indicated construct validity of the concept, suggesting that employee ratings are meaningful as assessments of reputation management.

An ambition in the dissertation was to use the hierarchical structure of the data in the analyses in Paper II and III (investigating how reputation management can influence employee outcomes) by conducting multi-level analyses applying both managers' and employees' ratings of leadership, thereby reducing the common source bias (Favero & Bullock 2015). By doing that, I would have been able to account for the fact that managers' understandings of their own leadership behaviour tend to differ from how their employees perceive their leadership behaviour. However, because inclusion of managers' self-ratings drastically reduced the size of the sample (as most managers only answered one of the two surveys) and because only employee perceived leadership is positively related to organizational outcomes (Jacobsen & Andersen 2015, 829), I conducted the analyses in Paper II and III relying only on employee ratings of reputation management.

3.3. Case-selection: Agencies and External Audiences

Although operating in different policy areas, the three agencies investigated in the dissertation were chosen based on their common features. I was interested in agencies with relatively high reputational awareness because I expected that managers within such agencies would be more inclined to engage in reputation management behaviour vis-à-vis managers in organizations with less reputational awareness. This was important given that the purpose of the dissertation is to provide a first investigation within the framework of bureaucratic reputation of how reputation management can be conceptualized and measured as a leadership behaviour, and how the concept relates to external audiences and employee outcomes. I chose agencies with a primarily regulatory function due to the vital importance of reputation for regulatory agencies argued by bureaucratic reputation scholars (Carpenter 2010, 10, 727; Overman, Busuioc & Wood 2020, 416) and also for reasons of comparison. Additionally, based on a study by Boon, Salomonsen and Verhoest (2019b), I identified a group of Danish agencies that had proven media-salient during the last approx. 20 years, and which had also been exposed to several, longer periods of extensive negative media coverage during that time period. I searched the agencies' websites for publicly available information (such as strategies, annual reports and performance contracts with their parent ministries) that could indicate reputational awareness. Based on this, I chose the following agencies: the Danish Health Authority, the Danish

Veterinary and Food Administration and Agency X. As mentioned in section 3.2, I conducted introductory conversations and interviews with Agency Heads and relevant senior-management staff and I also received access to internal, confidential documents such as communication strategies, stakeholder reports and reputation surveys, which confirmed the expectation that the chosen agencies have high reputational awareness. As such, the three agencies in the dissertation are chosen as ‘most-likely’ cases to identify reputation management behaviours.

Although I have attempted to choose agencies that are as comparable as possible, I acknowledge that they also differ from each other, and that I should be careful about making apples-to-apples comparisons of the agencies, and also cautious about including different agencies/organizations in the same sample as interchangeable units of analysis, as argued by Wilson (1989) and more recently by Carpenter (2020). I will address this further in Chapter 8.

Because the agencies are media-salient and have high-reputational awareness, I also expect the audiences of these agencies to be attentive towards the agencies and to form beliefs about the agencies’ reputations. I include two types of external audiences in the empirical investigation in Paper III of the association between reputation management and organizational reputation. By including two types of external audiences: citizens and regulatees, I responded to recent calls to pursue research on citizens’ perceptions of agencies (Lee & van Ryzin 2020). Citizens’ perceptions and evaluative judgements of public organizations are important from a democratic point of view, but for regulatory agencies, citizens are also important because they are often the rule beneficiaries of the regulation performed by the agencies (Levi-Faur 2020, 53). For example, as citizens we benefit from the formation of rules and regulation by the Danish Veterinary and Food Administration in relation to food safety, including the related food inspections conducted. Citizens also benefit from the Agency’s coordination of emergency measures against infectious livestock diseases, or legislation and policy formulation in relation to animal health, animal welfare and veterinary medicine.

The regulatees are a sample of organizations and/or companies directly regulated by the agencies. This stakeholder type is thus expectedly of crucial importance for the agencies. I selected the sample by first reading the legislation stating the agencies’ formal regulatory authority and by searching the websites of the three agencies and their parent ministries to find out which types of organizations and companies they regulate. From this I compiled a list which I discussed with my contacts from the agencies and got their input in relation to additional types of organizations/companies of relevance. The Danish Health Authority is responsible for advising and supporting the population, the Ministry of Health, the regions and the municipalities on issues of health and elder care, as well as for ensuring the best possible quality of healthcare and elder care across the country (Danish Health Authority 2022). Elder care and most preventive work take place in the 98 municipalities, while the five regions are responsible for healthcare provided in hospitals (incl. psychiatric hospitals) (Danish Health Care Act 2022). Following this, I chose three groups of regulatees from this agency:

municipalities, hospitals with emergency departments, and psychiatric hospitals with emergency departments. The Danish Veterinary and Food Administration is responsible for food safety and health (The Danish Veterinary and Food Administration 2022). For this agency, I wished to find companies covering the whole process from ‘farm to fork’ but several attempts to survey farmers failed, and I ended up selecting a large Danish grocery chain and cooperative as well as privately owned slaughterhouses. For Agency X, I selected the three main groups of companies/organizations regulated by the agency.

By including two different types of stakeholders, the dissertation adds to the emerging (but still limited) research that measures the perceptions and judgements among external audiences of public organizations, in contrast to most bureaucratic reputation research thus far, which typically relies on “proxy data to measure reputation, such as the coverage of agencies in newspapers or websites” (Lee & van Ryzin 2020, p. 184). Additionally, the relations between regulatory agencies, regulatees and citizens can be understood as a regulatory triangle as described by Six and Verhoest (2017). The regulatory agencies do not provide direct services to citizens but have the role of being a third-party provider of trust in the relationship between regulatees and citizens (Boon, Salomonsen & Verhoest 2021). E.g., is it safe to buy food from a (specific) street-kitchen? Citizens might be less interested in the regulatory style or approach of the Danish Veterinary and Food Administration as long as the food is safe to buy and eat, while the regulatees, in this case the street-kitchen owner, is likely to care a great deal about the agency’s approach to regulation and the adequacy of its inspections and decision making.

Finally, that the agencies are selected as most-likely to identify reputation management behaviour does not mean that they are also most likely to succeed in their managerial attempts to create a favourable reputation among their external audiences. As a recent comparative study shows (Verhoest et al. 2021), agencies with coercive and authoritative tasks such as regulatory agencies are more likely to attract reputational threats compared to agencies with service delivery or redistributive tasks. Regulatory agencies face more challenges when attempting to cultivate a good reputation simply because their tasks are of a coercive and authoritative nature. They are thus often critically evaluated by the audiences that are directly affected by the actions of the regulatory agencies (Boon, Salomonsen & Verhoest 2019b). It may thus be that the three regulatory agencies make up a hard case for finding a positive relationship between reputation management and organizational reputation.

CONCEPTUALIZING AND MEASURING (PUBLIC) REPUTATION MANAGEMENT

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Abstract

This article develops and empirically validates a conceptualization of reputation management in a public sector context. We define reputation management as management behaviors intended to identify and affect how external audiences perceive an organization, including their perceptions of what the organization is, what it strives to be, and the organization's positive impact on society more broadly. Such behaviors include strategically communicating the organization's vision to its most important external audiences. The empirical analysis is based on survey responses from 499 employees and 59 managers from three Danish agencies. The analysis yields support for our measure of reputation management. We conclude with a future research agenda on how our conceptualization and scale can be used to further develop Bureaucratic Reputation Theory as well as public management research aimed at applying a more integrated approach to the study of public management and leadership.

Keywords: Reputation management, bureaucratic reputation theory, agencies

Introduction

Research in the reputation of public organizations has increased in the public administration literature in the last decade, especially among scholars departing from bureaucratic reputation theory (Maor 2015; 2020). This line of research has thus far convincingly demonstrated how public organizations respond reactively (Müller and Braun 2021, 673) by communicating strategically or even remaining silent when the organizations become the focus of public scrutiny and experience public pressures (e.g., negative media coverage of the organization) (Carpenter 2020; Maor, Gilad, and Bloom, 2013; Gilad, Maor, and Bloom 2015; Rimkutė 2020; Müller and Braun 2021).

Reputation is defined as “a set of beliefs about the unique and separable capacities, roles and obligations of an organization, where these beliefs are embedded in audience networks” (Carpenter 2010, 45). Due to the perceptual nature of reputations, organizations’ reputations are largely crafted via communication (Müller and Braun 2021, 672; Maor 2020).

Scholars have provided empirical evidence for reputational concerns as part of explaining bureaucratic behavior in general and the strategic communication of public organizations in particular, and theorized different types of communication responses from when organizations become subject to reputational threats (Maor, Gilad, and Bloom, 2013; Gilad, Maor, and Bloom 2015). Measurements of bureaucratic reputation per se have also surfaced in the bureaucratic reputation literature (Overman, Busuioc & Wood 2020; Lee and Van Ryzin 2019).

However, while bureaucratic reputation research is indeed mounting, at least two observations warrant scholarly attention for the further development of bureaucratic reputation theory. First, most research on reputation-conscious behavior performed as strategic communication by organizations investigates reactive (rather than proactive) communication behavior. This means that while developments toward identifying different types of response strategies of a reactive nature in the context of reputational threats have been suggested, there is little to no theorizing of more proactive reputation management strategies (but see Müller and Braun 2021). Second, existing research is generally based on observations of “the organization” as the unit of analysis, black-boxing conceptualizations and empirical investigations of the intra-organizational behavior; that is, the actors who are deciding and performing the strategic communication responses.

In light of such observations, the ambition of this article is to contribute to the further development of bureaucratic reputation theory by shedding light on a previously neglected and undertheorized aspect of this research, being a conceptualization and measurement of reputation management. Such conceptualization enables the identification of reputation management as it materializes in reactive responses to public criticism; but just as importantly, as it materializes in different, more proactive management behaviors intended to craft the organizational reputation by affecting the perceptions of the organization among external audiences regardless of whether it is confronted with

reputational threats. This further enables investigations of more endogenous aspects of public organizations' reputation-oriented behavior (Maor 2015).

This article argues that reputation management is management behavior performed with the intent to identify how external audiences perceive the organization: intent to affect how audiences perceive what the organization is, what it strives to be, and its positive impact on society more broadly; based on targeted communication of the organization's vision to its external audiences. We argue further that such targeted communication implies management behavior intended to prioritize which aspects of the organization and its vision it communicates and to which audiences, also reflecting the strategic nature of such communication (Maor 2020).

As such, the article complements existing approaches to reputation management, which often take a narrower view on a single reputation-management activity, by adding a multidimensional measure that bridges insights from the corporate reputation and bureaucratic reputation and leadership literature.

By developing and empirically validating a conceptualization of reputation management in a public sector context, the article also contributes to public leadership research.

Public leadership research has largely paid attention to the internal aspects of public management; that is, employee-directed leadership behaviors (e.g., O'Toole and Meier 2011, 55; Orazi, Turrini, and Valotti 2013; Van Wart 2013; 't Hart 2014; Vogel and Masal 2015; Tummers and Knies 2016) vis-à-vis environment-directed leadership behaviors. Attention has largely been granted to investigating how public managers can and do lead downwards to enhance employee motivation, organizational commitment, and other employee outcomes; ultimately, to improve organizational performance. The public management literature therefore tends to overlook how, as noted by van Wart (2003, 221), core public leadership behaviors are a composite of providing technical performance, internal direction to followers (downwards), and external organizational direction aimed at aligning the organization with its environment (outwards). In other words, public managers "spend a considerable amount of time scanning their organization's environment for threats and opportunities and dealing with external actors to gain information and political support" (Fernandez 2005, 202–203) (e.g., performing reputation management).

The empirical analysis is based on an Internet-based survey distributed to 90 managers and 872 employees from three Danish primarily regulatory agencies in the spring of 2019. The response rates are 65.6% for managers and 56.7% for employees.

In the next section, we present our conceptualization of reputation management. We then describe the research design and methods before testing the reliability and validity of our reputation management measure. The final section concludes on our findings with respect to their relevance for bureaucratic reputation management and public leadership research while also addressing the limitations of the study.

Conceptualizing Reputation Management

Like reputation, the reputation management concept has been approached from a variety of different academic disciplines, starting with management, organization, and strategy, later adopted by scholars of strategic communication and public relations, and more recently also by public administration scholars (Carroll 2018, 1). However, both the generic literature on reputation management (Carroll 2018; Ravasi, Rindova, Etter and Cornelissen 2018) and literature on reputation management in public organizations in particular (Maor 2015; 2016) suffer from a lack of any clear conceptualization of reputation management enabling robust and systematic empirical validation of such management behavior, its causes, and effects.

As mentioned, reputation management is a largely unexplored management concept in the context of the public sector, with few attempts at defining, conceptualizing, and operationalizing reputation management behavior. To develop a more systematic assessment of how reputation management is dealt with in public administration research, we conducted a systematic search in nine top-level public management journals: *Public Administration Review*, *Governance*, *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory*, *Public Management Review*, *Review of Public Personnel Administration*, *Regulation & Governance*, *American Review of Public Administration*, *Administration & Society* and *Public Administration*. We searched each journal for all articles dating from the first issue of the journal to January 2020, narrowing our search to articles mentioning “reputation management” (using quotation marks) anywhere in the article. This resulted in 36 articles, all published since 2010, 12 of which were excluded either because they were actually “notes on contributors” for an issue or about issues not relevant to our search. Further examination of the remaining 24 articles led to the exclusion of five articles that addressed neither reputation, reputation management, nor related concepts. This left 19 relevant articles. Of these, three were purely theoretical, while the rest were based on empirical data primarily in the form of single or comparative case studies measuring reputation management by coding themes and topics on public organization websites or in annual reports or speeches. A few articles relied on survey experiments or surveys. Three articles focused on local governments or organizations (in Norway and the UK), while the remaining examined government agencies, primarily in the US, EU, or Israeli contexts. We divided the articles into three groups based on their focus, and the articles from which we draw inspiration for our conceptualization are described briefly below. All 19 articles are listed in appendix A1.

In the first group of articles, reputation management is linked to corporate branding without much distinction between the two concepts (Wæraas 2014; Sataøen and Wæraas 2015; Wæraas, Bjørnå and Moldenæs 2015;), or explicating reputation management as managerial behavior (but see Bjørnå and Moldenæs 2015). In line with Sataøen and Wæraas (2015) which focuses on reputation management and corporate branding in hospitals, we point to reputation management being related to external communication reflecting the vision of the organization and as such also its core

values (Sataøen and Wæraas 2015, 453, see also Wæraas 2014 for similar argument related to agency level).

In the second group of articles, reputation management is treated as a primarily *reactive* communication strategy aimed at reputation protection via selective communication response to threats performed by agencies at the state or EU level as well as central banks (Busuioc and Lodge 2016; Maor, Gilad and Bloom 2013; Gilad, Maor and Bloom 2015; Alon-Barkat and Gilad 2017; Moschella and Pinto 2019; Rimkutė 2020). The reactive aspect is among others reflected in Busuioc and Lodge (2016) arguing in their theoretical article, that “the heart of reputation management is the protection of one’s reputation” (p. 94). Based on Hood et al. (2009), Gilad, Maor and Bloom (2015) differentiate between silence, problem denial and problem admission as three types of agency responses to “allegations and/or incidents that shed a negative light on its fulfilment of its core mission” (p. 455). Moschella and Pinto 2019 identifies different types of communication strategies based on organizations’ reputational concerns about policy reversals and argue that organizations in their communication need to balance multiple issues, and emphasize some issues at the expense of others (p. 526.)

The third and final group treats reputation management as a *proactive* communication strategy and as an organization’s communication, including the organization’s self-presentation, by highlighting aspects relating to the different reputational dimensions on its website or through tweets (Christensen and Lodge 2018; Anastapoulos and Whitford 2019; Christensen and Gornitzka 2019). Anastasopoulos & Whitford (2019) argue that public organizations’ strategically attempt to shape their reputations through external communication channels such as tweets (p. 498). Christensen and Lodge (2018) argue that reputation management “involves issues about the core mission of an agency, reflecting on the agency’s historical path, its main resources and competences, and its outputs and outcomes” (p. 121), and argue further that reputation management has both defensive and offensive components. The article explores *one* of the proactive strategies that organizations can use to account for their activities and manage their reputations. More specifically, they study how organizations portray themselves on their websites, arguing that websites have become the main area of operations in which organizations now seek to shape their reputations. As the article states, self-presentation on websites is merely one of many reputation management strategies, but their study offers insights into how organizations across different areas and countries communicate to a specific audience: citizens. An article by Christensen and Gornitzka (2019) takes a different empirical approach, examining how four Norwegian regulatory agencies use communication on their websites over a 10-year period to appeal to different audiences. The article finds that the agencies portray themselves differently and highlight specific aspects, depending on the audience(s) to whom they are communicating (2019, 909). Together, the Christensen and Lodge (2018) and Christensen and Gornitzka (2019) articles address how public organizations are accountable to a multiplicity of audiences and that, as part of their reputation management efforts, public organizations must balance

and prioritize among different audiences and different reputational aspects. This is one of the key insights of bureaucratic reputation theory and an important aspect of reputation management for public organizations. Although taking a first important step to address the managerial aspect of reputation, the articles do not provide a conceptualization enabling the empirical identification of reputation management within the public sector as a distinct managerial behavior.

Summing up, while no clear definition of reputation management is offered in the public administration and public management studies described above, many point to reputation management as behavior reflected as communication of core mission; vision and/or values aimed at affecting external audiences' perception of the organization. Further, while primarily investigated as a reactive strategy, some point to the proactive nature of reputation management as well as to the need for prioritizing what to communicate to whom, that is; the need for targeting the communication performed.

Turning to the generic research on reputation management, most research on reputation management is linked to the field of strategic communication. As identified by Carroll (2018) and Ravasi, Rindova, Etter and Cornelissen (2018), also this line of research suffers from a lack of systematic treatment of the concept, lacking commonly agreed upon definitions, conceptualizations, and operationalizations.

In *The International Encyclopedia of Strategic Communication*, Carroll (2018) highlights Fombrun and Rindova (1998) as the first (and still one of very few) example of generic research on reputation management to conceptualize and empirically validate reputation management. Fombrun and Rindova identify five dimensions of corporate reputation management: being, doing, communicating, listening, and seeing. *Being* is described as the “heart of reputation management and refers to the degree to which firms have a strong sense of identity and project it outward to constituents.” *Doing* involves “organizational actions directed at stakeholders that reflect a commitment to exceeding standards and expectations in work and non-work involvements.” *Communicating* refers to the “actions the organization takes to convey its identity to key stakeholders and influence perceptions.” *Listening* (actively and constantly) is necessary to “ensure that the company is heard, that its messages are accepted and to narrow the gap between key stakeholders' perceptions and the organization's world view.” Listening is also required to understand how the organization's viewpoints diverge from the views of central stakeholders and to improve the ability of the organization to meet these expectations. Finally, *seeing* refers to the organization's “ability to monitor stakeholder expectations, decide where and how high to set the bar in the future, and to anticipate unexpected events that might threaten the organization's reputation” (Fombrun and Rindova 1998, 205–206).

Fombrun and Rindova (1998) provide a good starting point for developing a conceptualization of reputation management adjusted to the characteristics and context of public organizations, as

suggested by the Christensen et al. studies discussed earlier. When conceptualizing reputation management within a public sector context, we start by identifying the core behaviors of this particular leadership approach. We argue that the distinctive theoretical trait of reputation management is the managerial intent to affect how external audiences perceive the organization's reputation. Managers do not necessarily succeed in affecting audience perceptions in a favorable direction, but the reputation management behaviors are characterized by the intention to create a favorable perception of the organization among its audiences. By focusing on the intention, we avoid confounding leadership and its effects (Jensen et al. 2019). We argue that (public) reputation management consists of three behaviors that are logical parts of the managerial efforts to create a favorable reputation: The manager's attempts to *identify* perceptions and expectations held by audiences, to *prioritize* between different audiences (and expectations), and to *communicate* the vision of the organization to these (specific) audiences. With our conceptualization of reputation management as consisting of three core behaviors, we aim to develop a construct with a focused and limited scope. We do not include specific actions such as press releases, speeches, stakeholder analyses, or advertising, nor do we attempt to develop an exhaustive list of reputation management activities. Instead, we focus on the three core behaviors, which we argue are central aspects of managers' attempts to create a favorable reputation in the eyes of external stakeholders.

Below, we elaborate on why reputation management consists of the three behavioral elements identification, prioritization, and communication.

The first concept, identification, is inspired by Fombrun and Rindova's (1998) dimensions "listening" and "seeing." It refers to attempts to identify how audiences perceive the organization together with audience expectations to the organization. The two dimensions overlap considerably in the Fombrun and Rindova (1998) conceptualization, which is why we have chosen to merge them. Identification is characterized as reputation management behavior, as public organizations are sensitive to their audiences. Managers are expected to see value in mapping the expectations and demands placed on them from their external audiences for the organization to be able to perform its core tasks. Audiences can exercise greater control over public managers than their private sector counterparts, which makes it necessary for public managers to be sensitive to them (Van Slyke and Alexander 2006). In line with this, Maor (2015, 29) argues that reputation-sensitive organizations hear, see, and feel the public. According to O'Toole and Meier (2015, 245), it is even a managerial responsibility to monitor the organization's environment; and increasingly so for organizations with complex environments. The key theoretical argument is that although not all audiences are of equal importance for the organization, "at least some of them (more than one) are being watched explicitly and implicitly by public administrators for the purposes of accurately gauging expectations regarding external demands placed on them" (Carpenter and Krause 2012, 27). Identification takes places actively and continuously. It is important in relation to the next two behavioral steps that the

organization and its managers know how different audiences view them and the expectations these audiences have to the organization.

The second behavioral element is prioritization (Maor 2020). While this element is not part of the Fombrun and Rindova (1998) conceptualization, bureaucratic reputation scholars highlight it as a central aspect for public organizations (Boon et al. 2019a; Maor 2020, 1046) given the multidimensional nature of a public organization's reputation. Organizational reputations are comprised of external actors' beliefs about the unique attributes (or at least separable capacities) and missions of an organization (Carpenter 2010, 33). The importance of reputation for public organizations was first emphasized and theorized by Daniel Carpenter's (2001) seminal work on reputation within the context of US agency. By formulating a bureaucratic reputation theory, Carpenter argues that a strong organizational reputation can provide a protective shield against hostile audiences in the environment and secure the organization's autonomy and authority, not least vis-à-vis its political principals. Scholars generally adhere to Carpenter's definition of reputation as "a set of symbolic beliefs about the unique or separable capacities, intentions, roles, obligations, history and mission of and organizations that are embedded in a network of multiple audiences" (2010, 33). Carpenter further suggested differentiating between different reputational dimensions being a performative (can the agency do its job and fulfil its core task?), a technical (does the agency have what it takes to reach goals, outputs, and/or outcomes, regardless of actual performance?), a procedural (are the procedures and processes performed by the agency just? Do they respect accepted rules and norms?), as well as a moral dimension (is the agency working morally and ethically correctly?) (Carpenter and Krause 2012, 27).

The key argument in bureaucratic reputation theory is that, because public organizations are complex and have multiple, complex, and often ambiguous goals and tasks, public managers must perform balancing acts and prioritize between their diverse audiences (e.g., elected officials, media, policy experts, citizens) (Busuioc and Lodge 2016, functional areas (Maor, Gilad and Bloom 2013), and reputational dimensions (Carpenter and Krause 2012) in relation to what they communicate and to whom (Carpenter and Krause 2012, 29; Christensen and Lodge 2018; Christensen and Gornitzke 2019; Boon et al. 2019a). In relation to audiences, a core challenge for public organizations is how different audiences have different expectations of the organization, including how it should perform its tasks (Boon et al. 2019a). Satisfying a specific audience often means upsetting others or creating ambiguity, as noted by Carpenter and Krause (2012, 29). In relation to the dimensions, the effect of enhancing one reputational dimension implies that another dimension likely suffers. Prioritization behavior therefore means that when public managers attempt to cultivate the reputation of their organization, they must choose which reputational dimension to stress to a specific audience (Maor 2015, 32). Prioritization is reputation management behavior, because enhancing each reputational dimension and satisfying all audiences at the same time is unfeasible in practical terms.

Communication is the third and final behavioral element in our conceptualization of reputation management. Our conceptualization of communication is closely linked to that of Fombrun and Rindova (1998). Communication refers to efforts to convey the organization's vision, mission, and/or identity to external audiences to influence perceptions. As argued by Ingenhoff (2018, 3), reputation is an "attitudinal, multidimensional construct that is socially constructed in continuous, predominantly mediated communication and perception processes between the reputation bearer and its key constituents." Communicating the organization's vision thus plays a central role in the formation of beliefs about an organization's reputation. The key argument here is that public managers will see the communication of the organization's vision to external audiences as necessary to affect perceptions of the organization.

In short, we argue that public managers can cultivate the reputation of their organization by *identifying* the perceptions and expectations held by external audiences, *prioritizing* among audiences and different reputational aspects, and by *communicating* to affect how the audience perceives the organization's reputation. We consider the three aspects of reputation management behavior connected in the sense that the behaviors are only theoretically meaningful if used together, and that they reflect the same latent ambition to affect audience perceptions of the organization. In line with Yukl (2012, 76), we argue that effective patterns of behavior often involve multiple aspects woven together into a complex pattern. For example, identification is useful to gain insights into the perceptions and expectation of external audiences, but identification will not contribute to effective reputation management unless these insights are used in both the prioritization of messages/audiences/reputational aspects and in the communication to (specific) audiences. Each behavior is more effective when combined with the other two behaviors.

We do not include the two remaining dimensions *being* and *doing* from Fombrun and Rindova (1998) in our conceptualization of reputation management. As described above, *being* refers to the degree to which firms have a strong sense of identity together with the outward projection of this organizational identity. We argue that behaviors aimed at fostering a strong sense of "organizational being" is an antecedent to reputation management, which is an externally oriented leadership behavior. Insights into "organizational being" are necessary for successful reputation management, as reputation management is about affecting how external audiences perceive the very "organizational being". Hence, leading to convey the "organizational being" to external audiences (with the intent to affect their perception of the organization in a positive way) is at the "heart" of reputation management, rather than fostering "being" itself. Additionally, the outward projection of the organizational identity is communication and thus belongs to the communication dimension. *Doing* reflects a commitment to exceeding standards and expectations in work and non-work involvements. Doing and thus everything a manager or an organization does or is perceived to do affects how external audiences perceive the organization. However, we argue that what an organization does in a more

substantial (rather than communicative) manner would not be with the main intent to affect the organization's reputation among external audiences, but with e.g. the main intent to perform well (cf. Fombrun and Rindova's formulation of "exceeding standards" as part of doing) and solve its tasks, thereby meeting and maybe even exceeding expectations. "Doing" ultimately refers to enabling the organization to achieve its mission and vision, and reputation management is about communicating the vision to external audiences in a targeted and strategic manner so that audiences realize the positive impact of the organization and its "doing" on the wider society. We thus argue that *doing* is not reputation management behavior, although it can have reputational effects.

Scale Development for Reputation Management

Our operationalization of reputation management is aimed at developing a measure that captures the behavior or actions of the public managers performing reputation management. To do so, we conducted a scale development process that involved generating items and conducting a cross-sectional survey to test and validate the scale.

We began with discussions of a larger pool of theoretical phenomena related to reputation management behavior based on especially Fombrun and Rindova (1998) and the literature on bureaucratic reputation. As argued in the section "conceptualizing reputation management," we focus on three externally oriented leadership behaviors aimed at *identifying* perceptions and expectations, *prioritizing* among audiences and reputational aspects, and *communicating* the organizational vision. For the three behaviors we generated an initial pool of agree/disagree items based on a literature review of different public leadership roles together with the literatures on bureaucratic reputation, as we lacked previous measurements of reputation management to compare with and/or draw inspiration from. We used these literatures and scales as inspiration for the wording of the items, also relying on DeVellis's (2003) recommendations for scale development; that is, using simple words and avoiding double negatives and double-barreled items. We produced a seven-item pool that is formulated to match the theoretical concept, which is focused on leadership behavior aimed at identifying perceptions and expectations held by audiences (items 2 and 3), prioritization between different audiences (and expectations) (items 5–7), and the communication of the organization's vision as well as its positive societal impact on these (specific) audiences (items 1 and 4) (see table 1). The three prioritization items are formulated to capture how public managers prioritize their communication between specific messages, audiences, and (reputational) aspects. We initially had an 8th item to capture communication, but the wording of this item proved awkward in the Danish translation and we chose to remove it.

We conducted a small pilot study at the Danish Meteorological Institute where the agency head, two managers, and four employees completed the survey and were subsequently asked to comment

on the reputation management items to validate the specific wordings. We deliberately chose a relatively small number of items to balance the consideration of the respondents' time and willingness to participate in the survey. The feedback from the pilot study was that the questions/items were understandable and made sense, but that the survey was quite long. The final formulation of each item was based on discussions between the authors and inputs from the pilot study.

In total, four specifications of reputation management are applied. Managers were asked to assess their own behavior (Cronbach's alpha 0.87) and how the organization generally performs reputation management (Cronbach's alpha 0.85), while employees were asked about both their immediate manager (Cronbach's alpha 0.95) and the organization in general (Cronbach's alpha 0.90).

Table 1 Operationalization of Reputation Management		
Item #	Item wording: A. Leader version <i>As a leader I...</i>	Item wording: B and C. Employee version <i>B. My leader... C. My organization...</i>
1 (<i>communication</i>)	...strive to increase the outside world's knowledge of [the organization's] vision.	...strives to increase the outside world's knowledge of [the organization's] vision.
2 (<i>identification</i>)	...make an ongoing effort to gain insights into how our surroundings perceive [the organization].	...makes an ongoing effort to gain insights into how our surroundings perceive [the organization].
3 (<i>identification</i>)	...make an ongoing effort to gain insights into which expectations our surroundings have to [the organization].	...makes an ongoing effort to gain insights into which expectations our surroundings have to [the organization].
4 (<i>communication</i>)	...try to clarify [the organization's] positive impact on society to the outside world.	...tries to clarify [the organization's] positive impact on society to the outside world.
5 (<i>prioritization</i>)	...strive to target what [the organization] communicates to the outside world.	...strives to target what [the organization] communicates to the outside world.
6 (<i>prioritization</i>)	...strive to target [the organization's] messages to selected stakeholders in our surroundings.	...strives to target [the organization's] messages to selected stakeholders in our surroundings.
7 (<i>prioritization</i>)	...strive to highlight specific aspects of [the organization] in my communication to the outside world.	...strives to highlight specific aspects of [the organization] in his/her/its communication to the outside world.
Note: In the survey, "organization" is replaced with the name of the agency. Likert-type format: 1: strongly disagree 2: disagree 3: slightly disagree 4: neither agree nor disagree 5: slightly agree 6: agree 7: strongly agree		

Method and validation procedure

Our validation procedure included three main steps to ensure the validity and reliability of the reputation management scale. In the first step, we tested the psychometric properties of the three-factor model, compared it to alternative factor structures, and examined whether the measurement model was consistent for employee ratings of both the immediate manager and organization. The three factors reflect our theoretical expectation that reputation management consists of three factors: identification, communication, and prioritization. In the second step, we analyzed the intraclass

correlations (ICC1) and within-group agreement ($r_{wg(j)}$) to assess interrater reliability and interrater agreement to ensure the reliability of our measure.

Third, as suggested by Tummers and Knies (2016, 438), identifying an empirical relationship between a new leadership concept and other established leadership concepts in line with what is theoretically expected provides for an assessment of the construct validity of the reputation management concept, as it allows for assessing the convergent validity. We thus tested whether the reputation management scale discriminates from one of the most: transformational leadership. The common denominator of these two leadership behaviors performed by public managers is that the main vehicle through which they function is the communication and sharing of the formulated organizational vision; that is, they both reflect “visioning” leadership behaviors. The intent of leading through vision in reputation management is to affect *the perception of the organization, primarily as held by external audiences*, whereas transformational leadership involves using the vision to lead by *affecting employee behaviors*. Testing the discriminant validity of reputation management against transformational leadership provides for a conservative test of the construct validity of reputation management, given the potential relatedness of the two concepts because both types of behaviors are based on applying the same mechanism (i.e., the vision).

Transformational leadership was measured using a four-item measurement instrument developed and validated by Jensen et al. (2019). A key criticism of transformational leadership is that it confounds leadership actions and their effects, leading to applications that measure leadership effects instead of leadership behavior (Van Knippenberg and Sitkin 2013, 43; Jensen et al. 2019, 10). The Jensen et al (2019) scale measures the leadership behavior only. Employees were asked about both their immediate manager (Cronbach’s alpha 0.96) and the agency head (Cronbach’s alpha 0.92). Managers were asked to rate their own behavior (Cronbach’s alpha 0.80) and to assess the agency head’s behavior (Cronbach’s alpha 0.90). The operationalization of transformational leadership can be found in appendix A2.

We present the main results using employee ratings because we know from previous studies that managers have a tendency to overrate their own leadership behavior relative to employees (Jacobsen and Andersen 2015). We also know that only employee-perceived leadership is positively related to organizational outcomes (Jacobsen and Andersen 2015, 829). We do, however, test whether the measurement model is equally applicable for the managers’ self-ratings, and we examine whether the measurement model is consistent across the three organizations when analyzed separately. We also analyze interrater reliability and interrater agreement (IRA) to assess the reliability of the use of employee ratings of immediate manager’s reputation management behavior. Interrater reliability reflects the variation between employees who assess the same immediate manager (Koo and Li 2015). IRA is relevant when employees observe and assess behavior, and the absolute agreement of those ratings are of interest O’Neill (2017, 2). Together the two types of reliability allows us to assess

the level of agreement as well as consistency of agreement within a group of employee who share the same manager, and thus whether employee ratings of their manager's reputation management behavior is a reflection of their individual attitudes towards their manager, or whether employee assessments actually seem to capture the reputation management behavior of the managers. The analyses thus contribute to an evaluation of the construct validity of our measure. Finally, we analyze the correlation between the managers' self-ratings and employees' ratings of their immediate managers' reputation management.

Using several specifications demonstrates equal applicability across organizations and sources and allows for a more nuanced and robust investigation of the reputation management concept. In the following, we briefly describe the data collection before continuing with the analytical steps.

Data Collection

Our data stem from an Internet-based survey distributed to leaders and employees in three Danish agencies in the spring of 2019. We selected the three agencies based on their common features. For reasons of comparison, we chose agencies with a primarily regulatory function due to the vital importance of reputation for regulatory agencies (Carpenter, 2010, 10, 727; Overman, Busuioc & Wood 2020, 416). All three agencies are media-salient and have experienced periods of negative media coverage (Boon, Salomonsen, and Verhoest 2019b). As such, they have been chosen as 'most-likely' cases to identify reputation managerial behaviors. The three agencies are the Danish Veterinary and Food Administration (DVFA), the Danish Health Authority (DHA) and "Agency X" (the latter asking to remain anonymous for the time being). The DVFA has more than 1500 employees, most of whom are situated in inspection units across the country. From the DVFA, we conducted the survey using only a sample of the employees from this agency: the employees working with administration, development, coordination, and the formation of rules and regulations at the agency's head office. The tasks performed by these employees are similar to those performed by the employees in the two other agencies, and they have similar numbers of employees. Another reason for only including a specific sample of DVFA employees is that most employees from this agency (the food and veterinary inspectors) have limited contact with their immediate managers, which renders it difficult for them to assess the managers' leadership behavior. Although we have tried to select agencies that are as comparable as possible, we acknowledge their differences and that we should be cautious about comparing the agencies as apples-to-apples and also cautious about including different agencies in the same sample as interchangeable units of analysis, as argued by Wilson (1989) and more recently by Carpenter (2020). We have thus tested whether the main findings holds for each agency when we analyze them separately.

We sent the survey to a total of 872 employees and 90 managers from the three agencies, with an overall response rate (whole or part of the survey) of 56.7% (n = 499) and 65.6% (n = 59), respectively. For DVFA, we got the lowest response rate among employees (47.8%, n = 180 respondents) and managers (61.7%, n = 29 respondents), but the highest number of respondents. For the DHA, the employee response rate was 77.9% (141 respondents) and 73.4% (14 respondents) for managers. Agency X had a 56.7% employee response rate (178 respondents) and a 66.7% manager response rate (16 respondents). The heads of all three agencies also conducted the survey.

Psychometric Properties of the Leadership Scale

To test the validity of the reputation management scale, we performed confirmatory factor analyses (CFA). CFAs test whether our set of indicators converge on latent factors specified a priori by theory, and they improve the validity and reliability of a measure, as they have more stringent psychometric criteria for accepting models (Acock, 2013; Tummers & Knies, 2016). Consistent with our conceptualization of reputation management, we specified a three-factor measurement model from our seven items to reflect a) communication, b) identification, and c) prioritization.

To assess the overall fit of the measurement model, we relied on three of the most common approximate fit measures: the root-mean-square of approximation (RMSEA), the comparative fit index (CFI), and the standardized root-mean-square residual (SRMR). We applied the model fit thresholds proposed by Williams Vandenberg, and Edwards (2009) and Acock (2013). Chi-square statistics are commonly used for tests of fit of measurement models, but also generally acknowledged to be too strict a measure (Fornell and Larcker 1981) for assessing the goodness of fit of the CFA, as chi-square is highly sensitive to sample size. We therefore do not rely on a chi-square test to assess the model fit. To evaluate the robustness of our three-factor model, we compared it with two alternative models with simpler factor structures. We tested our model against (a) a two-factor model with identification and communication as one factor and (b) a one-factor model in which all three factors were combined into a single factor. The employee responses used in this study are nested within different agencies as well as groups within each agency. The hierarchical structure of the data and the inherently hierarchical structure of the three agencies makes it preferable to conduct multi-level factor analysis (MCFA), however the size of our sample does not allow for MCFA, as this requires a sample of 800 or more observations as discussed by Dyer, Hanges and Hall (2005). Instead, we conducted the CFA's with cluster robust standard errors (at the level of employees sharing the same manager), which showed mean standardized factor loadings almost identical to those in the regular CFA's indicating that the nesting our data would not change the results of the CFA's. An example of the CFA's with cluster robust standard errors can be found in the appendices (see table A3), but we do not include cluster robust standard errors in the main CFA's as this would not allow for an assessment of the model fit indices.

We include several steps to investigate the convergent and discriminant validity of the reputation management scale. Discriminant validity exists when a latent factor (reputation management) accounts for more variance in the indicators/items related to this factor compared to other factors (transformational leadership) or measurement error (Jensen et al. 2019, 17). Convergent validity exists if the two leadership concepts are related to each other in the theoretically expected direction (DeVellis 2003). This is demonstrated when the average variance extracted (AVE) for an indicator is above 0.5 (Jensen et al. 2019.) We investigate the discriminant validity by specifying a four-factor CFA (the three reputation management factors and transformational leadership) and test it against alternative models with simpler factor structures. We compared our model with a) a two-factor model where reputation management is combined in one factor and transformational leadership in another and b) a one-factor model where transformational leadership and reputation management are combined into a single factor. Fornell and Larcker (1981) propose that discriminant validity is established when the AVE for any two factors is greater than the shared variance between these two factors. The AVE consists of the average of the squared correlations (or factor loadings) between individual indicators and the associated factor. Shared variance between any two factors is the squared correlation between these factors. We use this approach to test discriminant validity by comparing all combinations of our four factors: identification, prioritization, communication, and transformational leadership.

Results

In this section, we present the results of the confirmatory factor analysis for reputation management, reliability analysis and analyses of convergent and discriminant validity. We present the results using employee data.

The analysis of the three-factor model with employee ratings of their immediate managers' reputation management behavior revealed a good fit to data: RMSEA = 0.052, CFI = 0.996, and SRMR = 0.013, with good levels on all fit measures. Mean standardized factor loadings were high for all factors ($\lambda_{\text{Identification}} = 0.95$, $\lambda_{\text{Communication}} = 0.88$, $\lambda_{\text{Prioritization}} = 0.92$), with no individual loadings below 0.5, suggesting convergent validity of our model. We then compared the model with two alternatives: a) a two-factor model with identification and communication items constrained to load on the same factor and b) a one-factor model where all items were constrained to load on the same factor. We present the results from the CFA on our main model and the alternative models in table 2. The differences in RMSEA, CFI, and SRMR showed that the three-factor model has a better fit to data than the alternative models, although the two-factor model also showed relatively good fit measures.

Table 2: Employee Ratings of Immediate Manager: Three-Factor Model vs Alternative Reputation Management Models

	3- factor model	2- factor model	1- factor model
Identification			
Makes an ongoing effort to gain insights into how our surroundings perceive [the organization]	.935	.931	.899
Makes an ongoing effort to gain insights into which expectations our surroundings have to [the organization]	.961	.950	.919
Communication			
Strives to increase the knowledge of the outside world of [the organization's] vision	.876	.850	.849
Tries to clarify [the organization's] positive impact on society to the outside world	.886	.855	.861
Prioritization			
Strives to target what [the organization] communicates to the outside world	.932	.932	.843
Strives to target [the organization's] messages to selected stakeholders in our surroundings	.932	.933	.822
Strives to highlight specific aspects of [the organization] in his/her/its communication to the outside world	.881	.880	.812
n (employees)	432	432	432
n (organizations)	3	3	3
chi ²	23.58	63.29	486.98
Df	11	13	14
RMSEA	.052	.095	.280
CFI	.996	.985	.855
SRMR	.013	.025	.062

Note. CFA with standardized factor loadings. CFA based on asymptotic distribution-free estimator. All standardized factor loadings are statistically significant at the .001 level. RMSEA = root-mean-square error of approximation; CFI = comparative fit index; SRMR = standardized root-mean-square residual; CFA = confirmatory factor analysis.

We then tested the three models on employee ratings of the organizations' use of reputation management (see table 3), the three-factor model proving again to have the best fit to data: RMSEA = 0.074, CFI = .986, and SRMR = 0.022, with good levels on all fit measures. Mean standardized factor loadings were high for all factors ($\lambda_{\text{Identification}} = 0.88$, $\lambda_{\text{Communication}} = 0.79$, $\lambda_{\text{Prioritization}} = 0.84$), with no individual loadings below 0.5, suggesting convergent validity of our model. When compared to the alternative models, the two-factor model has an RMSEA exceeding the threshold and both the CFI and SRMR at the threshold level. The one-factor model showed a generally poor fit to data. We have followed the same procedure to conduct the CFA on employee ratings from each of the three

agencies as well as on the managers' self-reported use of reputation management; here again, we found the three-factor model to have the best fit to data with good levels on all fit measures. These can be found in appendices A4-A7.¹ These results are consistent with our theoretical expectation that reputation management is a leadership behavior consisting of the three factors identification, prioritization, and communication.

Table 3: Employee Ratings of Organization: Three-Factor Model vs Alternative Reputation Management Models

	3- factor model	2- factor model	1-fac- tor model
Identification			
Makes an ongoing effort to gain insights into how our surroundings perceive [the organization]	.925	.875	.752
Makes an ongoing effort to gain insights into which expectations our surroundings have to [the organization]	.832	.814	.690
Communication			
Strives to increase the knowledge of the outside world of [the organization's] vision	.798	.748	.726
Tries to clarify to the outside world how [the organization] has a positive impact on society	.778	.720	.738
Prioritization			
Strives to target what [the organization] communicates to the outside world	.883	.879	.798
Strives to target [the organization's] messages to selected stakeholders in our surroundings	.865	.879	.769
Strives to highlight specific aspects of [the organization] when communicating with the outside world	.782	.782	.739
n (employees)	457	457	457
n (organizations)	3	3	3
chi ²	38.30	114.21	402.52
df	11	13	14
RMSEA	.074	.131	.247
CFI	.986	.948	.800
SRMR	.022	.052	.086

Note. CFA with standardized factor loadings. CFA based on asymptotic distribution-free estimator. All standardized factor loadings are statistically significant at the .001 level. RMSEA = root-mean-square error of approximation; CFI = comparative fit index; SRMR = standardized root-mean-square residual; CFA = confirmatory factor analysis.

¹ In appendix A4-A6 we use employee ratings of immediate managers' reputation management behavior to conduct CFAs for each of the three agencies. We have also conducted CFA analyses of employee ratings of the organization's reputation management behavior. These are not included in the appendix. We found the same results: that the three-factor models have the best fit to data compared to the alternative models, with good fit measures on RMSEA, CFI, and SRMR.

As an assessment of interrater agreement we have estimated an absolute within-group agreement ($r_{wg(j)}$) of 0.87, which is considered an indication of as strong agreement, especially for a newly established measure as discussed by O'Neill (2017, 11). As argued by O'Neill (2017), a high $r_{wg(j)}$ supports the appropriateness of averaging employees' ratings of leadership to the leader level. If within-group consensus in employee ratings of their manager's reputation management behavior had been low, then the use of the mean rating would be a misleading or inappropriate picture of the underlying ratings (O'Neill 2017, 1). Table A8 in the appendices shows an overview of the ($r_{wg(j)}$) for each individual group of employees sharing the same manager.

Along with assessing within-group agreement, we estimated the consistency of agreement among employees using ICC(1) and ICC(2). ICC(1) indicates the amount of variance in the assessment of reputation management that can be attributed to belonging to the group. ICC(1) also indicates the degree to which the assessment of reputation management for any employee in the group is a reliable estimate of the aggregated assessment. ICC(2) estimates the reliability of the group means within a sample (Woehr et al 2015). We estimated a significant ICC(1) of 0.23 and a significant ICC(2) of 0.90. Following the conventions recommended by Woehr et al. (2015), the estimates indicate that there is a natural variation of agreement between the groups within the data (ICC1) and high reliability within each group (ICC2).

The reliability analyses thus show that employees within the same group are in agreement in their assessments of their manager's reputation management behavior. Additionally, the reliability analyses indicate construct validity of our concept, suggesting that employee ratings are meaningful as assessments of reputation management, and not a reflection of the individual employees' general attitudes towards their immediate manager.

Finally, we conducted a bivariate correlation to explore the relationship between the manager self-reported measure of reputation management and employee assessed measure of their immediate manager's reputation management. The bivariate correlation showed a significant correlation of 0.19 between the two measures, which is similar to other studies of the relationship between leader-intended leadership and employee-perceived leadership in the self-other leadership assessment literature (Jacobsen and Andersen 2015).

After testing the factor structure and reliability of our measure of reputation management, we addressed the relationship between reputation management and transformational leadership in order to assess the construct validity of our reputation management measure. First, we conducted a bivariate analysis to explore the association between the two leadership concepts and found that reputation management is significantly related to transformational leadership, with Pearson's $r = 0.77$ for employee ratings of their immediate manager. We also analyzed the associations between employee ratings of their agency head's transformational leadership behavior and the organization's

reputation management behavior, finding a significant relation between the two concepts with Pearson's $r = 0.57$. Second, due to the high correlation between the two concepts, we conducted a confirmatory factor analysis with the four transformational leadership items and the seven reputation management items as part of the robustness test of the reputation management measure. We specified a four-factor model from our 11 items to reflect identification, communication, prioritization, and transformational leadership and compared it to models with simpler factor structures. Again, we did this for both employee ratings of their immediate manager and employee ratings of their agency head/organization. The differences in RMSEA, CFI, and SRMR indicate that the four-factor models have the best fit to data compared to the alternative models. The CFA's can be found in appendices A9 (employee ratings of immediate manager) and A10 (employee ratings of their agency head/organization).

Third, for assessing discriminant validity of our measure, we present the interfactor correlations, average variance extracted (AVE), and shared variance in table 4 and 5.

Table 4 shows a) interfactor correlations, b) average variance extracted (AVE), and c) shared variance for employee ratings of their immediate manager. As would be expected, the correlations (below the diagonal) are highest between the three reputation management factors, ranging between 0.943 and 0.797, and these factors thus share between 89% and 64% of their variance (above diagonal) with each other. Correlations between transformational leadership and any of the three reputation management factors are slightly lower, but transformational leadership does share around 50-60% of its variance with any of the three reputation management factors. All three reputation management factors discriminate from transformational leadership, as the AVE (marked with bold type in the diagonal) exceeds the shared variance between each of them and transformational leadership. Communication does not discriminate from identification, however, which indicates that communication is not a valid empirical factor. The AVE is ≥ 0.5 for all four factors, which indicates convergent validity for each of the three reputation management factors and transformational leadership. We also analyzed composite reliability scores in terms of Cronbach's alpha for identification (0.96), communication (0.87), prioritization (0.94), and transformational leadership (0.96), which suggests internal consistency among each of the four factors, as Cronbach's alpha is well above the recommended lower threshold of 0.7.

Table 4 Intercorrelations and Estimates for Discriminant Validity and Reliability: Employee Ratings of Immediate Manager (N = 432)

	Identification	Communication	Prioritization	Transformational leadership
Identification	0.899	0.890	0.636	0.573
Communication	0.943***	0.776	0.691	0.626
Prioritization	0.797***	0.831***	0.838	0.532
Transformational leadership	0.757***	0.793***	0.729***	0.853

Note. Subdiagonal entries are correlations between latent constructs (***p < .001). Entries above the diagonal are the squared correlation estimates (shared variance). Entries (**in bold**) in the diagonal are the average variance extracted (average of squared factor loadings AVE) for each latent construct.

In table 5, we show a) interfactor correlations, b) average variance extracted (AVE), and c) shared variance for employee ratings of their agency head's transformational leadership and organization's reputation management. The overall tendency is the same as in table 7, although the interfactor correlations (and therefore also shared variance) between the factors are lower. Transformational leadership shares less than half of its variance with any of the three reputation management factors. All three reputation management factors discriminate from transformational leadership, but communication does not discriminate from identification, which further suggests that communication is not a valid empirical third factor. Composite reliability scores in terms of Cronbach's alpha for identification (0.87), communication (0.76), prioritization (0.88), and transformational leadership (0.93) suggest internal consistency among each of the four factors, as Cronbach's alpha is well above the recommended lower threshold of 0.7.

Table 5 Intercorrelations and Estimates for Discriminant Validity and Reliability: Employee Ratings of Agency Head and Organization (N = 457)

	Identification	Communication	Prioritization	Transformational leadership
Identification	0.774	0.704	0.382	0.249
Communication	0.839***	0.622	0.574	0.411
Prioritization	0.618***	0.757***	0.713	0.263
Transformational leadership	0.499***	0.641***	0.513***	0.760

Note. Subdiagonal entries are correlations between latent constructs (***p < .001). Entries above the diagonal are the squared correlation estimates (shared variance). Entries (**in bold**) in the diagonal are the average variance extracted (average of squared factor loadings AVE) for each latent construct.

Additionally, we analyzed convergent and discriminant validity of the three reputation management factors combined into a single factor and transformational leadership. Again, the two concepts discriminate from each other. This can be found in table A11-A12 in the appendix. We also analyzed interfactor correlations, average variance extracted, shared variance, and Cronbach's alpha

reliability scores for managers' ratings which also indicate discriminant properties of the two concepts using managers' self-ratings and internal consistency among items associated with four factors (see Table A13 in the appendix).

Finally, we conducted explorative factor analyses (EFA) using the seven reputation management items and the four transformational leadership items as part of the robustness test of the reputation management measure. We found that the two leadership behaviors loaded on different factors. These EFAs can be found in appendices A14-A17.

Conclusion

The ambition of this article was to conceptualize and illustrate the empirical relevance of reputation management as a distinct type of leadership behavior that public managers perform with the intent to affect how external audiences perceive the organization. The empirical analysis supports our conceptualization of reputation management as a concept consisting of three behaviors: identification, prioritization, and communication. By doing so, we contribute to the research on public leadership and bureaucratic reputation theory by providing a multidimensional concept of reputation management that enables the empirical identification and investigation of the behavior performed by public managers when they communicate and share the organizational vision with external audiences; that is, when they lead outwards. The analysis shows high reliability of our measure, especially within groups of employee who share the same immediate manager, which is also an indication of construct validity of our concept, suggesting that employee ratings are meaningful as assessments of reputation management.

We also supplement the emerging focus on reputation management within the bureaucratic reputation scholarship. In line with Maor (2020), we argue that communication is a central aspect of reputation management, but reputation management is more than "just" communication in relation to external threats. We argue that the distinct theoretical trait of reputation management is the manager's intent to affect audience perceptions of the organization's reputation, which can be proactive and thus not only a reactive managerial strategy. So, while agreeing with Busuioc and Lodge (2016, 94) that protecting one's reputation is vital, reputation management is more than protecting the reputation during times of public criticism. In our conceptualization, we argue that reputation management consists of three behaviors, which together comprise the managerial efforts to consciously and continuously create and cultivate a favorable reputation. We thus contribute with a conceptualization of reputation management that captures the centrality of the *communication* of the organizational vision and its positive impact on society more broadly, while also including the *identification* of the perceptions and expectations held by audiences and *prioritization* between audiences and

expectations, which are two key aspects of bureaucratic reputation theory. This, we argue, is at the heart of bureaucratic reputation management.

The article also demonstrates how reputation management is related to, but distinct from, one of the most established leadership constructs within public management research: transformational leadership (Tummers and Knies 2016, 438). Reputation management and transformational leadership behaviors both reflect “visioning” leadership behaviors as they are based on the idea that communicating the vision can help shape and give direction to the perceptions of external audiences and behaviors of internal audiences, respectively.

The importance of using missions and visions when leading public organizations has long been recognized in public administration research (e.g., Selznick 1957; Boin 2001; Goodsell 2011). Within public management research, this recognition has been translated into scholarly interest in transformational leadership, which has become the most studied leadership approach in public management research (Vogel and Masal 2015, 1175; Tummers and Knies 2016, 438). Despite its prominent position in public management research, transformational leadership is often investigated in isolation to scrutinize the impact of the immediate manager’s leadership behavior on employee outcomes; that is, leading by means of a vision has primarily been investigated in terms of employee-targeted leadership behaviors. However, visions often target both internal and external actors (Mayfield, Mayfield, and Sharbrough 2015), meaning that attention has not been paid to potential effects of communicating the vision externally with the purpose of affecting how external audiences perceive the organization and/or their expectations to the organization. Leading by means of a vision is not only a central mechanism applied when public managers perform transformational leadership behavior aimed at transforming employee behavior toward realizing the goals of the organization as imagined and formulated in the vision (Jensen et al. 2019, 8). Visions are also a main vehicle for public managers when aiming to transform how external audiences view an organization. Based on this argument, the article defines and conceptualizes this kind of externally oriented visioning behavior of public managers as reputation management, which we further demonstrate to be a distinct management behavior while also being related to transformational leadership.

Limitations and Future Research

Although our proposed measure of reputation management has limitations, our scale provides an important step in the development and validation of a new leadership concept useful to future research on public administration and public management; not least for the bureaucratic reputation scholars carrying out future investigations of who in the organization performs bureaucratic conscious behavior of a not merely reactive, but also proactive nature (and how they do so).

Our study should be viewed as a first, important step toward developing a multidimensional concept and scale to measure reputation management per se and to investigate its relation to other

established leadership constructs, including transformational leadership. The validation of measurement instruments is an ongoing process (DeVellis 2003), and future studies are needed to further test and potentially refine the scale in different organizational contexts. Government agencies represent a special type of public organization, and the three agencies included in the empirical analysis all, as expected, have a relative high degree of reputational awareness due to a history of intense media salience. Although operating across different policy areas, the reputation management concept proved empirically relevant for all three agencies. This improves the validity of the measurement scale while also relating to Carpenter's cautioning against including agencies operating in different policy areas in the same sample (2020). While recognizing the relevance of this argument, we do believe that investigating the existence of reputation management behavior across different types of agencies up and down the managerial hierarchy within those agencies is valid. As Carpenter notes, "different levels of bureaucrats all share in a politics of reputation" (2020, 86). To this, we would add that at least regulatory agencies across policy areas share in reputation management. However, to further validate the reputation management concept proposed in this article, a next step could be expanding the empirical domain beyond agencies performing regulatory tasks. Regulatory agencies, as argued by Overman, Busuioc & Wood (2020, 416), provides for an exemplary case, as the legitimacy of this type of agency and the *de facto* authority necessary to perform their regulatory task depends from a favorable reputation (see also Carpenter 2010). Future research should also apply the measurement to agencies, performing other than regulatory tasks (e.g. service delivery) as well as to other types of public organizations across different governance levels in the future validation process. While bureaucratic reputation scholars appear to have a particular appetite for investigating (regulatory) agencies, other organizations in the public sector habitat are also expectedly communicating their vision externally to affect how external audiences perceive them.

The inherent hierarchical structure of the agencies investigated in this article raises concerns regarding multilevel issues, which we were not able to account for due to the sample size of our data. The relationships between the different constructs could potentially vary at different levels of analysis (Dyer, Hanges and Hall 2005), and we encourage future studies to pursue this using multi-level analysis. A related point, and in line with Carpenter, a next step for future research would be to disentangle the extent to which reputation management is performed across the executive vis-à-vis the middle-level management in public organizations (2020, 86).

We also hope that future research will investigate the potential effects of combining reputation management with transformational leadership and other leadership strategies. Distinct management and leadership behaviors are seldom performed in isolation, and how reputation management interact with, strengthen, or weaken other leadership and management behaviors relative to various outcomes if performed simultaneously is important to pursue in future research. This would be relevant to investigate further from both practitioner and theoretical perspectives. Communication

theory provides us with the insight that when an organization communicates a message to external audiences, organization members also listen; and possibly with even greater interest (Lotman 1990; Morsing 2006). Studies within this field of research have demonstrated how organizational communication to external audiences can build organizational identification among organizational members (Morsing 2006, 171); and as such in a more indirect way, strengthen the efforts from transformational leadership behaviors vis-à-vis the employees. This means that when managers communicate and share the organizational vision outside of the organization, they perform auto-communication as well as external communication; that is, they simultaneously communicate to their employees (Christensen 1997, 2018). Additionally, communicating the vision internally and its impact on employee behavior can strengthen the efforts of reputation management behavior on how external audiences view the organization. Public relations research recognize employees as informal spokespersons and advocates for their organizations through the promotion or defense of an organization or its products (Men 2014; Dozier, Grunig and Grunig 1995). Men (2014) further suggest that transformational leadership increases the likelihood of employee advocacy behavior. We encourage future research to investigate the role of employees in relation to reputation management and organizational reputation as well as disentangle the type of leadership behaviors that fosters such employee behavior.

Bureaucratic reputation has emerged as an important concept in public administration research, and we hope that the scale we have developed to measure reputation management will contribute to this important area of research. We believe that our measure could be useful to scholars who are interested in measuring how organizations and their managers attempt to shape the perceptions of external audiences and the effects hereof in relation to both organizational reputation and internal organizational and employee outcomes. We hope that our study will inspire future studies to direct attention to externally oriented aspects of public management, which may also be relevant for organizational outcomes.

Vogel and Masal (2015) argue that public management research must focus more on the publicness of management. We hope to contribute to this by developing a measure of reputation management especially relevant in the public sector context. This includes communicating the positive impact of the organization on society more broadly, intended to affect the organization's most important audiences.

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Appendix

Content:

Table A1: Overview of articles from literature search in public administration journals

Table A2: Operationalization of Transformational Leadership

Table A3 Example of a Confirmatory factor analysis of reputation management (employee ratings) with cluster robust standard errors.

Table A4: Confirmatory factor analysis of reputation management (employee ratings): Agency X

Table A5: Confirmatory factor analysis of reputation management (employee ratings): Danish Veterinary and Food Administration

Table A6: Confirmatory factor analysis of reputation management (employee ratings): Danish Health Agency

Table A7: Confirmatory factor analysis of reputation management (manager self-reported behavior)

Table A8: Interrater agreement within each group of employees (r_{wg})

Table A9: Confirmatory factor analysis of Reputation Management and Transformational leadership: Four-Factor Model vs Alternative Models (Employee Ratings of Immediate Manager)

Table A10 Confirmatory factor analysis of Reputation Management and Transformational leadership: Four-Factor Model vs Alternative Models (Employee Ratings of Organization and Agency Head)

Table A11: Interfactor correlations, average variance extracted, shared variance, and composite reliability scores for employee-perceived leadership behavior

Table A12: Interfactor correlations, average variance extracted, shared variance, and composite reliability scores for employee-perceived agency head/organizational behavior

Table A13: Interfactor correlations, average variance extracted, shared variance, and composite reliability scores for managers' self-reported leadership behavior

Table A14: Explorative factor analysis of reputation management and transformational leadership (employee ratings of immediate manager)

Table A15: Explorative factor analysis of reputation management and transformational leadership (employee ratings of organization/agency head)

Table A16: Explorative factor analysis of reputation management and transformational leadership (employee ratings of immediate manager): specifying the number of factors a priori (pf 2)

Table A17: Explorative factor analysis of reputation management and transformational leadership (employee ratings of organization/agency head): specifying the number of factors a priori (pf 2)

Table A 1 Overview of Articles from Literature Search in Public Administration Journals

Au- thor(s)	Definition or description of reputation management	Operationalization of reputation management /reputation man- agement identified as	Govern- ance level	Method	Jour- nal	Inspired the defini- tion of reputation management in our article
Sataøen & Wæraas (2015)	The article describes reputation management as a part of corporate branding: the highlighting of uniqueness	Based on Van Riel and Fombrun (2007) the article identifies reputation management as the standardization of external communication, visions, and core values and identities.	Norwegian hospitals	Qualitative (interviews)	Public Manage-ment Re-view	Yes, the article points to reputation management as external communica-tion of visions and values to affect external audi-ences' perception
Wæraas, Bjørnå & Mold-enæs (2015)	Reputation management and brand-ing are described as closely linked to each other and understood as "sys-tematic efforts to instill a particular impression of an organization in the minds of observ-ers"	The article develops a typology of three strategies for municipal branding (place, or-ganization and democracy). The empirical study is exploratory and aimed at investigat-ing the empirical relevance and validity of the three strategies based a survey on sent to the chief administrative officer in Norwe-gian municipalities.	Local gov-ernment level in Nor-way	Quantitative (survey)	Public Manage-ment Re-view	Yes, the article points to reputation management as a managerial behavior, although no definition is offered
Wæraas (2014)	Reputation management is de-scribed as image-enhancing activi-ties, where the organization articu-lates its' uniqueness as an essential part of the brand.	The article compares core value statements of U.S. federal agencies to identify their uniqueness/the frequency by which they ap-pear	Central gov-ernment level US Govern-ment agen-cies	Quantitative content anal-ysis	American Review of Public Admin-istration	Yes, the article points to values as being part of what is communicated to affect external audiences' perception of the organi-zation
Teodoro & An (2018)	The article investigates reputation as brand equity, including whether the formal names of agencies per se are related to different degrees of 'brand favorability' among citizens	Brand favorability	Central gov-ernment level US federal agencies	Quantitative (survey ex-periment)	Journal of Public Admin-istration Research and The-ory	No, although the article points to the name of the agency's relevance for brand favorability, the formal name of the agency often lies beyond the discretion of agency heads or managers at

						other levels within the agency
Busuioc & Lodge (2017)	The heart of reputation management is the protection of one's reputation	Reputation management is identified as account giving, so no definition of how to give accounts to enhance reputation but theoretical argument for account giving behavior (mandatory and voluntary) being part of reputation management	Central government level Agencies	Theoretical	Governance	The article has inspired our definition of reputation management in the sense that providing voluntary accounts can include communication of the vision of the organization towards external audiences and is as such, as also noted by Busuioc and Lodge can be conceptualized as reputation management
Maor, Gilad & Bloom (2013)	The article defines reputation management as "government agencies' attempt to actively construct the way in which their multiple audiences judge their performance" and as the management of external stakeholders' expectations.	Reputation management is identified as the shaping of communication. The article investigates agencies' communication response when judgmental opinions about the agency is expressed in newspaper opinions.	Central government level Israeli banking regulator	Quantitative (media content analysis)	Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory	Yes, the article points to reputation management as a managerial behavior, although no definition is offered. The article also points to reputation management as including communication behaviors
Gilad, Maor & Bloom (2015)	The article describes reputation management as agency response to external allegations expressed in news media articles	Agencies' communication response identified in news media articles to external allegations by means of the following communication responses: silence, problem denial or problem admission.	Central government level Israeli banking regulator	Quantitative (multinomial logistic regression analysis)	Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory	Yes, the article points to reputation management as including communication behaviors
Alon-Barakat & Gilad (2017)	Reputation management is linked to brand management and described as the strategic use of promotional symbols	The article conducts a survey-experiment where respondents are presented with different amounts of an electricity agency's promotional symbols.	Central government level State-owned electricity monopoly in Israel	Quantitative (Survey-experiment)	Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory	Yes, points to reputation management as including communication behaviors

Rimkuté (2018)	Described as agencies' active and strategic assessment of reputational threats	Identified as how agencies respond to reputational threats. More specifically, the article compares how agencies in their risk assessment focus on different aspects of their scientific conduct and send either professional or protectionist signals to their regulatory audience.	Central government level in France and EU level	Qualitative	Public Administration	No, performing risk assessments we would argue, are not primarily done for the purpose of affecting external audiences' perceptions of the organization, but part of the organization's 'doing', that is the performance of its core task
Rimkuté (2020)	Reputation management is described as strategic behavior employed to engender the belief vis-à-vis relevant audiences that they can carry out the functions entrusted to them by national governments in a professional, efficient, procedurally appropriate, and/or ethical way.	The article investigates how frequently agencies refer to technical, performative, procedural, and/or moral vocabulary on their websites (annual reports and multiannual programming documents)	EU level Regulatory and social policy agencies	Quantitative (content-analysis and text-mining of textual data.)	Governance	Yes, the article points to reputation management as including communication behaviors as well as to the need to prioritize in this case between reputational dimensions
Moschella and Pinto 2019	Reputation management is described as how organizations' "craft their communication to cope with reputational challenges."	Reputation management is identified as the relative salience that different issues assume in central banks' communication. The article identifies different types of communication strategies based reputational concerns about policy reversals. Reputation management is also identified as the balancing of multiple issues.	Federal bank in the US	Quantitative (structural topic model to analyze speeches)	Public administration	Yes, the article points to reputation management as including communication behaviors, as well as the need to prioritize or emphasize some issues at the expense of others.
Christensen & Lodge (2018)	The article describes reputation management as involving issues about the core mission of an agency, reflecting on the agency's historical path, its main resources and competences, and its outputs and outcomes.	To investigate how agencies seek to manage their reputation, the article explores how agencies portray themselves on their websites using symbols (mission statements, tasks, history ect.) that refer to performance/security, to constitutional norms and core values, to legal procedures and to professionalism.	Government agencies	Qualitative (Comparative case study)	American Review of Public Administration	Yes, the article points to reputation management as including communication behaviors, reputation management as proactive, as well as to the need to prioritize in this case between reputational dimensions

Anastasopoulos & Whitford (2019)	Public organizations' attempt to strategically shape their own reputations (through media and other materials that they distribute to the public)	The article investigates agency communication in the form of tweets	Central government level US federal agencies	Quantitative (machine learning)	Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory	Yes, the article points to reputation management as including communication behaviors as well as points to the potential proactive nature of reputation management
Christensen & Gornitzka (2019)	Reputation management is described as an activity where organizational leaders in an organized and systematic way use symbols to reach and appeal to diverse audiences to build a reputation	The article identifies reputation management as the use of symbols referring to reputational dimensions in texts posted online on the agencies' official websites	Central government agencies	Qualitative (comparative case study)	Administration & Society	Yes, the article points to reputation management as including communication behaviors as well as points to the potential proactive nature of reputation management
Gjølberg (2010)	It is an article about the CSR in relation to Nordic Governments. CSR is related to reputation management and argued to be a way to enhance reputation management.	The article does not measure or identify reputation management behavior	National government	Qualitative (comparative case study)		No, the article mentions reputation management but investigates something else (CSR)
de Graaf & van der Wal (2010)	It is an article about managing conflicting values: governing with integrity and governing effectively/efficiently. The article links reputation management to integrity.	The article does not measure or identify reputation management behavior	Governments both national and local	Theoretical	American Review of Public Administration	No, the article mentions reputation management but is about managing conflicting public values
Rho, Yun & Lee (2015)	Reputation management is described as important in relation to managing organizational image	The article does not measure reputation management but organizational image	Organizational level (public and nonprofit)	Quantitative (survey data)	Public Administration Review	No, the article mentions reputation management but investigates something else (organizational image)

Christensen, Lægreid & Rykkja (2016)	Reputation management is linked to crisis management	It is a theoretical article about governmental crisis management with governance capacity and governance legitimacy as important for well-functioning crisis management	Government	Theoretical	Public Administration Review	No, the article mentions reputation management but investigates something else (crisis management)
Doering, Downe, Elraz & Martin (2019)	The article does not define reputation management but describe it as the management of the relationship between the organization and their audiences	The article identifies one reputation management strategy: Engaging proactively with new voluntary performance assessments	English local governments	Qualitative (interviews)	Public Management Review	No, the article mentions reputation management but investigates something else (performance assessments), which is part of the organization's "doing".

Table A2: Operationalization of Transformational Leadership

Item #	Item wording: A. Leader version <i>As a leader I...</i>	Item wording: B. Employee version <i>B. My leader/director...</i>
1	...specify a clear vision for the [organization's] future.	...specifies a clear vision for the [organization's] future.
2	...seek to make employees accept common goals for the [organization].	...seeks to make employees accept common goals for the [organization].
3	...strive to get the [organization's] employees to work together in the direction of the vision.	...strives to get the [organization's] employees to work together in the direction of the vision.
4	...strive to clarify for the employees how they can contribute to achieving the [organization's] goals.	...strives to clarify for the employees how they can contribute to achieving the [organization's] goals.
Note: In the survey, "organization" is replaced with the name of the agency. Likert-type format: 1: strongly disagree 2: disagree 3: slightly disagree 4: neither agree nor disagree 5: slightly agree 6: agree 7: strongly agree		

Table A3 Example of a Confirmatory factor analysis of reputation management with cluster robust standard errors: Three-Factor Model vs Alternative Reputation Management Models (employee ratings of immediate manager – comparable to Table 2 in the article)

	3-factor model	2-factor model	1-factor model
Identification			
Makes an ongoing effort to gain insights into how our surroundings perceive [the organization]	.935	.931	.899
Makes an ongoing effort to gain insights into which expectations our surroundings have to [the organization]	.961	.950	.919
Communication			
Strives to increase the knowledge of the outside world of [the organization's] vision	.876	.850	.849
Tries to clarify [the organization's] positive impact on society to the outside world	.886	.855	.861
Prioritization			
Strives to target what [the organization] communicates to the outside world	.932	.932	.843
Strives to target [the organization's] messages to selected stakeholders in our surroundings	.932	.933	.822
Strives to highlight specific aspects of [the organization] in his/her/its communication to the outside world	.881	.880	.812
SRMR	.013	.025	.062
Note. CFA with standardized factor loadings and cluster robust standard errors. CFA based on asymptotic distribution-free estimator. All standardized factor loadings are statistically significant at the .001 level.			

Table A4: Confirmatory Factor Analysis of Reputation Management: Employee Data from Agency X: Three-Factor Model vs Alternative Models (ratings of immediate manager)

	3-factor model	2-factor model	1-fac- tor model
Identification			
Makes an ongoing effort to gain insights into how our surroundings perceive [the organization]	.971	.956	.930
Makes an ongoing effort to gain insights into which expectations our surroundings have to [the organization]	.946	.945	.909
Communication			
Strives to increase the knowledge of the outside world of [the organization's] vision	.898	.815	.830
Tries to make it clear to the outside world how [the organization] has a positive impact on society	.923	.835	.850
Prioritization			
Strives to target what [the organization] communicates to the outside world	.941	.941	.838
Strives to target [the organization's] messages to selected stakeholders in our surroundings	.917	.917	.800
Strives to highlight specific aspects of [the organization] in his/her/its communication to the outside world	.860	.858	.809
N (employees)	148	148	148
n (organizations)	1	1	1
chi ²	22.52	72.02	201.48
df	11	13	14
RMSEA	.084	.176	.302
CFI	.990	.947	.833
SRMR	.024	.044	.065
Note. CFA with standardized factor loadings. CFA based on asymptotic distribution-free estimator. All standardized factor loadings are statistically significant at the .001 level. RMSEA = root-mean-square error of approximation; CFI = comparative fit index; SRMR = standardized root-mean-square residual; CFA = confirmatory factor analysis.			

Table A5: Confirmatory Factor Analysis of Reputation Management: Employee Data from Danish Veterinary and Food Administration: Three-Factor Model vs Alternative Models (Employee Ratings of Immediate Manager)

	3-factor model	2-factor model	1-factor model
Identification			
Makes an ongoing effort to gain insights into how our surroundings perceive [the organization]	.923	.924	.904
Makes an ongoing effort to gain insights into which expectations our surroundings have to [the organization]	.979	.970	.952
Communication			
Strives to increase the knowledge of the outside world of [the organization's] vision	.881	.867	.870
Tries to make it clear to the outside world how [the organization] has a positive impact on society	.912	.893	.891
Prioritization			
Strives to target what [the organization] communicates to the outside world	.946	.946	.826
Strives to target [the organization's] messages to selected stakeholders in our surroundings	.948	.948	.811
Strives to highlight specific aspects of [the organization] in his/her/its communication to the outside world	.915	.914	.824
N (employees)	159	159	159
n (organizations)	1	1	1
chi ²	20.59	27.13	251.28
df	11	13	14
RMSEA	.074	.083	.328
CFI	.993	.990	.825
SRMR	.017	.021	.075
Note. CFA with standardized factor loadings. CFA based on asymptotic distribution-free estimator. All standardized factor loadings are statistically significant at the .001 level. RMSEA = root-mean-square error of approximation; CFI = comparative fit index; SRMR = standardized root-mean-square residual; CFA = confirmatory factor analysis.			

Table A6: Confirmatory Factor Analysis of Reputation Management: Employee Data from the Danish Health Authority: Three-Factor Model vs Alternative Models (Employee Ratings of Immediate Manager)

	3-factor model	2-factor model	1-fac- tor model
Identification			
Makes an ongoing effort to gain insights into how our surroundings perceive [the organization]	.905	.900	.867
Makes an ongoing effort to gain insights into which expectations our surroundings have to [the organization]	.945	.946	.912
Communication			
Strives to increase the knowledge of the outside world of [the organization's] vision	.829	.867	.844
Tries to make it clear to the outside world how [the organization] has a positive impact on society	.791	.804	.829
Prioritization			
Strives to target what [the organization] communicates to the outside world	.896	.894	.849
Strives to target [the organization's] messages to selected stakeholders in our surroundings	.929	.930	.844
Strives to highlight specific aspects of [the organization] in his/her/its communication to the outside world	.847	.847	.771
N (employees)	125	125	125
n (organizations)	1	1	1
chi ²	17.88	26.28	104.15
df	11	13	14
RMSEA	.071	.093	.228
CFI	.992	.983	.892
SRMR	.028	.038	.056
Note. CFA with standardized factor loadings. CFA based on asymptotic distribution-free estimator. All standardized factor loadings are statistically significant at the .001 level. RMSEA = root-mean-square error of approximation; CFI = comparative fit index; SRMR = standardized root-mean-square residual; CFA = confirmatory factor analysis.			

Table A7: Confirmatory Factor Analysis of Reputation Management: Three-Factor Model vs Alternative Reputation Management Models (Managers' Self-Reported Behavior)

	3-factor model	2-factor model	1-fac- tor model
Identification			
Make an ongoing effort to gain insights into how our surroundings perceive [the organization]	.749	.732	.578
Make an ongoing effort to gain insights into which expectations our surroundings have to [the organization]	.895	.823	.683
Communication			
Strive to increase the knowledge of the outside world of [the organiza- tion's] vision	.756	.620	.462
Try to clarify [the organization's] positive impact on society to the out- side world	.903	.693	.579
Prioritization			
Strive to target what [the organization] communicates to the outside world	.814	.817	.799
Strive to target [the organization's] messages to selected stakeholders in our surroundings	.871	.870	.839
Strive to highlight specific aspects of [the organization] in his/her/its communication to the outside world	.871	.870	.844
n (managers)	52	52	52
n (organizations)	3	3	3
chi ²	8.70	24.98	52.52
df	11	13	14
RMSEA	0	.134	.232
CFI	1	.934	.788
SRMR	.033	.066	.117
Note. CFA with standardized factor loadings. CFA based on asymptotic distribution-free estimator. All stand- ardized factor loadings are statistically significant at the .001 level. RMSEA = root-mean-square error of ap- proximation; CFI = comparative fit index; SRMR = standardized root-mean-square residual; CFA = confirm- atory factor analysis.			

Table A8 Interrater agreement (rwg)

Group number	rwg.j	Group size
1	0,89	15
2	0,95	8
3	0,97	8
4	0,86	10
5	0,00	2
6	0,87	7
7	0,90	4
8	0,97	6
9	0,86	15
10	0,88	7
11	0,95	6
12	0,54	5
13	0,88	10
14	0,85	10
15	0,83	4
16	0,96	9
17	0,81	4
18	0,94	8
19	0,96	4
20	0,81	6
21	0,99	2
22	0,97	6
23	0,83	6
24	0,96	5
25	0,90	4
26	0,00	2
27	0,91	4
28	0,98	3
29	0,97	3
30	0,97	3
31	0,95	3
32	0,96	8
33	0,98	2
34	0,97	5
35	NA	1
36	0,99	3
37	0,94	8
38	0,83	3

Table A8 Interrater agreement (rwg)

Group number	rwg.j	Group size
39	0,92	7
40	0,92	7
41	NA	1
42	0,95	5
43	1,00	6
44	0,98	2
45	0,00	3
46	0,94	6
47	0,92	3
48	0,96	2
49	0,79	6
50	NA	1
51	0,95	5
52	0,96	4
53	0,89	5
54	0,93	6
55	0,93	3
56	0,87	10
57	0,79	6
58	0,84	18
59	0,98	6
60	0,94	7
61	0,95	5
62	0,94	10
63	0,96	5
64	0,99	3
65	0,96	20
66	0,96	9
67	0,00	3
68	0,99	5
69	0,97	10
70	0,95	8
71	0,94	16

Table A9 Confirmatory factor analysis of Reputation Management and Transformational leadership: Four-Factor Model vs Alternative Models (Employee Ratings of Immediate Manager)

	4-factor model	2-factor model	1-fac- tor model
Identification			
Makes an ongoing effort to gain insights into how our surroundings perceive [the organization]	.936	.896	.860
Makes an ongoing effort to gain insights into which expectations our surroundings have to [the organization]	.960	.915	.876
Communication			
Strives to increase the knowledge of the outside world of [the organization's] vision	.879	.851	.836
Tries to make it clear to the outside world how [the organization] has a positive impact on society	.882	.860	.830
Prioritization			
Strives to target what [the organization] communicates to the outside world	.930	.844	.823
Strives to target [the organization's] messages to selected stakeholders in our surroundings	.933	.824	.811
Strives to highlight specific aspects of [the organization] in his/her/its communication to the outside world	.882	.814	.798
Transformational Leadership			
Specifies a clear vision for the [organization's] future	.902	.902	.841
Seeks to make employees accept common goals for the [organization]	.917	.917	.836
Strives to get the [organization's] employees to work together in the direction of the vision	.936	.935	.843
Strives to clarify for the employees how they can contribute to achieving the [organization's] goals	.939	.939	.852
N (employees)	432	432	432
n (organizations)	3	3	3
chi ²	92,79	558.12	1339.4
df	38	43	44
RMSEA	0.058	0.167	0.261
CFI	0.990	0.909	0.770
SRMR	0.016	0.042	0.076
Note. CFA with standardized factor loadings. CFA based on asymptotic distribution-free estimator. All standardized factor loadings are statistically significant at the .001 level. RMSEA = root-mean-square error of approximation; CFI = comparative fit index; SRMR = standardized root-mean-square residual; CFA = confirmatory factor analysis.			

Table A10 Confirmatory factor analysis of Reputation Management and Transformational leadership: Four-Factor Model vs Alternative Models (Employee Ratings of Organization and Agency Head)

	4-factor model	2-factor model	1-factor model
Identification			
Makes an ongoing effort to gain insights into how our surroundings perceive [the organization]	0.924	0.759	0.640
Makes an ongoing effort to gain insights into which expectations our surroundings have to [the organization]	0.833	0.700	0.609
Communication			
Strives to increase the knowledge of the outside world of [the organization's] vision	0.811	0.744	0.693
Tries to make it clear to the outside world how [the organization] has a positive impact on society	0.765	0.742	0.629
Prioritization			
Strives to target what [the organization] communicates to the outside world	0.882	0.786	0.638
Strives to target [the organization's] messages to selected stakeholders in our surroundings	0.866	0.756	0.617
Strives to highlight specific aspects of [the organization] in his/her/its communication to the outside world	0.782	0.728	0.590
Transformational Leadership			
Specifies a clear vision for the [organization's] future	0.817	0.818	0.785
Seeks to make employees accept common goals for the [organization]	0.854	0.855	0.790
Strives to get the [organization's] employees to work together in the direction of the vision	0.922	0.922	0.833
Strives to clarify for the employees how they can contribute to achieving the [organization's] goals	0.889	0.889	0.813
N (employees)	457	457	457
n (organizations)	3	3	3
chi ²	129.23	502.95	1304.93
df	38	43	44
RMSEA	0.073	0.153	0.251
CFI	0.975	0.873	0.652
SRMR	0.026	0.062	0.132
Note. CFA with standardized factor loadings. CFA based on asymptotic distribution-free estimator. All standardized factor loadings are statistically significant at the .001 level. RMSEA = root-mean-square error of approximation; CFI = comparative fit index; SRMR = standardized root-mean-square residual; CFA = confirmatory factor analysis.			

Table A11 Intercorrelations and Estimates for Discriminant Validity and Reliability: Employee Ratings of Immediate Manager (N = 432)

	Reputation management	Transformational leadership
Reputation management	0.738	0.645
Transformational leadership	0.803	0.853

Note. Subdiagonal entries are correlations between latent constructs. Entries above the diagonal are the squared correlation estimates (shared variance). Entries (**in bold**) in the diagonal is the average variance extracted (average of squared factor loadings AVE) for each latent construct.

Table A12 Intercorrelations and Estimates for Discriminant Validity and Reliability: Employee Ratings of Agency Head/Organization (N = 432)

	Reputation management	Transformational leadership
Reputation management	0.556	0.374
Transformational leadership	0.612	0.760

Note. Subdiagonal entries are correlations between latent constructs. Entries above the diagonal are the squared correlation estimates (shared variance). Entries (**in bold**) in the diagonal is the average variance extracted (average of squared factor loadings AVE) for each latent construct.

Table A13 Intercorrelations and Estimates for Discriminant Validity and Reliability: Managers' Ratings of Own Leadership Behavior (N = 52)

	Identification	Communication	Prioritization	Transformational leadership
Identification	0.668	0.408	0.436	0.249
Communication	0.639	0.687	0.275	0.228
Prioritization	0.660	0.525	0.727	0.135
Transformational leadership	0.499	0.478	0.367	0.555

Note. Subdiagonal entries are correlations between latent constructs (**p < .01, ***p < .001). Entries above the diagonal are the squared correlation estimates (shared variance). Entries (**in bold**) in the diagonal is the average variance extracted (average of squared factor loadings AVE) for each latent construct.

Composite reliability scores in terms of Cronbach's alpha for identification (0.80), communication (0.81), prioritization (0.89), and transformational leadership (0.88) suggest internal consistency among each of the four factors, as Cronbach's alpha is well above the recommended lower threshold of 0.7.

Table A14 Exploratory Factor Analysis of Transformational Leadership and Reputation Management for Immediate Manager (Employee Data)

Without specifying the number of factors a priori

Factor loadings						
Item	Every item starts with: <i>My immediate manager...</i>	F1	F2	F3	F4	F5
Transformational leadership						
1	...specifies a clear vision for the [organization's] future.	0.06	0.83	0.01	0.05	0.08
2	...seeks to make employees accept common goals for the [organization].	-0.05	0.91	0.05	0.02	0.02
3	...strives to get the [organization's] employees to work together in the direction of the vision.	0.00	0.95	-0.01	-0.05	-0.05
4	...strives to clarify for the employees how they can contribute to achieving the [organization's] goals.	0.03	0.93	-0.02	-0.00	-0.02
Reputation management						
1 Communication	...strives to increase the knowledge of the outside world of [the organization's] vision.	0.74	0.09	0.02	0.15	0.01
2 Identification	...make an ongoing effort to gain insights into how our surroundings perceive [the organization].	0.94	0.01	-0.01	-0.08	0.03
3 Identification	...make an ongoing effort to gain insights into which expectations our surroundings have to [the organization].	0.94	-0.01	0.01	-0.05	0.00
4 Communication	...tries to clarify [the organization's] positive impact on society to the outside world.	0.78	0.01	0.07	0.11	-0.06
5 Prioritization	...strives to target what [the organization] communicates to the outside world.	0.07	-0.02	0.88	-0.03	-0.00
6 Prioritization	...strives to target [the organization's] messages to selected stakeholders in our surroundings.	-0.06	-0.02	0.93	-0.02	-0.00
7 Prioritization	...strives to highlight specific aspects of [the organization] in their communication to the outside world.	0.05	0.01	0.81	0.06	0.01
N = 432, principal factoring (pf). Factor loadings > 0.3 marked with bold type. Oblique oblimin rotation						

Table A15 Exploratory Factor Analysis of Transformational Leadership (Agency Head) and Reputation Management (Organization) (Employee Data)

Without specifying the number of factors a priori

Factor loadings						
Item	Every transformational leadership item starts with: <i>My immediate manager...</i> Every reputation management item starts with: <i>My organization...</i>	F1	F2	F3	F4	F5
Transformational leadership						
1	...specifies a clear vision for the [organization's] future.	0.78	0.04	0.03	-0.00	0.15
2	...seeks to make employees accept common goals for the [organization].	0.86	-0.01	0.02	-0.03	0.12
3	...strives to get the [organization's] employees to work together in the direction of the vision.	0.90	-0.01	-0.04	0.07	-0.09
4	...strives to clarify for the employees how they can contribute to achieving the [organization's] goals.	0.86	0.03	0.02	-0.02	-0.13
Reputation management						
1 COMMUNICATION	...strives to increase the knowledge of the outside world of [the organization's] vision.	0.18	0.10	0.24	0.40	0.03
2 IDENTIFICATION	...makes an ongoing effort to gain insights into how our surroundings perceive [the organization].	-0.02	0.04	0.81	0.05	0.05
3 IDENTIFICATION	...makes an ongoing effort to gain insights into which expectations our surroundings have to [the organization].	-0.02	-0.03	0.86	-0.03	-0.04
4 COMMUNICATION	...tries to clarify to the outside world how [the organization] has a positive impact on society.	0.04	0.25	0.26	0.32	-0.04
5 PRIORITIZATION	...strives to target what [the organization] communicates to the outside world.	0.00	0.83	-0.03	0.06	0.03
6 PRIORITIZATION	...strives to target [the organization's] messages to selected stakeholders in our surroundings.	0.01	0.88	-0.01	-0.05	0.01
7 PRIORITIZATION	...strives to highlight specific aspects of [the organization] in their communication to the outside world.	-0.00	0.74	0.05	0.00	-0.06
N = 457, principal factoring (pf). Factor loadings > 0.3 marked with bold type. Oblique oblimin rotation						

Table A16 Exploratory Factor Analysis of Transformational Leadership and Reputation Management for Immediate Manager (Employee Data)

Specifying the number of factors a priori (pf 2)

Item	Every item starts with: <i>My immediate manager...</i>	F1	F2
Transformational leadership			
1	...specifies a clear vision for the [organization's] future.	0.05	0.87
2	...seeks to make employees accept common goals for the [organization].	0.01	0.91
3	...strives to get the [organization's] employees to work together in the direction of the vision.	-0.01	0.94
4	...strives to clarify for the employees how they can contribute to achieving the [organization's] goals.	0.01	0.92
Reputation management			
1 Communication	...strives to increase the knowledge of the outside world of [the organization's] vision.	0.69	0.18
2 Identification	...makes ongoing effort to gain insights into how our surroundings perceive [the organization].	0.79	0.01
3 Identification	...makes an ongoing effort to gain insights into which expectations our surroundings have to [the organization].	0.83	0.08
4 communication	...tries to clarify [the organization's] positive impact on society to the outside world.	0.78	0.08
5 Prioritization	...strives to target what [the organization] communicates to the outside world.	0.95	-0.09
6 Prioritization	...strives to target [the organization's] messages to selected stakeholders in our surroundings.	0.92	-0.07
7 Prioritization	...strives to highlight specific aspects of [the organization] in their communication to the outside world.	0.88	-0.05
N = 432, principal factoring (pf 2). Factor loadings > 0.3 marked with bold type. Oblique oblimin rotation			

Table A17 Explorative Factor Analysis Transformational Leadership (Agency Head) and Reputation Management (Organization) (Employee Data)

Specifying the number of factors a priori (pf 2)

Item	Every transformational leadership item starts with: <i>My agency head...</i> Every reputation management item starts with: <i>My organization...</i>	F1	F2
Transformational leadership			
1	...specifies a clear vision for the [organization's] future.	0.05	0.80
2	...seeks to make employees accept common goals for the [organization].	-0.03	0.88
3	...strives to get the [organization's] employees to work together in the direction of the vision.	-0.01	0.91
4	...strives to clarify for the employees how they can contribute to achieving the [organization's] goals.	0.01	0.86
Reputation management			
1 Communication	...strives to increase the knowledge of the outside world of [the organization's] vision.	0.62	0.19
2 Identification	...makes an ongoing effort to gain insights into how our surroundings perceive [the organization].	0.78	0.01
3 Identification	...makes an ongoing effort to gain insights into which expectations our surroundings have to [the organization].	0.69	0.05
4 Communication	...tries to clarify to the outside world how [the organization] has a positive impact on society.	0.71	0.04
5 Prioritization	...strives to target what [the organization] communicates to the outside world.	0.82	-0.04
6 Prioritization	...strives to target [the organization's] messages to selected stakeholders in our surroundings.	0.79	-0.04
7 Prioritization	...strives to highlight specific aspects of [the organization] in his/her communication to the outside world.	0.76	-0.05
N = 457, principal factoring (pf 2). Factor loadings > 0.3 marked with bold type. Oblique oblimin rotation			

**HOW TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP AND
REPUTATION MANAGEMENT RELATE TO
EMPLOYEE MISSION VALENCE:
A TWO-WAVE STUDY OF MISSION VALENCE
IN PUBLIC AGENCIES**

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Abstract

Mission valence is argued to hold a motivational potential vis-à-vis employees and therefore also potential to influence performance. But how do public managers foster an attraction among their employees to the organizational vision? We examine the effects of reputation management and transformational leadership on employee mission valence. Both leadership strategies are visioning behaviour performed by public managers but differ in terms of the former primarily targeting external audiences (for the purpose of fostering positive perceptions among those audiences of the organization's contribution to society), and the latter targeting employees (to transcend their own self-interest and achieve organizational goals). Panel analyses using repeated measures of 193 employees show that both leadership strategies increase mission valence. Additionally, we find that the positive relationships between the two leadership constructs and mission valence are partially mediated by value congruence; that is, whether employees perceive alignment between their own values and the organizational values.

Keywords: Mission valence, Reputation management, Transformational leadership, Value congruence, Public agencies

1.0 Introduction

Public organizations hold the potential to develop an ‘aura of magnetic appeal’ (Goodsell 2011b, p. 477) condensed in their public vision or mission. Visions ideally embody and reflect the values, which come to characterize organizations over time (Selznick 1957). The ability of public managers to cultivate such a vision holds a motivational potential vis-à-vis their employees (Goodsell 2011a, p. 2), and therefore a potential to influence performance positively. But how do public managers make their employees feel attracted to the vision of their organization, and ensure that the values infusing their organizations are aligned with the values embodied in the organizational vision?

Within the public leadership context, research addressing these questions has thus far led to conceptualizing employee attraction to the vision as mission valence. Mission valence has attracted increased scholarly interest as an important lever public managers can pull when cultivating the motivational aspects of their employees (Wright et al. 2012).

Originally defined by Rainey and Steinbauer (1999), mission valence refers to an ‘employee’s perception of the attractiveness or salience of an organization’s purpose’ (Wright and Pandey 2011, p. 24), and perception of degree to which this purpose is valuable and ‘worthwhile’ to pursue (Rainey and Steinbauer 1999, p. 16). In this article, we refer to mission valence as attraction to the organizational vision, as others before us (e.g., Jensen et al. 2018). This is in line with Goodsell’s description of a mission being an articulation of the organization’s values and what guides the organization in its effort to pursue and realize its goals;

At its best, the mission is a fundamental, institution-specific, purposeful commitment to the larger society. It is what the organization ‘stands for’, a *raison d’être* or underlying rationale that gives employees a source of dedication and external observers a perception of contribution. (Goodsell 2006, pp. 630-631)

As such, mission valence resides in employees’ emotional sides and expresses the degree to which they feel attracted to their organization’s reason for being (Goodsell 2006) and the social contribution and purpose expressed in the organization’s vision (Rainey and Steinbauer 1999, p. 17).

Moving toward the question of how to foster mission valence, public leadership research has thus far looked for an answer within the context of transformational leadership. Public leadership scholars have argued and empirically investigated whether and how transformational leadership behavior fosters mission valence (Moynihan et al. 2014; Wright et al. 2012; Jensen et al. 2018; Desmict and Prinzie 2019; Wright 2007). In addition, research has identified positive correlations of mission valence with employee turnover intention, extra-role

behaviour, and ultimately performance (Caillier 2014; 2015; 2016; Guerrero and Chênevert 2020).

However, transformational leadership is not the only leadership behaviour where the organizational vision is the main mechanism used by public managers. This is also the case with reputation management. Defined as behaviour that ‘attempts to identify perceptions and expectations held by audiences, to prioritize between different audiences (and expectations), and to communicate the vision of the organization to these (specific) audiences’ (Author 1 and Author 2), reputation management is also a type of visioning behaviour. However, contrary to transformational leadership, reputation management primarily targets external audiences for the purpose of conveying a positive portrayal of the organization and fostering a positive perception among those audiences in terms of the organization’s contribution to society.

Building on insights from auto communication theory, we suggest that reputation management can also foster employees’ mission valence. Auto communication can be defined as self-referential acts of communication that organize a sender around its own perspectives and images (Christensen 1997). According to Broms and Gahmberg (1983), external communication often functions as auto communication through which organizations tell themselves what they aspire to be in the future. As such, communicating images of an ‘ideal corporate we’, as reflected in the vision originally intended to external audiences may be transformed into ideal, self-enhancing perceptions of the organization by internal audiences (Christensen 1997; 2018).

Reputation management may involve processes of auto communication; that is, when public managers communicate the organizational vision externally, they simultaneously communicate to their employees. The simultaneous communication to external audiences and internal organizational members is argued to be one of the most powerful ways for managers to tell themselves and their employees who they are and how their organization ought to look like (Christensen 1997).

Performing reputation management provides for yet another opportunity for public managers to articulate a clear and attractive vision to their employees, and hence another opportunity to foster mission valence among employees, albeit the main intention of the external communication is to affect the perception of the organization held by its external audiences.

Next to introducing an alternative direct ‘route’ for public managers to foster mission valence, the article aspires to begin to identify the mechanisms through which reputation management and transformational leadership relate to mission valence. While the knowledge of such mechanisms in the reputation management–mission valence relationship is absent, research has started to identify the mechanisms through which transformational leadership is positively related to mission valence via public service motivation (PSM) and goal clarity (Wright et al. 2012; Desmidt and Prinzie, 2019). In this article, we propose that value

congruence, as the alignment between the values reflected in the organizational vision and the employees' own values, may mediate the relationship between both transformational leadership and reputation management and employees' mission valence respectively; and hence of relevance when identifying the more indirect effects of such leadership behaviours.

To investigate the empirical validity of the proposed theoretical arguments and expectations, the article investigates the following research question: *How are the reputation management and transformational behaviours of public managers related to employee mission valence?*

Our article responds to recent calls within public administration research for using panel design to investigate the development of perceptions and attitudes over time (Stritch 2017), as the empirical analysis is based on survey responses from 193 employees in three Danish regulatory agencies in a two-wave panel data design.

By pursuing the research question, the article expands existing research on mission valence and public management and leadership within the public sector in three respects.

First, in relation to research on leadership and mission valence, we empirically investigate and demonstrate that mission valence can be enhanced by multiple leadership behaviours, and not exclusively by transformational leadership. Introducing reputation management next to the more established transformational leadership construct within public management research rests on the criterion that the mechanism is the same, that being the vision.

Second, this provides for developing existing research on reputation management within the public sector. Departing from bureaucratic reputation theory as coined by Carpenter (2001; 2010), the relevance of reputation consciousness behaviour has attracted increased scholarly interest in the last decade (for an overview, see Maor 2015; 2016; 2020). While empirical evidence of reputation-based motives for explaining agency behaviour when facing reputational threats is mounting (see e.g. Maor 2015; 2020), systematic theorizing with respect to the managerial behaviours behind, e.g. communicative responses to protect let alone to cultivate positive reputations is limited. Recent research has started to explore the potential positive and negative relations between organizational reputation and employee outcomes, including employee engagement (Hameduddin 2021; Hameduddin and Lee 2021), job choice decisions (Lee and Zhang 2020), as well as between reputation management and employee voice behaviour (Wæraas and Dahle 2020). While this provides for better understanding whether and how a positive perception of the organization by external audiences may affect employees, the managerial behaviours fostering this perception in the first place remains 'black boxed'. In the article, we address this limitation by investigating the relationship between reputation management and employee outcomes, based on a recent suggested definition of reputation management (Author 1 and Author 2).

Third, by theorizing and empirically demonstrating how public managers can foster mission valence, and by identifying the partially mediating role of value congruence, the article adds to research demonstrating the relevance of also investigating the ‘softer’ levers available to public managers when affecting employee outcomes more indirectly (Wright et al. 2012, p. 212).

2.0 Theory

Fostering mission valence involves an appeal to employees’ emotions. As noted by Callier, the original definition of mission valence by Rainey and Steinbauer (1999) extends the idea of valence introduced by expectancy theory, where valence reflects ‘an individual’s emotional orientation with respect to, or the value placed on, and expected outcome (Croom, 1946)’ (2016, p. 228). On this basis, Rainey and Steinbauer noted how a mission or vision can also be experienced and felt as rewarding (1999, see also Callier 2016, p. 228). As such, mission valence refers to how an employee perceives the attractiveness of an organizational vision, deriving from ‘the satisfaction an individual experiences (or anticipates receiving) from advancing that purpose’ (Wright and Pandey 2011, p. 24). Given the existing, albeit mixed, empirical findings of the relevance of transformational leadership to foster mission valence and given that both reputation management and transformational leadership are performing ‘visioning behaviour’, we theorize and empirically investigate both reputation management and transformational leadership in relation to mission valence.

Transformational leadership—and mission valence

Transformational leadership was originally a multidimensional concept including idealized influence, individualized consideration, intellectual stimulation and inspirational motivation (Burns 1978; Bass 1990). In line with recent research on transformational leadership public management research, we emphasize the inspirational motivation and, hence, the visioning dimension of this leadership style (Jensen et al. 2019b; Jensen et al. 2019a, p. 14; Callier 2014). Based on Jensen et al., we define transformational leadership as leadership behaviours with the intention to develop, share and sustain the vision of the organization (2019b, p. 8).

The positive relationship between transformational leadership and mission valence is argued to be based on transformational leadership by the mere ‘articulation of *clear* and *attractive* vision of the organization’s mission’ (Wright et al. 2012, p. 207, italics in original) performed by transformational leaders; and as such based on the expectation that formulating, sharing and sustaining the vision renders the vision and the goals and values it reflects, attractive and desirable in themselves. The ability to identify a direct relationship between transformational leadership and mission valence has thus far been mixed. Wright, Moynihan and Pandey find transformational leadership to be positively related to manager’s mission valence, but

only through PSM and goal clarity in the context of U.S. local government (2012). Further, in the context of U.S. state agencies, Pasha et al. (2017) also identified an indirect relationship between transformational leadership and mission valence through performance management and goal clarity. In the context of Danish public sector organizations at different governance levels, Jensen, Moynihan and Salomonsen (2018) identified a relationship between transformational leadership and employee mission valence when leaders share the vision via face-to-face dialogue. Finally, a direct relationship between top managers' transformational leadership behaviour and employees' mission valence has been identified in the context of Belgian social welfare organizations by Desmidt and Prinzie (2019). Despite the mixed findings regarding a direct relationship, we expect:

H1: Transformational leadership is positively related to employee mission valence.

Reputation management—and mission valence

Reputation management is a relatively new concept in the public administration literature, and few attempts have been made to define and empirically validate the concept (Maor 2015). While it is often described as a reactive strategy used by organizations in response to organizational threats, it can also be a proactive strategy pursued by organizations to convey organization identity and want it wants to be known for among external audiences (Carroll 2018).

In this article, we argue that reputation management is the management of how external audiences perceive of an organization; that is, perceptions of what the organization is, what it does and what it aspires to be, which is mainly based on the communication of the formulated vision to the organization's most important external audiences. Reputation management can thus be defined as behaviour with the intent to identify and affect external audiences' perception of the organization (Author 1 and Author 2).

However, external communication performed as part of reputation management also involves an element of auto communication. Auto communication theory was first coined by Lotman (1977), who argued that all individuals, institutions and cultures communicate with themselves, even when addressing other audiences (Lotman 1977). The theory was later developed by especially Christensen (1995, 1997, 2018) and Broms and Gahmberg (1983). When public managers communicate with external audiences, employees also listen (Morsing 2006). This may be unintended or deliberately planned by the organization and/or its managers (Christensen 2018). Nevertheless, auto communication is relevant in relation to organizations, as it serves to convey, confirm and reinforce idealized self-perceptions within the organization. This means that although reputation management is behaviour with the intent to affect the perceptions of external stakeholders, it has the potential to define, alter and shape how employees perceive the organization. Christensen (2018) actually argues that the presence of a

potentially interested and attentive external audience increases the likelihood that a message is taken seriously by the organizational members. When an organization conveys important messages such as its vision externally (e.g., through external media), it lends status and authority to the message, and also— if only temporarily—obligates the organization itself to take the message seriously (Christensen 1995). Based on existing research, which has demonstrated that auto communication can build organizational identification among organizational members (Morsing 2006, p. 171), and hence make employees more inclined to ‘feel as one’ with the organization (Mael and Ashforth 1992, p. 103), we expect auto communication also to be able to increase mission valence. Both organizational identification and mission valence reside in the emotional side of employees. While they differ in terms of organizational identification reflecting felt oneness with the organization as such, and mission valence reflecting felt attraction to the organizational vision more specifically, we do expect managers’ auto communicative efforts also to stimulate positive emotional attraction to the vision among employees. Hence, we expect that:

H2: Reputation management is positively related to employee mission valence.

Value congruence—as mediator

In addition to expecting a direct relation between the two types of leadership behaviour and mission valence, we expect this relation to be at least partially mediated by employees’ perceived value congruence—the degree to which employees perceive their values are compatible, aligned with or match the organizational values (Jensen et al. 2019a, p. 13).

The mediating effect of value congruence was first noted by Callier (citing Paarlberg and Lavigna 2010) when investigating the relationship between transformational leadership and mission valence (2016, p. 229). As Paarlberg and Lavigna noted, transformational leaders are expectedly able to increase mission valence among employees exactly because they align employee values with ‘the organization’s ideology’ (2010, p. 711). This, in turn, makes the mission more salient and attractive to the employees (Callier 2016, p. 229).

Public leadership scholars have investigated whether and under which conditions transformational leadership behaviours can accomplish alignment of values (Jensen 2018; Jensen et al. 2019a). While public employees may be attracted to public organizations in part due to their often ‘service and community-orientated missions’ (Wright et al. 2012, p. 7), employee values may deviate from the organization values, reflecting differences in what is conceived as ‘desirable’ by the employees and the organization (Jensen et al. 2019a, p. 14).

We expect transformational leadership to have potential to foster alignment of values. The theoretical argument for such effects rests upon an idea advanced by Paarlberg and Lavigna: that value congruence may be cultivated through a process of value internalization (2012, p.

711). This value internalization process is argued to be facilitated by transformational leaders when they formulate, share and sustain a vision reflecting the organizational values (Jensen 2018, p. 50, see also Jung and Avolio 2000, p. 952). When so doing, public managers are argued to make employees realize the importance of realizing the vision and align their values with those reflected in the vision (Jensen 2018, p. 50).

While an early study of the aligning potential of transformational leadership regarding the organizational and employee-held values identified such a relationship (Jung and Avolio 2000), a more recent study demonstrates how the ability of transformational leadership to foster value congruence depends partly on the perceived societal impact of the service produced by the organization (Jensen 2018). It has also recently been demonstrated how the ability of transformational leaders to foster PSM among employees is contingent upon the degree of initial value congruence, as perceived by the employees (Jensen et al. 2019a). These are important steps towards assessing whether (and the conditions and contextual factors under which) transformational leadership holds the potential to align employee values with the organizational values.

We argue, that the alignment of values provides for the mechanism that makes transformational leaders foster mission valence, as the alignment of values renders the vision valuable and attractive (Guerrero and Chênevert 2020).

Therefore, we expect that:

H3: The relationship between transformational leadership and employee mission valence is mediated by employee's value congruence.

Finally, we also expect the relationship between reputation management and mission valence to be mediated by employee perceived value congruence. We expect the value internalization process, as described in relation to transformational leadership above, to be facilitated by managers when they communicate and share the organizational vision externally with the intent to transform how external audiences view the organization, as this communication also facilitates the employee internalization of the organizational values reflected in the vision. Employees are argued to be among the most—if not *the* most—interested listeners to organizational messages directed towards external audiences (Morsing 2006, Christensen 2018). When public managers perform reputation management and convey the organizational vision to external audiences, employees also listen, which may cause them to align their values with the organizational values reflected in the vision. Because reputation management involves an element of auto communication, we expect the mechanism between reputation management and value congruence to be similar to that of the relationship between transformational leadership and value congruence.

Empirical studies within the context of marketing support this expectation. Gilly and Wolfinbarger (1998) have investigated how employees in service-providing organizations perceive values reflected in advertising campaigns from their own workplace and found that employees evaluate values and value congruence with more interest and attention than external audiences. Celsi and Gilly (2010) have investigated the relationship between advertising campaigns, value congruence and customer focus, and found that ‘organizational advertising reminds and increases the belief that employees are collectively working toward the common goal of serving customers’ (Celsi and Gilly 2010, p. 521).

As noted by Paarlberg and Lavigna (2010)—and described in relation to H3—the alignment of employee values and organizational values is expected to foster mission valence among employees because the value congruence renders the mission more salient and attractive.

Therefore, we expect that:

H4: The relationship between reputation management and employee mission valence is mediated by employee value congruence.

3.0 Research design, methods and data

To examine the hypotheses, we employ a panel research design aimed at uncovering how changes in leadership relate to changes in employee value congruence and mission valence over time. Panel research designs have at least three advantages relative to the cross-sectional designs often used in public leadership research (Nielsen et al. 2019, p. 419). First, panel designs are less vulnerable to concerns regarding endogeneity resulting from, for example, situations where the leadership behaviour is influenced by existing or prior employee mission valence or from non-observed variables affecting the theoretical concepts we are interested. Examining how changes in leadership affect changes in value congruence and mission valence enables us to study within-unit variation over time to control for any possible observed and unobserved time-invariant confounders at both the employee and organizational levels, which in turn makes it possible to root out the influence of covariates that are correlated with the levels of leadership, value congruence or mission valence (Allison 2009; Wooldridge 2020). Second, panel designs are argued to be better aligned with the underlying theoretical arguments and mechanisms within public leadership research focusing on how attitudes and perceptions are affected by, for example, leadership (Oberfield 2014; Stritch 2017, 220; Nielsen et al. 2019, p. 419). Third, the research design has advantages in relation to measurement. Panel designs reduce the potential common source bias problem relating to the issue of using employee assessments of both the independent and dependent variables. The respondent-level fixed effects design controls for all time-invariant common source bias (Favero and Bullcock 2014).

The empirical basis for our study consists of two consecutive survey studies conducted in 2019 and 2020. In both rounds, we sent the survey to approximately 900 employees in three Danish agencies. The overall response rates were 43% in 2019 and 45.33% in 2020, with some variations across the three agencies (see appendix A1). As we investigate the same employees over time, the data used in the analyses are from respondents who completed both rounds. 193 employees completed both surveys, giving a 21.2% response rate for the balanced panel, which is an acceptable response rate for panel data, but with the drawback of the approach that the statistical power is reduced.

The three agencies were chosen based on their common features to create as much comparability as possible. We chose agencies with a primarily regulatory function, as reputation is argued to be of special importance for regulatory agencies (Carpenter, 2010; Overman et al. 2020, 416). The three agencies are media-salient and have experienced negative media coverage (Boon et al. 2019). As such, we expect their reputational awareness to be relatively high, which also means that managers within these agencies strive to perform extensive reputation management behaviour. Following this, we consider the chosen agencies to be ‘most likely’ cases to find a relation between reputation management and employees’ mission valence.

The agencies are the Danish Veterinary and Food Administration (DVFA), the Danish Health Authority (DHA) and ‘Agency X’ (the latter tentatively asking to remain anonymous). All employees of the DHA and Agency X were included in the study, while we chose to conduct the survey only among a sample of the DVFA employees: the employees working at the agency’s head office. The tasks performed by these employees are similar to those performed by the employees in the two other agencies, and the sample size from this agency is somewhat similar to the number of employees in each of the other two.

We conduct the analysis at the individual level on employee data using a fixed effects approach. Fixed effects analyses the variation within subjects (the individual employees) only. As a robustness check of the results, we also conducted random effects analyses using both the balanced panel and the full sample (employees who answered at least one of the survey rounds). We check the results using random effects because the fixed effects approach can render the respondents non-representative, as it is not random who answers both survey rounds.

Data collection

Our data consist of two questionnaires distributed via e-mail to employees of the three agencies (1½ years between the two surveys). On 4 March 2019, the questionnaire was sent to 181 DHA employees, on 20 March 2019, the questionnaire was sent to 314 employees at Agency X, and the questionnaire was sent to 377 employees at the Danish Veterinary and Food

Administration (DVFA) on 8 April 2019. In total, the first round of the survey was sent to 872 employees with a response rate (whole survey) of 43% ($n = 373$).

The second survey round was planned for exactly one year after the first survey. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, however, the DHA questionnaire had to be postponed, and in agreement with the two remaining agencies, theirs too were postponed. Round 2 of surveys was thus distributed (again via e-mail) in September and October 2020 to the three agencies in the same order as Round 1. New employees also received the second survey, and the second questionnaire was sent to a total of 919 employees (413 respondents = 45.33% response rate).

Measures

All constructs were measured as latent variables. To the extent possible, we employed previously validated measures (see descriptive statistics in table A2 in the appendix). The measures for transformational leadership, mission valence and value congruence have all been validated in existing studies and furthermore shown internal consistency in a Danish context (Jensen et al. 2018, 2019a, 2019b). The reputation management measure has been validated in (Author 1 and Author 2). We measure the two leadership constructs using employee ratings of their immediate manager's leadership behaviour because we know from previous studies that managers tend to overrate their own leadership behaviour relative to employees and that only employee-perceived leadership is positively related to organizational outcomes (Jacobsen and Andersen 2015, p. 829). All items were measured on a 7-point Likert scale ranging from 'strongly agree' to 'strongly disagree'.

Reputation management

We measure reputation management using seven items developed in (Author 1 and Author 2). The seven items reflect the three behavioural components of reputation management outlined in the theoretical section; that is, the managerial attempts to *identify* perceptions and expectations held by audiences, to *prioritize* between different audiences and their expectations, and lastly to *communicate* the organizational vision to these audiences. Identification is reflected in the two items: [*my leader...*] 'makes an ongoing effort to gain insights into how our surroundings perceive [the organization]', 'makes an ongoing effort to gain insights into which expectations our surroundings have towards [the organization]'. Communication is reflected in the items: [*my leader...*] 'strives to increase the outside world's knowledge of [the organization's] vision' and 'tries to clarify [the organization's] positive impact on society to the outside world'. Finally, prioritization is reflected in the three items: [*my leader...*] 'strives to target what [the organization] communicates to the outside world', 'strives to target [the organization's] messages to selected stakeholders in our surroundings' and 'strives to highlight specific aspects of [the organization] in their/its communication to the outside world'.

To test the psychometric properties of the reputation management measure, we conducted confirmatory factor analyses (CFA) specifying a 3-factor model of identification, communication and prioritization, which showed similar loadings across rounds and agencies. The estimation procedure is outlined in the appendix. CFA's showed standardized factor loadings for the reputation management measure well above the lower recommended threshold (Acocck 2013). The 3-factor model generally fits our data well and performs significantly better than less complex models (a model in which the items were constrained to load on two factors and a model where all items were constrained to load on a single factor, not shown in appendix). There are, however, a poor model fit to data in relation to the RMSEA for the CFA for round 2 and the CFA for the combination of both rounds with RMSEA above the 0.08 threshold for a reasonably close fit (Acocck 2013). This is likely due to the small degrees of freedom under which RMSEA tends to falsely indicate a poor fit (Kenny et al. 2015)

We generated a summative index of reputation management based on the three dimensions. Each dimension showed internal consistency, with Cronbach's alphas well above the recommended 0.7 cut-off (Acocck 2013). Finally, we rescaled the reputation management index to range from 0–1, 1 representing the maximum value.

Transformational leadership

To measure transformational leadership, we draw on four items developed by Jensen et al. (2019a; 2019b). Items were [My leader...] 'Concretizes a clear vision for the [organization's] future', 'Seeks to make employees accept common goals for the [organization]', 'Strives to get the [organization's] employees to work together in the direction of the vision' and 'Strives to clarify for the employees how they can contribute to achieving the [organization's] goals'. Cronbach's alpha indicates internal consistency of items (0.95 in Round 1, 0.95 in Round 2). We generated a summative index for transformational leadership, giving equal weight to each item. We rescaled the index to range from 0–1, 1 representing the maximum value.

We conducted a CFA of the two leadership behaviours to demonstrate discriminant validity between the two independent variables (see table A5). To test for cross-loadings, exploratory factor analysis showed that the items only load strongly on the expected latent dimensions (see table A6-A7). Finally, we analysed the correlation between the two leadership concepts (see table A8-A9) and found that the two leadership concepts are (highly) correlated, and the average variance extracted and shared variance are close to each other, suggesting that the two concepts are distinct but closely related.

Mission valence

We measured mission valence using three items developed by Jensen et al. (2018) based on Wright et al. (2012) and Van Loon et al. (2017). The three items were: 'the vision of this

organization is of personal importance to me', 'this organization provides valuable public service' and 'I believe that the priorities of this organization are quite important'. Cronbach's alpha shows a reliability of items (0.64 in Round 1 and 0.74 in Round 2) just around the conventional standards. We created a summative index based on the three items and rescaled the index to range from 0–1.

Value congruence

We measured value congruence using employee perception of whether their own values match those of the organization. Items were 'my values are very similar to the values of the organization', 'what this organization stands for is important to me', and 'I feel a strong sense of "belonging" to my organization'. The three items have been validated in previous studies (e.g., Wright and Pandey 2008; Jensen et al. 2019a). Cronbach's alpha scores shows internal consistency (0.76 in Round 1, 0.81 in Round 2). We generated a summative index for of the three items, giving equal weight to each item, and rescaled the index to range from 0 to 1.

Controls

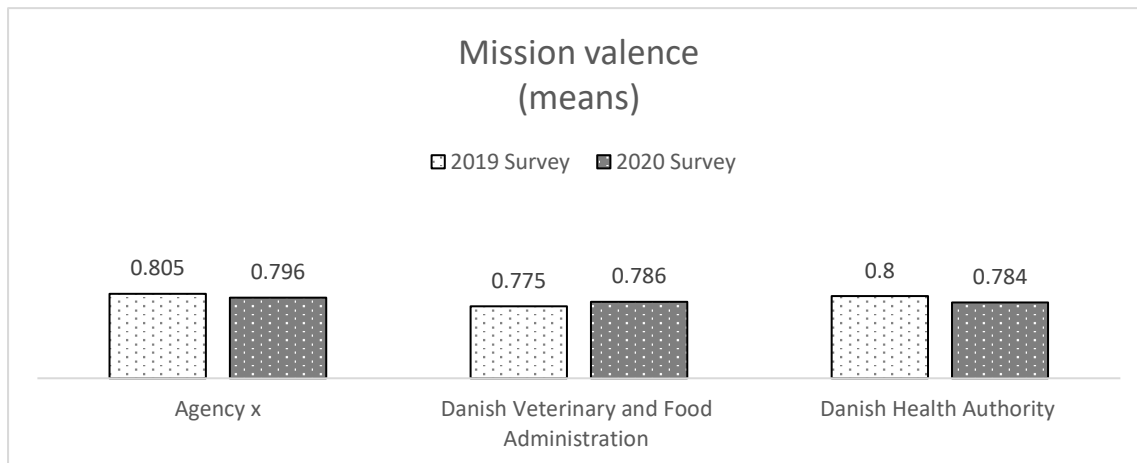
The analyses were carried out with dummy variables for the second survey round as well as the second survey round for each agency with Agency X as reference category.

4.0 Empirical findings

Our presentation of results is structured in two parts. First, we present graphs with mean values of the measures mission valence, transformational leadership and reputation management for the three agencies for each survey round in order to give an overview of the tendencies for each agency. Second, we examine the hypotheses regarding the relationship between, respectively, transformational leadership and reputation management and mission valence, including the mediating effect of value congruence.

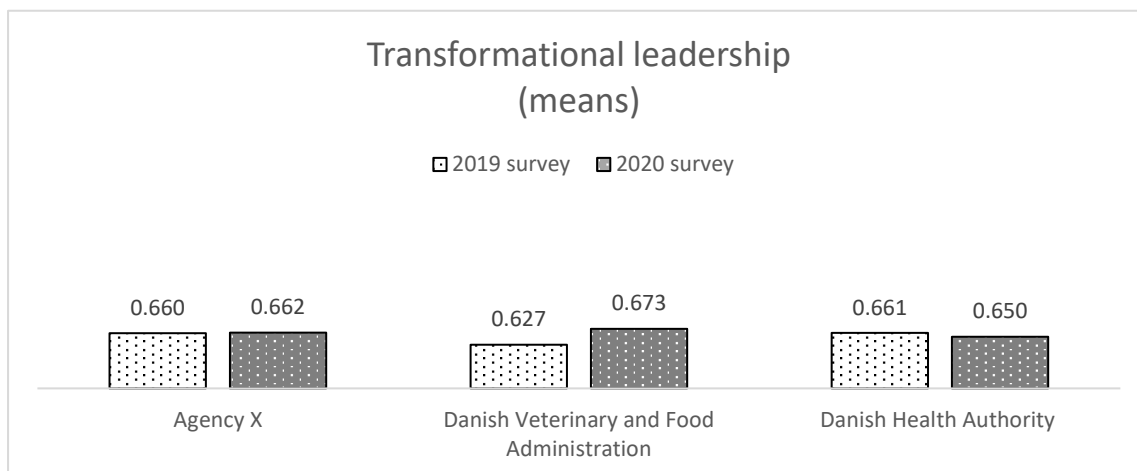
Graph 1 shows the average level of employee mission valence for the three agencies in the two survey rounds. Generally, the level of mission valence is fairly high and similar across agencies and rounds (scale 0–1). The DHA employees experienced a small drop in the average amount of mission valence from 2019 to 2020, Agency X employees' mission valence is unchanged, whereas DVFA employees had a small increase in average level of mission valence between the two rounds.

Graph 1. Mission Valence (Means), Balanced Panel (n = 193)



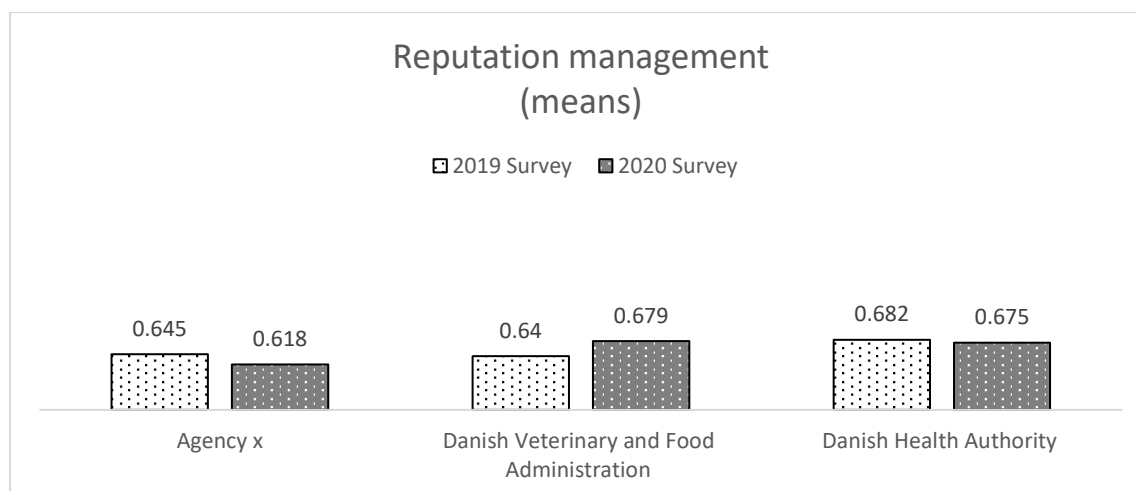
Graph 2 shows the average level of employee perception of immediate manager's transformational leadership behaviour. In 2019, the DHA employees on average experienced their managers' transformational leadership behaviour highest, while the DVFA employees experienced the lowest amount of transformational leadership behaviour from their managers. Between the two rounds, there is a change where the employee-perceived transformational leadership behaviour increases at the DVFA, whereas the perceived leadership behaviour is almost unchanged at Agency X and declines for the DHA.

Graph 2. Transformational Leadership (Means), Balanced Panel (n = 193)



Graph 3 shows the average level of employee-perceived reputation management in 2019 and 2020 for the balanced panel. In 2019, the DHA employees gave the highest average rating of their immediate managers' reputation management behaviour, while the DFVA employees gave the lowest. In 2020, employee ratings increased for DVFA employees while falling for DHA and Agency X employees, although most notably for Agency X employees

Graph 3. Reputation Management (Means), Balanced Panel (n = 193)



To sum up, graphs 1–3 illustrate how the average level of mission valence is quite similar across rounds and agencies, while there are larger differences and changes in relation to the two leadership constructs. On average, DVFA employees rank all three concepts higher in 2020 than in 2019. The opposite is seen for DHA employees, while Agency X employees give a lower ranking of reputation management in 2020 compared to 2019 but are almost unchanged for the remaining two constructs.

We now turn to the hypotheses and present the fixed effects analyses of the relationship between transformational leadership (H1) and reputation management (H2) and mission valence, and whether the relationships are mediated by value congruence (H3) (H4). The analyses are performed as respondent-level-fixed-effects regressions.

Model 1.2 in table 1 supports our expectation in H1 that mission valence on average increases with employee-perceived transformational leadership. This result also holds for the relationship between reputation management and mission valence (H2) in model 1.3, as regression coefficients are positive and statistically significant. When analysed together in model 1.4, the relations between mission valence and two types of leadership behaviour are not statistically significant at the 0.05 level. Model 1.4 shows that the regression coefficients for both leadership constructs decrease considerably when compared to model 1.2 (for transformational leadership) and model 1.3 (for reputation management). This is probably due to the high degree of positive covariance between the two leadership constructs. The two constructs do not explain enough unique variation to both be significant in model 1.4. A test for joint significance shows that the two leadership concepts are significant when combined ($p = 0.007$) (test not shown in table). The results thus show support for hypotheses H1 and H2.

We now turn to the mediation hypotheses H3 and H4. Model 1.5 supports our expectation in H3 that the relationship between transformational leadership and mission valence is

partially mediated by value congruence as the coefficient for transformational leadership decreases from 0.118 in model 1.2 to 0.087 but remains significant in model 1.5. Similarly, model 1.6 supports the theoretical expectation that the relationship between reputation management and mission valence is partially mediated by value congruence as the coefficient for transformational leadership decreases from 0.145 in model 1.3 to 0.1 but remains significant in model 1.6. However, in model 1.7 (with both leadership constructs included) the coefficients are insignificant but remain positive. Again, the insignificant coefficients could be due to the high degree of positive covariance between the two leadership constructs. A test for joint significance shows that the two leadership concepts are significant at the 10% level when combined ($p = 0.069$, test not shown in table). Furthermore, t-statistics in model 1.7 indicate that there could be the relationships in proposed in H3 and H4, also controlled for the other leadership construct. Therefore, the analysis indicates that the relationship between transformational leadership and reputation management, respectively, and mission valence is partially mediated by value congruence. Additionally, we follow the Baron and Kenny (1986) test for mediation by; first, regressing the mediator on the independent variable(s); second, regressing the dependent variable on the independent variable; and third regressing the dependent variable on both the independent variable and the mediator ($p. 1177$). The test (see table A10) supports our argument that value congruence partially mediates the relationships between the two leadership constructs and mission valence.

TABLE 1 Leadership, value congruence and mission valence: unstandardized regression coefficients (fixed effects model)

	Mission valence Model 1.1	Mission valence Model 1.2	Mission valence Model 1.3	Mission valence Model 1.4	Mission valence Model 1.5	Mission valence Model 1.6	Mission valence Model 1.7
Transformational leadership		0.118** (2.82)		0.066 (1.21)	0.087* (2.14)		0.056 (1.08)
Reputation manage- ment			0.145** (2.96)	0.096 (1.50)		0.100* (2.07)	0.058 (0.94)
Value con- gruence					0.298*** (4.27)	0.292*** (4.14)	0.289*** (4.08)
Round 2	-0.009 (-0.55)	-0.009 (-0.58)	-0.005 (-0.31)	-0.006 (-0.40)	-0.006 (-0.41)	-0.003 (-0.22)	-0.005 (-0.30)
Round 2 DVFA	0.02 (0.89)	0.015 (0.67)	0.010 (0.46)	0.011 (0.48)	0.006 (0.29)	0.004 (0.17)	0.004 (0.19)
Round 2 DHA	-0.007 (-0.29)	-0.006 (-0.24)	-0.010 (-0.41)	-0.008 (-0.34)	-0.009 (-0.39)	-0.012 (-0.51)	-0.011 (-0.45)
Constant	0.792*** (116.43)	0.716*** (25.74)	0.697*** (21.29)	0.687*** (20.36)	0.521*** (9.87)	0.516*** (9.60)	0.510*** (9.42)
<i>N</i>	386	386	386	386	386	386	386
<i>R</i> ²	0.008	0.048	0.052	0.059	0.132	0.131	0.136

Notes: individual-level fixed effects regression t statistics in parentheses † $p < .1$, * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$. Two-wave panel with observations in spring 2019 and autumn 2020.

As a robustness check of the results, we conducted random effects analyses, where we allowed for variation across both individuals and time, as the rationale behind the model is that variation across entities is assumed to be random and uncorrelated, with independent variables included in the model. We conducted random effects analyses on both the balanced² and unbalanced panel³ (full sample, using responses from employees who took part in at least one of the two survey rounds). For the balanced panel, the results are similar to those in table 1, with the addition that both leadership constructs are significantly related to mission valence in the model where both are included (compares to model 1.4) in the random effects analysis. In the random effects analysis using the unbalanced panel, both leadership constructs were

² A Hausman test for all models similar to those shown in table 1 suggests the use of a random effects model for the balanced panel.

³ A Hausman test for all models similar to those shown in table 1 suggests the use of a random effects model for model 1.2–1.4, but fixed effects model for the model 1.5–1.7 (mediation) for the unbalanced panel.

again significantly related to mission valence in the model corresponding to model 1.4, and the transformational leadership construct was significant in the model corresponding to model 1.7, where we include both leadership constructs and investigate mediation. The random effects analyses thus produce the same results and even stronger support for the hypotheses. See tables A11 and A12 for random effects analyses for the balanced and unbalanced panel.

5.0 Discussion and Conclusion

The ambition of the article has been to contribute to the public leadership and management literature concerned with mission valence, reputation management and transformational leadership. The empirical analysis points to the relevance of identifying how leadership behaviours other than transformational leadership can affect mission valence. Relative to existing knowledge of how public managers can cultivate employee mission valence, the first and main contribution of the article is therefore the demonstration of how reputation management can also make employees feel more attracted to the organizational vision.

This finding reflects the relevance of expanding our theoretical repertoire when investigating how public managers can foster mission valence. Public managers can make their employees feel attracted to the organizational vision through other means than (just) transformational leadership. While the relevance of reputational aspects vis-à-vis external audience mission valence has been demonstrated (Willems et al. 2021), our study also points to the relevance of reputation management for internal audiences.

We argue that auto communication could be the mechanism through which public managers simultaneously convey the importance of the organizational vision to employees when they are actually aiming to communicate the message to external stakeholders. A potential supplementing mechanism for explaining the relationship between reputation management and mission valence is that managerial attempts to convey the vision to external stakeholders reflects on the organizational reputation, and that this has a positive effect on employee perceptions of the vision. Dutton and Duckerich refer to this as the ‘mirror effect’, arguing that it is important how employees believe people outside the organization perceive the organization as this influences organizational identification (Dutton and Duckerich 1991; Dutton et al. 1994). This resonates with a recent study by Hameduddin and Lee (2021), who found that how employees believe others see the organization, influences employee job satisfaction and work engagement.

As a second contribution, and in line with parts of the existing literature, we further identify a positive direct relation between transformational leadership and mission valence.

The third and final contribution relates to the empirical findings regarding the mediating role of value congruence. We find that both reputation management and transformational leadership can create value congruence between employees’ own values and organizational

values, which subsequently fosters mission valence. As such, value congruence provides for a ‘softer lever’ for public managers to pull when making employees sense the ‘magnetic appeal’ of the vision and become attracted to it. Existing studies have produced mixed findings in relation to transformational leadership and value congruence in studies of public organizations that are more directly service-producing than the three agencies in our study, all of which play a regulatory function.

Turning to the practical implications of our study, the supplemental route to increasing employee mission valence by means of reputation management comes to the fore, and we suggest at least three rather immediate implications.

First, reputation management has mainly been seen as a management behaviour thus far, primarily performed with the intent to affect external audiences’ perception. These efforts are generally considered challenging, as many other factors may affect such perceptions, including reputational intermediaries (Rindova and Martins 2012). Additionally, it has been recognized to be a type of behaviour where the effect in terms of reputational judgements may have a long-term perspective. Our study points to the relevance of assessing the value of reputation management, also in terms of its effect on employee outcome—even in a relatively short-term perspective.

Second, existing studies have shown that sharing the vision by transformational leaders via face-to-face dialogue to foster mission valence is conditioned by span of control (Jensen et al. 2018). This provides for a challenge when public managers have a larger span of control. Our study suggests that such managers may explore the potential external communication holds in terms of simultaneously communicating to employees. This further suggests that the external communication of the organizational vision is a task of relevance for not only the executive levels of public organizations; but for all managers with employee responsibility to install the sense of attraction to the vision.

Third, if employees also ‘listen’ when the vision is conveyed to external audiences, it becomes even more important for public managers to come across as credible (Kouzes and Posner 1990), both internally and externally, that they align their internal visioning behaviour with the external ditto.

Limitations and future research

Although our study contributes to the empirical research on reputation management, transformational leadership and mission valence, there are a number of limitations requiring attention. First, we measure the perceived value congruence, leaving questions in relation to whether employees’ ratings reflect organizational values accurately. Secondly, we do not measure the theoretical mechanism of auto communication empirically, which limits our

understanding of the mechanisms in relation to the relationship between reputation management and mission valence.

Second, although our panel design and fixed effects approach is preferable to cross-sectional designs, there is still some risk of endogeneity and common source bias relating to the use of employee ratings of both independent, mediating and dependent variables, which possibly reduces the validity of our findings.

Third, our empirical investigation is limited to Danish agencies performing primarily regulatory tasks, and it is not given that the results can be extended to agencies performing other tasks or other types of organizations, let alone to public organizations in other national contexts.

Fourth, although we have tried to choose agencies that are as comparable as possible, we acknowledge their differences and that we must be cautious about apples-to-apples comparisons between them, as well as being cautious about including different agencies in the same sample as interchangeable units of analysis, as argued by Wilson (1989) and more recently by Carpenter (2020).

Finally, the specific context in which the second survey round was conducted was influenced by the Covid-19 pandemic for especially the DHA and DVFA employees, which may have influenced the employees' survey responses. Important next steps for scholars are thus to replicate the study in order to improve our understanding of the potential of reputation management in fostering mission valence. This could include studies in different organizations; countries and cultures; applying both direct and indirect measures of value congruence; and applying measures of auto communication to validate empirically the theoretical mechanism suggested in the article in order to move the emerging research agenda on the effects of reputation management on employee outcomes even further.

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Appendices:

TABLE A1 Response rates

	2019: completed questionnaire	2020: completed questionnaire	Included in the panel (effective response rate)
Agency X	127 (40.5%)	163 (50.2%)	69 (21.9%)
Danish Health Authority	110 (61.1%)	94 (50.8%)	48 (26.67%)
Danish Veteri- nary and Food Administration	136 (36.5%)	156 (38.9%)	76 (20.3%)
Total	373 (43%)	413 (45.33%)	193 (22.2%)

TABLE A2 Descriptive statistics for cross-sectional variables (panel)

Variable	Description	Rnd	N	Mean	SD	Min.	Max.
Mission valence	3-item summative index; see item wording on p. 11. 7-point Likert scale	1	193	0.792	0.137	0.333	1
		2	193	0.789	0.144	0.222	1
Transformational leadership	4-item summative index; see item wording on p. 10. 7-point Likert scale	1	193	0.647	0.215	0	1
		2	193	0.664	0.221	0	1
Reputation Management	7-item summative index 7-point Likert scale;	1	193	0.652	0.187	0.056	1
		2	193	0.660	.199	0	1
Value congruence	3-item summative index; see item wording on p. 12. 7-point Likert scale	1	193	0.720	0.6	0.111	1
		2	193	0.725	0.160	0	1
Years in organization	Number of years employee has worked in the organization	1	193	7.064	7.475	0	32
		2	193	8.321	7.295	1	34
Education							
	School	1/2	-	.	.	.	.
	Vocational education	1/2	9	.	.	.	.
	High school	1/2	2	.	.	.	.
	Short higher education	1/2	11	.	.	.	.
	Medium-term higher education	1/2	19	.	.	.	.
	Long higher education	1/2	154	.	.	.	.
Round 2	1 = second round of survey	1/2	390	0.5	0.501	0	1
DVFA Round 2	1 = second round of survey DVFA employees	1/2	390	0.197	0.399	0	1
DHA Round 2	1 = second round of survey DHA employees	1/2	390	0.126	0.332	0	1
Gender	1 = female	1	192	0.671	.471	0	1
		2	192	.677	.469	0	1
Age	Employee age	1	191	43.76	11.196	23	71

2	192	44.78	11.187	24	72
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TABLE A3 Confirmatory factor analyses reputation management, Round 1

Employee ratings of immediate manager: 3-factor model vs alternative reputation management models			
	3-factor model	2-factor model	1-factor model
Identification			
Makes an ongoing effort to gain insights into how our surroundings perceive [the organization].	.930	.929	.876
Makes an ongoing effort to gain insights into which expectations our surroundings have towards [the organization].	.969	.956	.910
Communication			
Strives to increase the knowledge of the outside world of [the organization's] vision.	.859	.814	.832
Tries to clarify [the organization's] positive impact on society to the outside world.	.859	.818	.830
Prioritization			
Strives to target what [the organization] communicates to the outside world.	.915	.916	.830
Strives to target [the organization's] messages to selected stakeholders in our surroundings.	.925	.927	.811
Strives to highlight specific aspects of [the organization] in his/her/its communication to the outside world.	.897	.893	.814
n (employees)	195	195	195
n (organizations)	3	3	3
chi2	21.68	48.52	254.42
Df	11	13	14
RMSEA	0.071	0.119	0.298
CFI	0.992	0.974	0.827
SRMR	0.017	0.038	0.070
<p>Note. CFA with standardized factor loadings. CFA based on asymptotic distribution-free estimator. All standardized factor loadings are statistically significant at the .001 level. RMSEA = root-mean-square error of approximation; CFI = comparative fit index; SRMR = standardized root-mean-square residual; CFA = confirmatory factor analysis.</p> <p>Cronbach's alpha for all seven items: 0.950, Cronbach's alpha for 'identification': 0.948, Cronbach's alpha for 'prioritization': 0.937, Cronbach's alpha for 'communication': 0.850</p>			

TABLE A4 Confirmatory factor analyses reputation management, Round 2

Employee ratings of immediate manager: 3-factor model vs alternative reputation management models				
	3-fac- tor model	2-fac- tor model	1-fac- tor model	
Identification				
Makes an ongoing effort to gain insights into how our surroundings perceive [the organization].	0.948	0.930	0.904	
Makes an ongoing effort to gain insights into which expectations our surroundings have towards [the organization].	0.938	0.920	0.900	
Communication				
Strives to increase the knowledge of the outside world of [the organization's] vision.	0.902	0.863	0.863	
Tries to clarify [the organization's] positive impact on society to the outside world.	0.927	0.869	0.886	
Prioritization				
Strives to target what [the organization] communicates to the outside world.	0.849	0.850	0.749	
Strives to target [the organization's] messages to selected stakeholders in our surroundings.	0.908	0.912	0.760	
Strives to highlight specific aspects of [the organization] in his/her/its communication to the outside world.	0.834	0.828	0.739	
n (employees)	195	195	195	
n (organizations)	3	3	3	
chi2	49.62	98.04	217.78	
Df	11	13	14	
RMSEA	0.135	0.184	0.274	
CFI	.971	0.935	0.845	
SRMR	0.028	0.040	0.072	
<p>Note. CFA with standardized factor loadings. CFA based on asymptotic distribution-free estimator. All standardized factor loadings are statistically significant at the .001 level. RMSEA = root-mean-square error of approximation; CFI = comparative fit index; SRMR = standardized root-mean-square residual; CFA = confirmatory factor analysis.</p> <p>Cronbach's alpha for all seven items: 0.941, Cronbach's alpha for 'identification': 0.941 Cronbach's alpha for 'prioritization': 0.9895, Cronbach's alpha for 'communication': 0.910</p>				

TABLE A5 Full confirmatory factor analysis of reputation management (3 factors) and transformational leadership (1 factor) (employee perception of immediate manager)

	First survey (2019)	Second survey (2020)
Identification		
Makes an ongoing effort to gain insights into how our surroundings perceive [the organization]	0.932	0.944
Makes an ongoing effort to gain insights into which expectations our surroundings have to [the organization]	0.967	0.942
Communication		
Strives to increase the knowledge of the outside world of [the organization's] vision	0.864	0.911
Tries to make it clear to the outside world how [the organization] has a positive impact on society	0.854	0.917
Prioritization		
Strives to target what [the organization] communicates to the outside world	0.914	0.850
Strives to target [the organization's] messages to selected stakeholders in our surroundings	0.927	0.908
Strives to highlight specific aspects of [the organization] in his/her/its communication to the outside world	.0895	0.833
Transformational Leadership		
Specifies a clear vision for the [organization's] future	0.912	0.904
Seeks to make employees accept common goals for the [organization]	0.902	0.923
Strives to get the [organization's] employees to work together in the direction of the vision	0.925	0.922
Strives to clarify for the employees how they can contribute to achieving the [organization's] goals	0.921	0.890
N (employees)	195	195
n (organizations)	3	3
chi ²	98.65	125.56
Df	38	38
RMSEA	0.091	0.109
CFI	0.975	0.962
SRMR	0.023	0.028

TABLE A6 Exploratory factor analysis of transformational leadership and reputation management for immediate manager (N = 195), first survey
Specifying the number of factors a priori

Factors loadings			
Item	Every item starts with: <i>My immediate manager...</i>	F1	F2
Transformational leadership			
1	...specifies a clear vision for the [organization's] future.	0.827	0.103
2	...seeks to make employees accept common goals for the [organization].	0.916	-0.018
3	...strives to get the [organization's] employees to work together in the direction of the vision.	0.976	-0.061
4	...strives to clarify for the employees how they can contribute to achieving the [organization's] goals.	0.853	0.077
Reputation management			
1 Communication	...strives to increase the knowledge of the outside world of [the organization's] vision.	0.18	0.686
2 Identification	...makes an ongoing effort to gain insights into how our surroundings perceive [the organization].	0.109	0.882
3 Identification	...makes an ongoing effort to gain insights into which expectations our surroundings have to [the organization].	-0.099	0.979
4 Communication	...tries to clarify [the organization's] positive impact on society to the outside world.	0.014	0.729
5 Prioritization	...strives to target what [the organization] communicates to the outside world.	0.055	0.846
6 Prioritization	...strives to target [the organization's] messages to selected stakeholders in our surroundings.	0.921	0.802
7 Prioritization	...strives to highlight specific aspects of [the organization] in their communication to the outside world.	0.017	0.830

principal factoring (pf). Oblique oblimin rotation

TABLE A7 Exploratory factor analysis of transformational leadership and reputation management for immediate manager (N = 195), second survey
Specifying the number of factors a priori

Factors loadings			
Item	Every item starts with: <i>My immediate manager...</i>	F1	F2
Transformational leadership			
1	...specifies a clear vision for the [organization's] future.	0.881	0.028
2	...seeks to make employees accept common goals for the [organization].	0.915	0.002
3	...strives to get the [organization's] employees to work together in the direction of the vision.	0.802	0.021
4	...strives to clarify for the employees how they can contribute to achieving the [organization's] goals.	0.879	0.008
Reputation management			
1 Communication	...strives to increase the knowledge of the outside world of [the organization's] vision.	0.266	0.634
2 Identification	...makes an ongoing effort to gain insights into how our surroundings perceive [the organization].	0.134	0.765
3 Identification	...makes an ongoing effort to gain insights into which expectations our surroundings have to [the organization].	0.192	0.727
4 Communication	...tries to clarify [the organization's] positive impact on society to the outside world.	0.051	0.839
5 Prioritization	...strives to target what [the organization] communicates to the outside world.	-0.061	0.846
6 Prioritization	...strives to target [the organization's] messages to selected stakeholders in our surroundings.	-0.113	0.916
7 Prioritization	...strives to highlight specific aspects of [the organization] in their communication to the outside world.	-0.077	0.856

principal factoring (pf). Oblique oblimin rotation

TABLE A8 Intercorrelations and estimates for discriminant validity and reliability: Employee ratings of immediate manager (N = 195), first survey

	1. Transformational leadership	2. Reputation management
1. Transformational leadership	0.837	0.662
2. Reputation management	0.813	0.715

Note. Subdiagonal entries are correlations between latent constructs. Entries above the diagonal are the squared correlation estimates (shared variance). Entries in the diagonal are the average variance extracted (average of squared factor loadings AVE) for each latent construct.

TABLE A9 Intercorrelations and estimates for discriminant validity and reliability: Employee ratings of immediate manager (N = 195), second survey

	1. Transformational leadership	2. Reputation management
1. Transformational leadership	0.828	0.610
2. Reputation management	0.780	0.692

Note. Subdiagonal entries are correlations between latent constructs. Entries above the diagonal are the squared correlation estimates (shared variance). Entries in the diagonal are the average variance extracted (average of squared factor loadings AVE) for each latent construct.

Table A10. Baron and Kenny Test for Mediation: Transformational Leadership, Reputation Management, Value Congruence and Mission Valence

	Coefficient (transformational leadership)	Coefficient (reputation management)
$M = X + \varepsilon$	0.11**	0.16***
$Y = X + \varepsilon$	0.12**	0.15**
$Y = M + X + \varepsilon$	0.08*	0.10*

TABLE A11 Leadership, value congruence and mission valence: unstandardized regression coefficients (random effects model, balanced panel)

	Mission valence Model 1.1	Mission valence Model 1.2	Mission valence Model 1.3	Mission valence Model 1.4	Mission valence Model 1.5	Mission valence Model 1.6	Mission valence Model 1.7
Transformational leadership		0.199*** (6.46)		0.127** (2.92)	0.0766 (1.90)	0.105*** (3.65)	
Reputation management			0.207*** (5.91)	0.103* (2.07)	0.0456 (1.00)		0.107** (3.26)
Value congruence					0.437*** (10.06)	0.442*** (10.26)	0.450*** (10.47)
Years in organization	0.000116 (0.10)	0.000804 (0.73)	0.000985 (0.73)	0.00123 (0.92)	0.000151 (0.14)	0.000164 (0.15)	-0.0000186 (-0.02)
Education	-0.007 (-0.81)	-0.0016 (-0.19)	-0.00314 (-0.38)	-0.00110 (-0.14)	0.00405 (0.60)	0.00439 (0.65)	0.00295 (0.44)
2 nd survey (Agency X)	-0.00267 (-0.18)	-0.00433 (-0.30)	0.00254 (0.16)	-0.00112 (-0.07)	0.000957 (0.06)	-0.000428 (-0.03)	0.00322 (0.21)
DVFA 2 nd survey (ref. Agency x)	0.00585 (0.30)	-0.00239 (-0.12)	-0.000771 (-0.04)	0.000911 (0.04)	-0.00603 (-0.29)	-0.00426 (-0.21)	-0.00733 (-0.35)
DHA 2 nd survey (ref. Agency x)	-0.0110 (-0.50)	-0.00764 (-0.35)	-0.0161 (-0.67)	-0.0116 (-0.48)	-0.0145 (-0.61)	-0.0130 (-0.55)	-0.0173 (-0.73)
Age			-0.000109 (-0.12)	-0.000172 (-0.19)	0.000379 (0.51)	0.000353 (0.48)	0.000432 (0.58)
Gender (ref. female)			0.0119 (0.63)	0.0145 (0.79)	0.00883 (0.58)	0.00996 (0.66)	0.00705 (0.47)
DVFA (ref. Agency X)			-0.0378 (-1.61)	-0.0355 (-1.53)	-0.0138 (-0.69)	-0.0132 (-0.66)	-0.0145 (-0.73)
DHA (ref. Agency X)			-0.0192 (-0.75)	-0.0152 (-0.60)	-0.00248 (-0.12)	-0.000828 (-0.04)	-0.00451 (-0.21)
_cons	0.831*** (16.24)	0.666*** (12.43)	0.684*** (10.17)	0.655*** (9.82)	0.357*** (5.70)	0.363*** (5.82)	0.365*** (5.81)
N	386	386	382	382	382	382	382

TABLE A12 Leadership, value congruence and mission valence: unstandardized regression coefficients (random effects model, full sample)

	Mission valence Model 11.1	Mission valence Model 11.2	Mission valence Model 11.3	Mission valence Model 11.4	Mission valence Model 11.5	Mission valence Model 11.6	Mission valence Model 11.7
Transfor- mational leadership		0.203*** (9.34)		0.145*** (4.61)	0.0795** (2.90)	0.109*** (5.59)	
Reputa- tion man- agement			0.224*** (8.80)	0.104** (2.85)	0.0477 (1.52)		0.112*** (4.99)
Value con- gruence					0.491*** (17.22)	0.495*** (17.44)	0.504*** (17.81)
Years in organiza- tion	-0.0003- (-0.44)	0.00056 3 (0.77)	-0.000357 (-0.39)	-0.000124 (-0.14)	-0.00013 (-0.18)	-0.000130 (-0.18)	-0.000246 (-0.33)
Education	0.00011 6 (0.02)	0.00762 (1.53)	0.00520 (1.06)	0.00831 (1.71)	0.00801* (2.01)	0.00831* (2.08)	0.00632 (1.59)
2 nd survey (Agency X)	-0.00194 (-0.17)	-0.00869 (-0.80)	0.00709 (0.55)	0.00235 (0.18)	0.00223 (0.19)	0.00109 (0.09)	0.00484 (0.41)
DVFA 2 nd survey (ref. Agency x)	0.00558 (0.38)	-0.00372 (-0.26)	-0.0156 (-0.87)	-0.0154 (-0.86)	-0.0165 (-1.01)	-0.0148 (-0.90)	-0.0165 (-1.00)
DHA 2 nd survey (ref. Agency x)	-0.0067 (-0.40)	0.00304 (0.19)	-0.0184 (-0.92)	-0.0115 (-0.57)	-0.0121 (-0.66)	-0.0104 (-0.57)	-0.0161 (-0.88)
Age			0.00117* (2.09)	0.00118* (2.14)	0.000727 (1.62)	0.000699 (1.56)	0.000710 (1.57)
Gender (ref. fe- male)			0.00695 (0.60)	0.0107 (0.94)	0.00856 (0.93)	0.0104 (1.14)	0.00644 (0.70)
DVFA (ref. Agency X)			-0.00817 (-0.50)	-0.00658 (-0.41)	0.00472 (0.35)	0.00491 (0.36)	0.00400 (0.29)
DHA (ref. Agency X)			0.00463 (0.27)	0.00856 (0.50)	0.00861 (0.60)	0.00963 (0.67)	0.00659 (0.46)
_cons	0.795*** (26.05)	0.615*** (17.81)	0.569*** (13.68)	0.530*** (12.69)	0.273*** (7.28)	0.280*** (7.51)	0.286*** (7.65)
N	770	770	756	756	756	756	756

**DOES REPUTATION MANAGEMENT MATTER
FOR REGULATORY AGENCIES' REPUTATIONS
AS PERCEIVED BY THEIR EXTERNAL AND
INTERNAL AUDIENCES?**

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Abstract

Studies investigating agencies' reputation-conscious behavior have primarily focused on behavior in the context of reputational threats. Additionally, although reputation management efforts to affect the organizational reputation are primarily intended for external audiences' beliefs and perceptions of the agency, reputation resides in both external and *internal* audiences. This study aims to address these two gaps by (1) investigating whether reputations can be cultivated not only in a reactive manner, in a context where agencies face reputational threats, but also in a more proactive sense and (2) identifying the relevance of agencies' reputations vis-à-vis internal audiences. Using a unique two-wave panel survey targeting external and internal audiences from three Danish regulatory agencies, we do not find a clear relationship between reputation management and organizational reputation, but we do find a positive and significant relationship between reputation management and how internal audiences perceive the organizational reputation. Moreover, employee advocacy partially mediates that relationship.

Keywords: reputation, reputation management, employee advocacy, agencies, bureaucratic reputation theory

Introduction

Since Daniel Carpenter's seminal work (2001, 2010) on Bureaucratic Reputation Theory (BRT), the reputation of public organizations has attracted increasing scholarly attention among public administration scholars (Bustos 2021), often within the context of investigating regulatory agencies (Overman *et al.* 2020). Research has demonstrated how reputational concerns explain regulatory agencies' regulatory and decision making behavior (e.g., Carpenter 2002; Maor & Sulitzeanu-Kenan 2013); their "regulatory talk" as strategic communication responses when confronted with negative media coverage (Gilad *et al.* 2015; Rimkutė 2020; Müller & Braun 2021); their practices in terms of turf protection and bureaucratic cooperation (e.g. Busuioc 2016) and which factors explain the media reputation of regulatory agencies, including their prior reputational histories (Salomonsen *et al.* 2021) and the type of tasks they perform (Verhoest *et al.* 2021).

The BRT literature points to the need for agencies to cultivate their reputations to a multiplicity of stakeholders (Carpenter & Krause 2012), because "the successful cultivation of a strong reputation is a crucial ingredient of regulatory 'power', beyond formal fiat" (Overman *et al.* 2020: p. 415). A positive reputation is an intangible *political* asset for regulatory agencies, which strengthens their power when negotiating their autonomy vis-à-vis their political principal (Carpenter 2001, 2010). However, for regulatory agencies a positive reputation also is a *regulatory* asset vis-à-vis those they regulate – the regulatees – as the agencies' regulatory authority and their ability to ensure compliance with regulatory rules is influenced by and intimately related to the reputational judgements held by those regulatees (Capelos *et al.* 2016; Overman *et al.* 2020, p. 4).

However, three important gaps remain in our knowledge concerning the cultivation of reputation by regulatory agencies and its effect on reputation, which we address in this article. First, Bustos (2021, p. 737) in his review of the BRT literature notes that research investigating how agencies can cultivate a positive reputation not only by reacting to reputational threats, but also proactively to avoid threats in the first place, remains limited (for a similar point in relation to generic reputation management research, see Carroll 2018, p. 1). Defined as behavior that "attempts to identify perceptions and expectations held by audiences, to prioritize between different audiences (and expectations), and to communicate the vision of the organization to these (specific) audiences" (Author 1 & Author 3), the reputation management concept refers to the formation of such reputations among primarily external audiences. Hence, this paper aims to study the effect of reputation management by regulatory agencies on the reputation as perceived by external audiences. By including reputational perceptions from both citizens and regulatees at two points in time, we address the recent calls to pursue research on citizen perceptions of agencies (Lee & van Ryzin 2020) as citizens are important to regulatory agencies, as they are often beneficiaries of the regulation the agencies perform (Levi-Faur

2020, p. 53). In addition, when investigating agency reputation, we measure the direct views and perceptions of more than one stakeholder group as well as doing so over time in contrast to the dominant practice so far within BRT research (but see Overman et al. 2020; Bustos 2021, p. 739), which is to measure reputation in the eyes of one audience at a particular moment or to rely on “proxy data to measure reputation, such as the coverage of agencies in newspapers or websites” (Lee & van Ryzin 2020, p. 184).

A second gap addressed in this paper is the relevance of reputation for internal audiences. Although reputation management primarily aims at affecting external stakeholders’ beliefs and perceptions of the agency (Bustos 2021, p. 736), reputation resides in “a network of *internal* and external audiences” (Bustos 2021, p. 734; see also Fombrun *et al.* 2000 – italics added by authors). As such, a positive reputation can become also an *organizational* asset in terms of generating positive employee outcomes. However, only recently research has started to consider the relevance of internal audiences in the heterogeneous audience landscape of agencies, identifying relations between an organization’s reputation per se and employee outcomes, like employee-perceived reputation and employee engagement (Hameduddin 2021; Hameduddin & Lee 2021), organizational identification (Rho *et al.* 2015), and the moderating effect of organization-based self-esteem (Gilad *et al.* 2018). However, it remains to be investigated whether and how the reputation management behavior of regulatory agencies aimed at external audiences may also (directly or indirectly) affect how internal audiences perceive the organizational reputation. This article theorizes and identifies that reputation management – although primarily targeting external audiences – also has the potential to affect how internal audiences perceive the organizational reputation. The mechanisms generating this relation, we argue, are primarily twofold, being a ‘mirroring mechanism’ (Dutton & Duckerich 1991) and an ‘auto-communication mechanism’ (Christensen 2018).

Third, next to investigating the direct relationship between reputation management and the reputations held by external and internal audiences, the article further investigates whether the relationship between reputation management and how internal audiences perceive the agency’s reputation is mediated by employee advocacy behaviors. Employee advocacy refers to employee communication behavior in terms of promoting the organization to external audiences (Kim & Rhee 2011). When internal audiences perform such communication behavior, this holds the potential not only to affect how external audiences perceive of the organization, but as importantly their own perception due to the “self-persuasion” effect (Bellé 2014, p. 113). Hence, the article adds to research demonstrating the relevance of also investigating the “softer” levers available to public managers when affecting employee outcomes more indirectly (Wright et al. 2012, p. 212). Employee advocacy has thus far attracted limited attention within public administration (but see Wæraas & Dahle) and BRT research (Wæraas & Dahle 2020, p. 278).

Based on recently suggested conceptualizations of, respectively, reputation management (Author 1 & Author 3) and bureaucratic reputation (Lee & van Ryzin 2019), the article addresses these gaps by investigating *whether there is a direct relationship between reputation management and regulatory agencies reputation – as perceived by their external and internal audiences, respectively, and whether the relationship between reputation management and regulatory agency reputation as perceived by their internal audiences is mediated by employee advocacy.*

As such, the article takes both “outside-in” (how external audiences perceive the organization) and “inside-out” (how internal audiences – or employees – perceive and interpret external audiences’ beliefs about the organization) perspectives (Men 2014a, p. 255). The empirical analysis is based on a unique two-wave panel survey study targeting both external and internal audiences from three regulatory agencies in Denmark: the Danish Veterinary and Food Administration (DVFA), the Danish Health Authority (DHA), and “Agency X” (the latter requesting anonymity). The external audiences surveyed are regulatees and citizens, while employees from the three agencies are included in a balanced panel as internal audiences. While no exogenous variation was induced to generate expected variation in reputation management across the three agencies as part of the research, the data was collected a year before the COVID-19 crisis hit Denmark (the first wave) and approximately six months after the beginning of the pandemic. The three regulatory agencies were involved in dealing with the COVID-19 crisis in different ways and this context is considered when discussing the findings.

In the following, we first develop the theoretical framework and hypotheses, after which we discuss the research design and methodology. Finally, we present and discuss the results and their contribution to literature.

Theory

Despite the mounting research departing from BRT, reputation management has remained a relatively unexplored concept in BRT research (Maor 2015). As such, studies reporting on reputation-conscious behavior on the part of the agencies has provided “reputational threat-,” “reputation-,” or “audience-centric” explanations (e.g., Maor *et al.* 2013; Gilad *et al.* 2015; van der Veer 2021). Hence, insights into the endogenous aspects of shaping audiences’ perceptions of the organization are still required, also when not confronted with reputational threats: that is, insight into reputation management strategies that can also be of a proactive nature aimed at creating and cultivating a favourable reputation. We suggest three hypotheses investigating the relation between, on the one hand, reputation management performed on the part of the agency as well as by the individual managers across the agency hierarchy and, on the other hand, external and internal audience perceptions of the agency’s reputation.

The relation between reputation management and how external audiences perceive the organization's reputation

An organization's reputation resides in the perceptions or beliefs held by multiple audiences of the organization (Carpenter 2010, p. 45). As noted by Lee and van Ryzin (2019, p. 178), such a definition points to the evaluative judgement forming audience perceptions, pointing to both the multiplicity and subjective nature characterizing the reputations of public sector organizations. The multiplicity of a public organization's reputation refers to the different dimensions of the organization that the audiences judge and about which they form beliefs (Carpenter 2010, pp. 46-47). These dimensions include (1) a performative dimension reflecting the ability of the organization to achieve its ends, including the declared policy priorities and goals, and to deliver high-quality outputs (Carpenter 2010, p. 46; Lee & van Ryzin 2019, p. 178); (2) a technical dimension referring to the technical skills and the general capacity of the organization (Carpenter 2010, p. 47; Lee & van Ryzin 2019, p. 179); (3) a moral dimension referring to the ability of the organization to demonstrate commitment to the moral and ethical values characterizing the wider society (Overman *et al.* 2020, p. 3); (4) a procedural dimension referring to the following of accepted procedures and rules (Carpenter 2010, p. 47; Overman *et al.* 2020, p. 3). In line with Lee and van Ryzin (2019, p. 179), by organizational reputation we refer to how specific audiences perceive of an organization based on their evaluative judgements about these four reputational dimensions but also their overall evaluation of the organization reflecting the general favorability of the organizational reputation.

Audience perceptions can be based on direct experience and more or less frequent contact with the organization (Overman *et al.* 2020, p. 4), but, at least for public organizations positioned at the central government level, such perceptions are often based on communication (Müller & Braun 2021, p. 672;); either mediated by news coverage, or by the direct and unmediated communication from the (often regulatory) agencies themselves.

Public organizations, including agencies, are confronted by a multiplicity of external and internal audiences; or what has been described recently as "audience heterogeneity" (van der Veer 2021) pointing to the fact that they face but also different types of audiences, which may hold different expectations toward the agency.

The heterogeneity among external audiences relates to the relative power held by different audiences in terms of mobilizing reputational threats (van der Veer 2021, p. 23). Both regulatees as well as citizens in their role as rule beneficiaries are important external audiences for regulatory agencies, and we therefore focus on those two audience types.

Agencies carefully tailor their strategic communication with regulatees and the general public, thereby shaping their perceptions (Maor 2020, p. 1048). For example, a study by Alon-Barkat and Gilad (2017) found that how agencies communicate promotional symbols can shape citizen attitudes, and Barrows *et al.* (2016) found that public organizations'

communication of performance information shapes citizen perceptions of government organizations. Hence, we expect that:

H1: There is a positive relationship between reputation management and agency reputation as perceived by their regulatees and citizens as their rule beneficiaries

The relation between reputation management and how internal audiences perceive organization reputation

Although primarily targeted toward external audiences, reputation management may also influence employee perceptions of the organizational reputation. This may occur via two different channels or mechanisms: a psychological “mirroring” process and an auto-communication process.

The mirroring effect refers to a process theorized by Dutton and Duckerich (1991), arguing that employees’ self-concepts and identifications are influenced by how they believe others view the organization (Dutton & Duckerich 1991, Dutton et al. 1994). Employees make judgments and act in part based on socially constructed beliefs about how outsiders judge their organization. These beliefs derive from observation and understandings of how others see the organization, and they are not necessarily the same as the *actual* organizational reputation (Rho et al. 2015). Organizational reputation (outsiders’ beliefs about the unique and separable capacities, roles, and obligations of an organization) can potentially influence employee’s perceptions of the organizational reputation. Public and environmental trust act as resources that shape public employees’ attitudes and behavior (Carpenter & Krause 2012), and a lack of support and legitimacy may negatively affect public organization performance (Hamaduddin 2021). According to Dutton et al. (1994), however, it may be that employees have misconceptions about the organization’s reputation and support. Dutton et al. (1994) link employee beliefs about the perceptions of external audiences to employee motivation, work behaviors and individual performance. How employees believe those outside the organization perceive the organization is therefore important.

This resonates with recent studies that have begun to examine how forces in the external environment and their perceptions influence public employee perceptions, attitudes, and motivation. How employees perceive outside actors to be judging the organization influences employee identification with their organization (Rho et al. 2015) as well as employee job satisfaction and work engagement (Hameduddin 2021; Hameduddin and Lee 2021). Likewise, Dhir and Shukla (2019) found a relation between the how employees perceive others judge their organization and employee engagement and performance.

The second mechanism is that external communication (e.g., as reputation management) often also involves auto communication. Auto communication is not an inherent part of a

message, but rather a latent possibility of all external communication if the message is also received by employees (Christensen 2018). Lotman pointed at auto communication as a phenomenon, arguing that all individuals, institutions, and cultures communicate with themselves, even when addressing other audiences (1977; 1990). Christensen (1997) applies auto communication in an organizational communication context, arguing it serves to convey, confirm, and reinforce idealized self-perceptions within the organization (Christensen 1997). The organization and/or its managers may unintentionally or deliberately plan this (Christensen 2018). Nevertheless, when managers communicate with external audiences, employees are also listening (Morsing 2006). As such, auto communication has a self-confirming and self-reproducing function (Lotman 1990). Applied to reputation management, this means that although reputation management is behavior aimed at affecting the perceptions of external stakeholders, it can potentially also shape and alter how employees perceive the organization's reputation. Corporate branding and marketing research has demonstrated how auto communication can build and confirm organizational identification among organizational members (Morsing 2006, p. 171; Christensen *et al.* 2007), and increase self-confidence and enthusiasm (Christensen 2018).

We expect the managerial and organizational reputation management efforts targeting external audiences to also positively stimulate employee perceptions of how the organization is perceived by their audiences:

H2: There is a positive relationship between reputation management and agency reputation, as perceived among employees

Employee advocacy as mediating the relation between reputation management and how internal audiences perceive the organization's reputation

Next to theorizing a direct relation between reputation management and employee-perceived organizational reputation, we expect that employee advocacy partly mediates the relationship. There is no clear or agreed upon definition of employee advocacy (Thelen 2020, p. 2), but inspired by Men (2014b), we define this behavior as employees' voluntary promotion of their organization externally (see also Kim & Rhee 2011; Walden & Westerman 2018). While some definitions of advocacy include not only a promotional but also *defensive* communication in their advocacy definition (Men 2014b; Thelen 2020, p. 2), we focus on the former given our definition of reputation management in a more proactive and, hence, promotional and positive communication behavior in employee advocacy.

The argument for expecting a positive relation between employee advocacy and how employees perceive the organizational reputation departs from the theory of self-persuasion. Self-

persuasion has been identified as a mechanism through which transformational leadership positively affects employee performance (Bellé 2014). It occurs when individuals, while trying to convince another person, end up convincing themselves in the process (Bellé 2014, p. 113). The argument is based on the observation that persuasion is more effective when the person communicating the message is someone whom you trust and perceive to be credible (Pratkanis & Aronson 2001); and given that this is often how one thinks about oneself, “hearing” oneself communicating positively about the organization for which one works to external audiences expectedly provides the “side effect” that one actually convinces oneself in the process.

Additionally, positive relations between employee advocacy and employee outcomes have already been recognized within corporate reputation research with respect to employee identification, motivation and engagement (Fombrun & van Riel 2004; Men 2014a). Hence, we expect employee advocacy behavior possibly also to be positively related to employee perception of the organization’s reputation.

The argument for expecting a positive relation between how employees perceive their immediate managers as well as the organization’s reputation management on the one hand and their own advocacy behavior on the other hand departs from the expected cascading effect of such managerial and organizational behaviors vis-à-vis employees (Boehm *et al.* 2015, p. 157): Employees who witness and/or experience their immediate manager and/or the organization as such performing reputation management – and in so doing communicate a positive portrait of the organizational vision and the positive impact the organization has on society – are more likely to imitate such role-modeling behaviors (Boem *et al.* 2015, p. 159) and perform employee advocacy themselves. We therefore expect:

H3: The positive relationship between reputation management and agency reputation as perceived by their employees is mediated by employee advocacy

Research design, data, and methods

We employ a longitudinal research design using a novel approach with a comprehensive data collection. More specifically, we include a longitudinal study of three Danish agencies: a sample of their most central external audiences; organizations/companies under regulation by the agencies (the regulatees); and a representative sample of 300 Danish citizens as well internal audiences (their employees). We investigate the relationships using a measure of reputation management with two different ratings; as performed by the organization and as individual managers using employee rating to measure both.

The choice of research design rests on two arguments. First, it allows us to explore the relation between reputation management and both external and internal perceptions of organizational reputation. Secondly, the empirical context includes three regulatory agencies from

different policy areas but similar types of audiences. Although operating in different policy areas, the three agencies were chosen based on their common features aimed at creating as much comparability as possible. As reputation is argued to be of special importance for regulatory agencies (Carpenter 2010, p. 10, 727; Overman *et al.* 2020, p. 416), we selected agencies with a primarily regulatory function. The three agencies are media-salient and have experienced negative media coverage (Boon *et al.* 2019). As such, we expect their reputational awareness to be relatively high, which also implies that the managers in these agencies strive to perform extensive reputation management behavior. We also expect these agencies' stakeholders to be attentive toward the agencies. Hence, we expect the chosen agencies to be "most likely" cases to find reputational awareness within the agency as well as externally (regulatees and citizens directing attention toward the agencies).

Longitudinal research designs bring three advantages relative to the cross-sectional designs often used in BRT and research on behavior of public managers (Nielsen *et al.* 2019, p. 419). First, longitudinal designs are argued to be better aligned with the underlying theoretical arguments and mechanisms, perhaps especially within research focusing on attitudes and perceptions being affected by management behavior (Stritch 2017, p. 220) because it allows the investigation of changes over time in our constructs and their relations: whether reputation management behaviors can change perceptions of organizational reputation. Second, longitudinal designs are less vulnerable to concerns regarding endogeneity, resulting, for example, from non-observed variables affecting both the independent and dependent variable(s) or situations where the managers' behavior is affected by (existing or prior) perceptions of organizational reputation. By examining how changes in management behavior (being reputation management) affect changes in employee advocacy and perceived reputation, we can study within-unit variation over time to control for any possible observed and unobserved time-invariant confounders at both the employee and agency levels (Wooldridge 2020). Third, longitudinal research designs have advantages in relation to measurement, as they reduce the potential common source bias problem relating to the issue of using employee assessments of both the independent and dependent variables. In the fixed effects analysis, the respondent-level fixed effects design controls for time-invariant common source bias (Favero & Bullock 2014). However, it is important to acknowledge that there are still some concerns about endogeneity and common source bias, which will be addressed in the discussion.

The three agencies are the DVFA, the DHA, and "Agency X". All of the DHA and Agency X employees were invited to participate in the study, while we only invited a sample of the DVFA employees (those working with administration, development, coordination, and the formation of rules and regulations in the head office). Their tasks are similar to those performed by the employees in the two other agencies, and the sample size from this agency is comparable to the number of employees in Agency X.

Survey data of reputation management, employee perceptions of organizational reputation, and employee advocacy were collected twice, with one and a half years between the data collection (spring 2019 and fall 2020). The first survey was sent to 181 DHA employees, 314 Agency X employees and 377 employees at the DVFA. In total, the first round of the survey was sent to 872 employees with a 42.77% response rate (whole survey) ($n = 373$). The second survey round was planned for exactly one year after the first survey. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, however, we had to postpone the survey, and instead distribute it in September and October 2020. New employees also received the second survey which was sent to 919 employees (413 respondents = 44.94% response rate). As we surveyed the same employees over time, the data used in the fixed effects analysis is from respondents who completed the survey in both rounds. Both surveys were completed by 193 employees, giving a 22.2% response rate for the balanced panel (see online appendix A1), which is an acceptable response rate for panel data, but with the drawback of the approach that the statistical power is reduced and that the approach can cause respondents to be non-representative, since who answered both surveys is not random. Descriptive tables can be found in the online appendices A1 and A3.

The regulatees are a sample of organizations and/or companies subjected to agency regulation. We chose this stakeholder type, as we expect them to be of special importance for regulatory agencies. We selected the sample by first looking at the three agencies' websites and those of their parent ministries to see which organizations/companies are members of the committees and boards in the parent ministry's policy area. Secondly, we examined which organizations/companies are on the agencies' "list of consultations" when they issue executive orders or propose legislation to a "consultation" (these lists are very comprehensible, see thedanishparliament.dk 2022 for a detailed description of the process). From this, we compiled a list of the types of organizations that were included in either committees or consultations. The DHA is responsible for advising and supporting the population, the Ministry of Health, the regions and the municipalities on issues of health and elder care, as well as for ensuring the best possible quality of healthcare and elder care across the country (Danish Health Authority 2022). Elder care and most preventive work take place in the 98 municipalities, while the five regions are responsible for healthcare provided in hospitals (incl. psychiatric hospitals) (Danish Health Care Act 2019). Following this, we chose three groups of regulatees from this agency: municipalities, hospitals with emergency departments, and psychiatric hospitals with emergency departments. The DVFA (2022) is responsible for food safety and health from farm to fork. For this agency, we wished to find companies covering the whole process from "farm to fork" but were unfortunately not able to survey farmers, and therefore ultimately selected a large Danish grocery chain with approximately 100 stores and cooperative as well as private slaughterhouses. For Agency X, we sent the survey to the three largest groups of companies/organizations regulated by the agency.

Regulatees and citizens both received a survey on organizational reputation, which, as for the agency surveys, was collected twice with a year and a half between the data collections roughly three months after the survey to the agencies (late summer 2019 and winter 2020/2021). We sent the survey to the general manager/CEO or the chairman of the board within the selected organizations (e.g., health directors in the municipalities and store managers in a large grocery chain). The first survey was sent to 211 DHA regulatees, 88 Agency X regulatees, and 104 DVFA regulatees on August 5, 2019. In total, the first stakeholder survey was sent to 403 regulatees with a response rate (whole survey) of 60.55% ($n = 244$). Following the postponement of the second employee survey, the second stakeholder survey was sent to 207 DHA regulatees, 82 Agency X regulatees, and 112 DVFA regulatees on December 14, 2020. The response rate for the second survey was 54.4% ($n = 218$). We had a market research company (Userneeds) conduct a citizen survey parallel to our own data collection in both survey rounds. A representative sample (albeit with ages between 18-70 years) of approximately 300 citizens completed the survey in both rounds. Descriptive tables can be found in the online appendices A2 and A4.

Measurements

To measure reputation management, we draw on a 7-item scale developed by (Author 1 & Author 3). We measure reputation management using employee ratings of a) their immediate manager's reputation management and b) the organization's reputation management. We use employee ratings for because previous studies show that managers tend to overrate their own behavior relative to employees (Jacobsen & Andersen 2015) and b) only employee-perceived leadership is positively related to organizational outcomes (2015, p. 829). Hence, we use two different ratings or specifications of reputation management to allow a nuanced and robust investigation of the measure and its relation to external and internal perceptions of organizational reputation.

The measure reflects the three behavioral elements of reputation management outlined above: the managerial attempts a) to *identify* perceptions and expectations held by audiences, b) to *prioritize* between different audiences and their expectations, and c) to *communicate* the organizational vision to these audiences. Identification is reflected in the two items: “[my leader/my organization...] makes an ongoing effort to gain insights into how our surroundings perceive [the organization],” and “[my leader/my organization...] makes an ongoing effort to gain insights into which expectations our surroundings have toward [the organization].” Communication is reflected in the items: “[my leader/my organization...] strives to increase the outside world’s knowledge of [the organization’s] vision” and “[my leader/my organization...] tries to clarify [the organization’s] positive impact on society to the outside world.” Finally, prioritization is reflected in the three items: “[my leader/organization...]”

strives to target what [*the organization*] communicates to the outside world,” “[*my leader/my organization...*] strives to target [*the organization's*] messages to selected stakeholders in our surroundings” and “[*my leader/my organization...*] strives to highlight specific aspects of [*the organization*] in their/its communication to the outside world.” Items were measured on a 7-point Likert scale. We conducted confirmatory factor analyses (CFA) for employee assessment of both their immediate manager’s reputation management and the reputation management performed by the organization as a whole, which enabled us to confirm a priori expectations about the relationships between individual items and latent factors (reputation management dimensions) (see tables A5-A8 in the online appendices). We generated a summative index of reputation management based on the three dimensions and rescale the index to range from 0-1, 1 representing the maximum value.

Organizational reputation was measured using a 5-item scale developed and validated by Lee and van Ryzin (2019). Lee and van Ryzin have developed both a 5-item and 10-item scale, but recommend the use of the 5-item scale unless the focus of the study is to investigate the different reputation profiles of agencies along the reputational dimensions or content domains (Lee & van Ryzin 2019, p. 188). Their 5-item scale combines questions on the reputational dimensions of bureaucratic reputation as well as a general question. The items are general: “[*this agency*] has a good reputation,” performative dimension “[*This agency*] is a well-run organization,” moral dimension “[*This agency*] maintains high ethical standards,” procedural dimension “[*This agency*] treats people fairly,” and technical dimension “[*This agency*] bases its decisions on evidence,” on a 1-5 Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5). We define organizational reputation as a formative measure, meaning that the indicators shape or cause the concept. Although we acknowledge that Lee and van Ryzin (2019) define their scale as a latent measure, based on Carpenter and Krause (2012), we argue that the items or dimensions together shape the organizational reputation and are thus not a reflection of the reputation. As noted by Carpenter and Krause (2012),

a critical feature of these dimensions of any single organization’s reputation is that they neither stay nor move in harmony. The effect of preserving, enhancing, or even “maximizing” one dimension implies that another dimension likely will suffer, rendering a full “optimization” among the various dimensions infeasible in practical terms. Therefore, agencies must choose reputational dimensions will receive priority and which will not. (p. 27)

For each of the three agencies, we measured the reputation as judged by citizens and a sample of their regulatees. Citizens were given questions regarding all three agencies but with randomization in relation to the order in which the agencies appeared in the survey. We generated

summative indexes for the five items for both regulatees and citizens and rescaled the indexes from 0-1.

Perceived organizational reputation was also measured using the 5-item Lee and van Ryzin (2019) scale. We asked employees how they believed their stakeholders perceived the agency's reputation in relation to each of the five items (e.g., "Our stakeholders have the perception that [*the agency*] is a well-run organization"). As with organizational reputation, a summative index for the five items was generated and rescaled from 0-1.

As there is no validated measure of employee advocacy in public relations research (Thelen 2020, p. 2) and there have been no attempts to measure the concepts in a public sector context, the authors developed a 3-item measure inspired by scales from Men (2014), Kim and Rhee (2011), and Walden and Westerman (2018). We adjusted our measure to fit a public sector context, as the existing measures include questions that were irrelevant for public organizations (and especially regulatory agencies), as there is usually just the one agency to perform a given task (e.g., questions relating to the recommendation of the company's services and products). The items are: "I talk positively about my organization in public," "I routinely recommend my organization as a good place to work," and "I say good things to friends and neighbors about the agency." The items were measured on a 7-point Likert scale ranging from "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree." Confirmatory factor analysis showed all standardized factor loading well above the lower recommended threshold of 0.5 (see Table A9 in the online appendix). Cronbach's alpha indicates internal consistency of items (0.84 in round 1, 0.87 in round 2), and a summative index for the five items was generated and rescaled from 0-1.

The fixed effects analyses were carried out with dummy variables for fulltime employment, the second survey round, as well as the second survey round for each agency (with Agency X as reference category). We also added a section fixed effect to control for employees changing section within the agency.

Analytical strategy

The first part of the analysis investigates the relationship between reputation management and organizational reputation as perceived by regulatees and citizens (H1). Given that we "only" have three agencies in our study, we cannot perform a quantitative analysis to investigate this relationship; instead, we use a descriptive approach, meaning that we compare averages and look for tendencies: Do reputation management and organizational reputation develop in the same direction for the agencies? For this part of the analysis, we use the full panel of employees to measure reputation management. Additionally, for each agency, the averages for organizational reputation as perceived by regulatees were created giving equal weight to each group of regulatees.

We conduct fixed effects analysis at the individual level on employee data using the balanced panel to investigate the relationship between reputation management and employee-perceived reputation (H2), as well as the potentially mediating role of employee advocacy (H3). Fixed effects analyze the variation within subjects (the individual employees) only. Because we are interested in the variation within subjects over time, observed as well as unobserved factors that do not change over time will not confound the results. While the fixed effects approach provides more robust estimates of the correlations than do cross-sectional designs, as discussed earlier, the fixed effects approach can render the respondents non-representative, as who answers both survey rounds is not random. We rely on the logic of mediation analysis by Baron and Kenny (1986) to investigate Hypothesis 3. According to them, a variable functions as a mediator when it meets three conditions: a) variations in the levels of the independent variable significantly account for variations in the presumed mediator, b) variations in the mediator significantly account for variations in the dependent variable, and c) when a and b are controlled, a previously significant relation between the independent and dependent variables is no longer significant (1986, p. 1176). This involves three regressions to test the mediation model:

first regressing the mediator on the independent variable; second, regressing the dependent variable on the independent variable; and third: regressing the dependent variable on both the independent and the presumed mediator. If the conditions hold, the effect of the independent variable on the dependent variable must be less in the third regression than in the second regression. (1986, p. 1177)

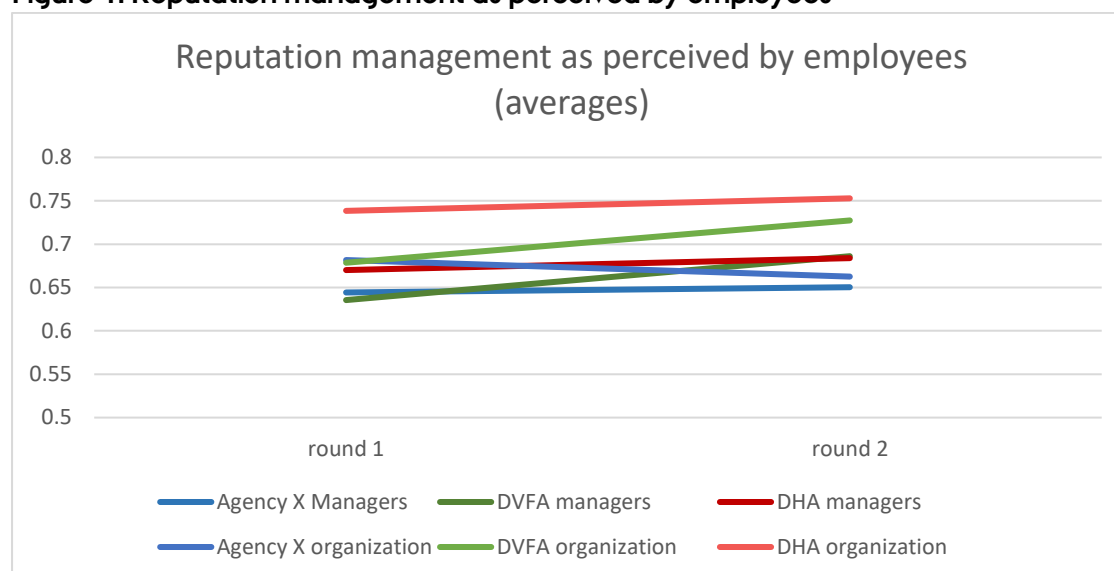
As hypothesized, we expect partial mediation (not perfect mediation), meaning that the reputation management may still have some effect on employee-perceived organizational reputation when employee advocacy is controlled. We rely on Baron and Kenny (1986), as the approach is transparent and intuitive compared to more thorough sensitivity analyses of mediation.

Results

Figure 1 presents the descriptive development in reputation management as perceived by employees. Two of the agencies (the DHA and DVFA) display almost parallel increases in the reputation management performed by the organization and managers, respectively. The increase between the survey rounds is larger for the DVFA relative to the DHA, but the latter was also at a higher absolute level in the first survey round. Organizational reputation management is perceived higher than managerial reputation management in all three agencies, and especially so for the DHA. Contrary to the other two agencies, Agency X employees

perceive their organization as performing less reputation management in the second round compared to the first survey round, while their managers' reputation management increases slightly between the rounds.

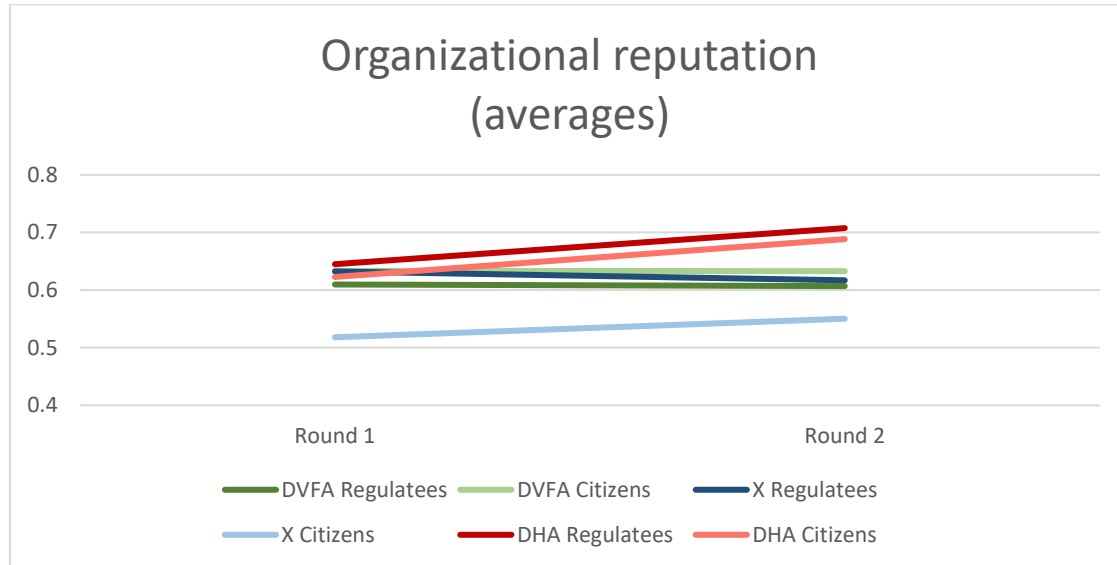
Figure 1: Reputation management as perceived by employees



Note: N = 193 (balanced panel)

Figure 2 shows the organizational reputation as judged by citizens and regulatees in the two survey rounds. In the first round, the reputations of the three agencies are, except for citizen judgements of Agency X, at similar levels (approx. 0.6-0.65 on a 0-1 scale). The DHA's reputation increases between the two rounds: in both rounds, regulatees have a slightly higher evaluative judgement relative to citizens. For the DVFA, the reputation is almost unchanged but with a slightly declining tendency; here, citizens give slightly higher judgements compared to regulatees. For Agency X, the reputation increases when judged by citizens but decreases slightly when judged by regulatees.

Figure 2: Organizational reputation



Note: N for citizens = approx. 315 in each round. $N_{\text{(Regulatees)}} = 46$ (Agency X), 129 (DHA), and 69 (DVFA) in 2019. In 2020 $N_{\text{(Regulatees)}} = 42$ (Agency X), 98 (DHA), and 88 (DVFA)

In Figures 3 and 4, we compare changes over time in the two focal constructs, reputation management and organizational reputation, in order to see whether the changes in organizational reputation seem to be related to changes in reputation management and thus support H1. As we have two measures of reputation management, Figure 3 presents changes in reputation management performed by the organization and organizational reputation, while Figure 4 presents changes in reputation management performed by the managers and organizational reputation. It would support our hypothesis if the agencies were placed in the top-left or bottom-right quadrants, indicating either increase in both reputation management and reputation or decrease in both reputation and reputation management. Overall, this is not the case for the relationship between either of the two measures of reputation management, on the one hand, and reputation on the other. As shown in graphs 3 and 4 above, the DVFA's reputation management increases between the rounds, while the organizational reputation is almost unchanged. The DHA experiences increases in both reputation management and organizational reputation, which is in line with our expectation and could indicate support for our theorized relationships. Agency X has different developments for the two reputation management measures; immediate manager's reputation management increases slightly on average (Figure 4), whereas organizational reputation management decreases on average (Figure 3). Similarly, the agency reputation decreases when evaluated by regulatees but increases when evaluated by citizens.

Figure 3: Relationship between organization's reputation management and organizational reputation.

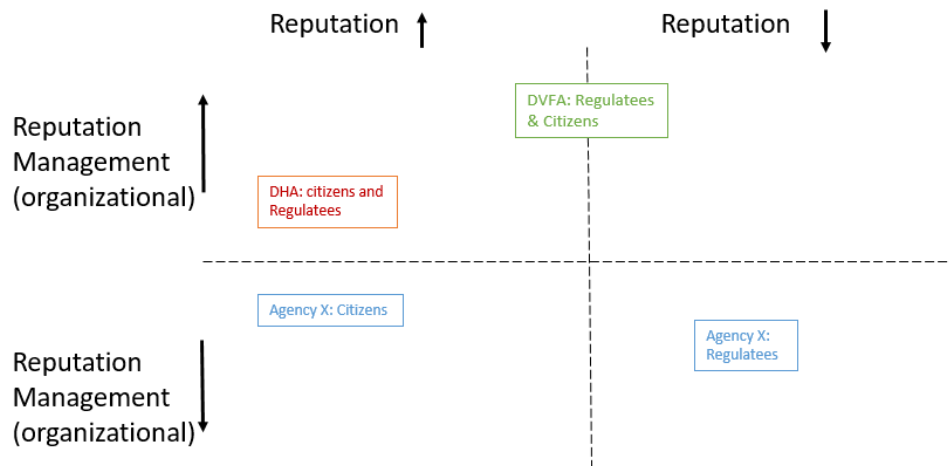
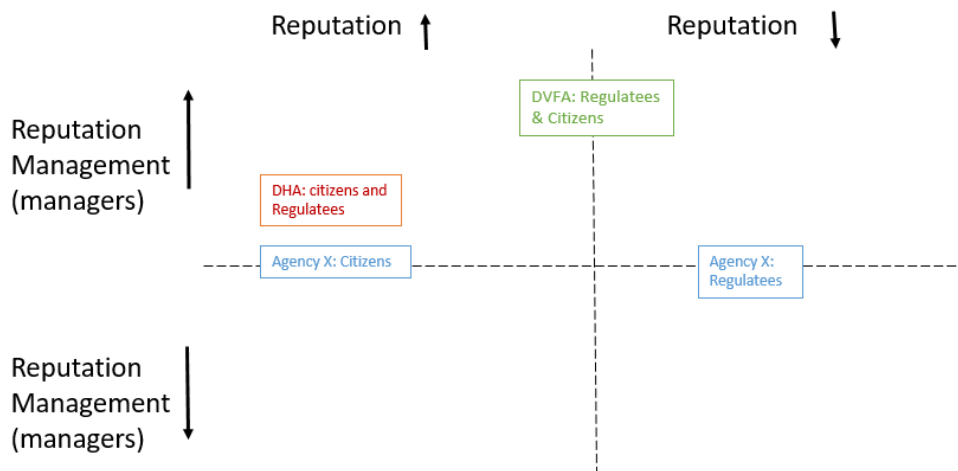


Figure 4: Relationship between managerial reputation management and organizational reputation



Next, we turn to the fixed effects analysis to evaluate the relationships between reputation management, employee advocacy, and employee-perceived organizational reputation (Table 1). Recalling Hypothesis 2, we expect a direct relationship between reputation management and employee-perceived organizational reputation. The estimates in Models 1.1 and 1.2 support this expectation. The regression coefficients for reputation management performed by managers (Model 1.1) and organization (Model 1.2) are both positive and statistically significant. When comparing Models 1.1 and 1.2, the regression coefficient is higher and more significant for Model 1.2 with reputation management measured as an organizational-level

behavior compared to Model 1.1, with reputation management measured as a managerial behavior. This indicates that the hypothesized relationship between reputation management and employee-perceived reputation is stronger when reputation management is measured as performed by the organization as a whole relative to when reputation management is measured as a managerial behavior.

Finally, we turn to Hypothesis 3 to evaluate whether the relationship between reputation management and employee-perceived organizational reputation is mediated by employee advocacy. As mentioned in the methods section, we rely on the logic of mediation analysis developed by Baron and Kenny (1986), where we conduct three regression models to test the linkage of the mediation model (1986, pp. 1176-1177).

To establish support for mediation, three conditions must hold: First, the independent variable must affect the mediator. This condition is met in Models 1.3 and 1.4, where reputation management as performed by both the managers (Model 1.3) and the organization (Model 1.4) has positive and statistically significant regression coefficients. Second, the independent variable must affect the dependent variable. This condition found support in Hypothesis 2 above. Third, when regressing the dependent variable on both the independent variable and on the mediator, the mediator must affect the dependent variable. This condition finds support in Model 1.5, where the regression coefficient for employee advocacy is positive and statistically significant. Additionally, the regression coefficient for reputation management as performed by managers decreases from 0.117 in Model 1.1 to 0.076 in Model 1.5 (where it is also no longer statistically significant) when employee advocacy is added to the model. This suggests that the relationship between reputation management measured as performed by managers and employee-perceived organizational reputation is partially mediated by employee advocacy. In Model 1.6, where the independent variable is measured as reputation management performed by the organization, we see (almost) the same: The regression coefficient for employee advocacy is positive, and the regression coefficient for reputation management has decreased compared to Model 1.2, but employee advocacy is not statistically significant at the 95% level. However, as the t statistics show, the p value is close to significant (p value = 0.065), indicating that mediation could also be considering the relatively small sample size, which affects the statistical power of our analysis.

Table 1 Reputation management, employee advocacy, and employee-perceived reputation, unstandardized regression coefficients (fixed effects model)

	1.1 Perceived reputation	1.2 Perceived reputation	1.3 Employee advocacy	1.4 Employee advocacy	1.5 Perceived reputation	1.6 Perceived reputation
Reputation management (manager)	0.117* (2.05)		0.192* (2.16)		0.076 (1.37)	
Reputation management (organization)		0.187** (2.99)		0.276*** (3.50)		0.137* (2.18)
Employee advocacy					0.213* (2.25)	0.182 [†] (1.86)
Section fixed effects	x	X	x	x	x	x
Second survey	0.013 (0.77)	0.014 (0.84)	-0.002 (-0.11)	-0.001 (-0.04)	0.014 (0.84)	0.015 (0.88)
Second survey DVFA (reference: Agency X)	0.039 [†] (1.77)	0.031 (1.45)	-0.002 (-0.06)	-0.013 (-0.49)	0.039 [†] (1.84)	0.033 (1.56)
Second survey DHA (reference: Agency X)	0.059 [†] (1.93)	0.060 [†] (1.92)	-0.011 (-0.28)	-0.011 (-0.28)	0.062* (2.02)	0.062* (2.02)
Employment type (dummy, fulltime = 1)	0.065 [†] (1.74)	0.059 [†] (1.62)	-0.019 (-0.91)	-0.031 [†] (-1.72)	0.069 [†] (1.92)	0.065 [†] (1.83)
Constant	0.570*** (8.96)	0.468*** (7.36)	0.687*** (8.58)	0.519*** (7.85)	0.423*** (4.41)	0.373*** (4.21)
N	386	386	386	386	386	386
R ²	0.343	0.369	2.49	0.289	0.382	0.396

Notes: respondent-level fixed effects regression t statistics in parentheses. Cluster robust standard errors at the individual level. [†]p < .1, *p < 0.05, **p < 0.01, ***p < 0.001. Two-wave panel with observations in spring 2019 and autumn 2020.

In relation to Hypothesis 1, where we expected a positive relation between reputation management and organizational reputation, we therefore found mixed relationships, indicating that other (contextual) factors may be at play. We find support for Hypothesis 2 for both measures of the reputation management measures regarding their relationship with perceived reputation and support for Hypothesis 3 when reputation management is measured as performed by managers. We further find indications of support for Hypothesis 3 when reputation management is measured as performed by the organization, but this result is not statistically significant at conventional levels. We will discuss the results, possible explanations, contextual factors, and implications in the following section.

Discussion

How can we interpret our findings, and what do they contribute to the literature? We found mixed results when studying the relation between reputation management and organizational reputation, as viewed by external audiences, being regulatees on the one hand and citizens as rule beneficiaries on the other. A positive relation was expected, as proactive reputation management by a regulatory agency aims to improve its organizational reputation. A positive organizational reputation is considered by the agency to be an asset, not only toward the political principals of the regulatory agency, but also toward regulatees as it increases its authority to regulate and stimulates voluntary compliance by regulatees. Also, toward the citizenry at large as rule beneficiaries such positive reputation is an asset as it will increase popular support for the actions of the regulatory agency, increasing in turn the agencies' standing toward its political principals and its autonomy toward these principals.

However, only one agency, the DHA, saw both an increase in perceived reputation management and an increase in organizational reputation with both regulatees and citizens. The DVFA's reputation remained almost unchanged, although its reputation management increased between the two moments of measurement. The third agency, Agency X, showed very disparate results, with reputation management evolving differently as practiced by managers and by the organization itself, and with reputation increasing as perceived by citizens but decreasing in the eyes of regulatees. Given that we find a consistent positive relation between reputation management and organizational reputation for only one of the three agencies studied, does this mean we must conclude that there is no clear effect of reputation management on organizational reputation?

We would argue that there are multiple reasons why we should not jump to this conclusion and that our results do not negate the effect of reputation management on external reputation. First, there is a lot of contexts at play; each of the three agencies was in a different position at both the moments of measurement and they were impacted differently by agency-related crises. First, the DHA, for which we observed an increase in reputation management and in organizational reputation between the two moments, was in a "*crisis as an opportunity*" situation, using the COVID-19 pandemic to create a favorable opinion of both the agency itself and the agency head. Especially the agency head, but also and senior staff members, was extensively appraised in the media, social media, and among citizens (especially at the time of the second survey) and gave interviews in different magazines and TV shows. For the other two agencies, the situation was different. The DVFA was in an *emerging crisis* situation at the time of the second survey. The agency was in the process of killing the entire Danish mink population at that time due to Covid-19 among minks, and by the time we surveyed citizens and regulatees, this killing had already been heavily criticized. Much of the criticism was more on how the government handled the situation but resulted also in partly negative coverage of the

agency itself. In that situation, the increased reputation management by the DVFA, both by its managers and by the organization itself, might have prevented a further drop in organizational reputation, which overall largely remained at the same levels as in survey round 1 before the mink crisis. The very dispersed image of Agency X might also be at least partly explained by its situation, as Agency X just came out of a crisis at survey round 1 in 2019 after a period of intense media coverage.

So, the agency-specific situation in relation to relevant crises might explain why we do not find positive relations between reputation management and externally perceived organizational reputation in all three agencies. As a more general point, one might question whether we can actually reject our Hypothesis 1 given how we selected our cases as most-likely cases based on all three regulatory agencies being highly salient and having experienced substantial negative coverage: in the context of a crisis, preventing a “big drop” in organizational reputation might also be considered as a positive effect of reputation management by an agency. It would be good for further research to focus on agencies that are “in calm waters” to assess the impact of reputation management and to expand the number of cases.

The mixed results might also have to do with the focus on regulatory agencies. This study has relevance for the field of regulatory governance, as it focuses on the effects of reputation management of regulatory agencies on the reputation as perceived by external and internal audiences. In reputation studies, most theoretical and empirical work is done on regulatory agencies (see, e.g., Carpenter 2010; Waeraas & Maor 2015; Overman *et al.* 2020). As one recent comparative study shows (Verhoest *et al.* 2021), agencies with coercive and authoritative tasks (e.g., regulatory agencies), are more likely to attract relatively more reputational threats than are agencies with, for example, service delivery tasks. Hence, regulatory agencies, their management, and staff can be assumed to be relatively more reputation-sensitive and more prone to using reputation management (Boon *et al.* 2019). However, regulatory agencies face more challenges when aiming for a good reputation simply because their tasks are of a coercive and authoritative nature and are hence very critically regarded by the audiences that are directly affected by the regulatory agencies’ actions. The sobering result of our study is, then, that we find no clear link between increased reputation management efforts and the externally perceived reputation might have been different when we would study service delivery agencies or other agencies with non-regulatory tasks, whose tasks are non-coercive or non-authoritative in nature.

Could the mixed findings for Hypothesis 1 also be due to issues of operationalization and measurement? We used the Lee and Van Ryzin (2019) scale of organizational reputation but used it as a formative measure based on theoretical grounds: we conceive the reputational dimensions as different aspects on which agencies can aim to maximize their reputation, but they prioritize which dimensions in relation to which to pursue a good reputation. The additive

index of reputation that we constructed is, hence, theoretically sounder. Moreover, for both citizens and stakeholders, using a summative index or an index based on factor scores delivers similar results. As to reputation management, we measured reputation management by asking employees about how they perceive the reputation management efforts. What we do not know, however, is which reputational dimensions were actually emphasized in the external communication toward audiences by the three agencies. As Rimkuté (2020) shows, regulatory agencies are more inclined to emphasize their technical, moral, and procedural reputation more in their own communication than are non-regulatory agencies. The three agencies might in fact actually emphasize different dimensions in their reputation management, which accounts for the different results.

Although we could not find a straightforward relation between reputation management and externally perceived reputation, our three-agency study did reveal a clear relation between reputation management and employee-perceived reputation. This in itself is an important finding, as studies show that employees perceiving a positive reputation for their organization enhance their engagement with their organization, their job satisfaction, and their individual-level performance (Dutton *et al.* 1994; Dihr & Shukla 2019 Hamaduddin 2020; Hamaduddin & Lee 2021). While this confirms Hypothesis 2, we do not know exactly which mechanism accounts for this. Maybe the lack of support for H1 could indicate that it is not through reputation management affecting organizational reputation as perceived by external audiences, which in turn positively influences the employees' perception of this reputation. Indeed, this might indicate that the positive effect of reputation management on employee perceptions of organizational reputation manifests itself merely through the auto communication mechanism. Auto-communication refers to the effect of external communication about the valuable vision, values, behavior, and performance of organizations by themselves, which resonates with their own staff, leading to improved perceptions of their own staff of their organizations' vision, values, behavior, and performance. Our study could hence be considered a potentially strong contribution to studies showing the relevance of such auto-communication (Christensen 1997, 2018; Lotman 1990; Morsing 2006). Given the nuances we provide above regarding the weak support for H1, we cannot fully confirm this, but future studies should focus on gauging the relative effect of both mechanisms.

Our study also found a clear relation between reputation management and employee advocacy versus employee advocacy and the perception of these employees of the organizational reputation. The latter supports the relevance of the self-persuasion mechanism, as noted by Bellé (2014). The former relation is also important, however, as an increased employee advocacy (fostered by reputation management, *inter alia*) is associated with employee identification with the organizational vision, motivation, and engagement (Fombrun & van Riel 2004; Men 2014a). Moreover, the fact that employees mirror the reputation management of their

managers and their organization by themselves advocating the organization to the outside world shows the cascading effect of managers deliberately communicating about the vision of their respective organizations in a positive way. It shows the potentially transformative effect of external communication by managers on the internal dynamics of their organization and its staff. Hence, reputation management might have a double value by not only changing external perceptions to the better, but also strengthening the engagement, identification, and motivation of the organization staff (Boem *et al.* 2015). Our study might even be interpreted as evidence that the latter effect of reputation management might be more straightforward than the former.

Conclusion

This study gauges the question of whether reputation management affects both perceived reputation among external audiences and the reputation as perceived by internal audiences, and whether the effect on the latter is not mediated by employee advocacy. The empirical analysis is based on a unique two-wave panel survey targeting external and internal audiences from three Danish regulatory agencies. Our main finding is that although we find no clear relationship between reputation management and organizational reputation, we find a positive and significant relationship between reputation management and internal audiences' perceptions of the organizational reputation. Moreover, employee advocacy mediates that relationship, at least partially.

By investigating the relationship between reputation management on the one hand and external and internal audience perceptions of the agency on the other, the article contributes to BRT research by pursuing research on how citizens and stakeholders perceive of agencies (Lee & van Ryzin 2020; Bustos 2021). Moreover, the article helps to investigate the “softer” levers available to public managers when affecting employee outcomes more indirectly (Wright *et al.* 2012, p. 212) by pointing at the effect of reputation management on how internal audiences perceive their organizations' reputation, as well as identifying the partially mediating role of employee advocacy.

However, there are several limitations to our study, which also points toward potential ways of developing future research. A first limitation to our study is the limited number of organizations we are able to study in this manner, which makes it difficult to draw clear conclusions in terms of how reputation management influences externally perceived reputation, and to make abstraction of the crisis-related, agency-specific context as an important explanation of our findings. Moreover, due to the low number of organizations under study, we could not investigate employee advocacy in relation to external audiences' perception of reputation.

Second, future research should try to unveil which reputational dimensions are stressed in the reputation management efforts by the organization or management in order to better understand how reputation management affects the reputations of the agencies in their specific contextual setting. When understanding the effect of reputation management on the reputation of agencies in crisis (or even non-crisis) times, it is important to know which dimension the agency is valued for by audiences or which dimension is under pressure because of recent events.

Our study is a first step to include management and leadership in studies of perceived reputation. However, a third limitation is that we cannot investigate the mechanisms causing employees' perceptions of the organizational reputation in H2: Is auto-communication the main mechanism, as our study seems to suggest? Or is there a feedback mechanism from the employees' confrontation with an improved or deteriorated organizational reputation held by external audiences? Or are there even other mechanisms at play? Future studies should, hence, delve into the individual-level considerations at play at the level of individual staff when confronted with intensified reputation management by their managers or organization.

Although the study included the usual safeguards in survey design and two moments of measurement, which reduces issues of common source bias and endogeneity, these risks cannot be fully ruled out. A risk of common source bias remains in the fixed effects analysis as we measure reputation management, employee advocacy, and perceived reputation by a staff survey. Fixed effects help to reduce these risks, as we only examine changes and not at actual levels, but the risk is not fully attenuated. As to endogeneity, one might ask whether reputation management and employee advocacy are more a reaction to the audiences' communication about the reputation of the organization (Carpenter 2010, p. 33; see also Gilad *et al.* 2018, p. 2 on possibility of endogeneity). However, this risk is reduced through this measurement at two moments.

Future research should account for the positive effects of employee advocacy per se (Thelen 2020). Although we look at employee advocacy as mediation, the positive effect of employee advocacy on the employees' perception of organizational reputation is also an interesting outcome in itself because it has been shown to have positive effects on staff identification, engagement, and motivation.

The main practical implication is that improving the externally perceived reputation by regulatory agencies' reputation management is no easy endeavor; its effect clearly depends on the specific context in which a regulatory agency finds itself at that moment and the kind of stakeholders the regulatory agency targets. This is not to say that regulatory agencies should not invest in reputation management; although it is not easy to make it to external audiences, there is the positive side-effect of reputation management affecting the internal perception of

reputation and increasing employee advocacy, which is said to have beneficial effects on organizational commitment, motivation, and performance.

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Supporting information/appendix

Table A1 Response rates from the three agencies

	2019: completed questionnaire	2020: completed questionnaire	Included in the panel (effective response rate)
Agency X	127 (40.5%)	163 (50.2%)	69 (21.9%)
Danish Health Authority	110 (61.1%)	94 (50.8%)	48 (26.67%)
Danish Veterinary and Food Administration	136 (36.5%)	156 (38.9%)	76 (20.3%)
Total	373 (43%)	413 (45.33%)	193 (22.2%)

Table A2: Response rates from regulatees and citizens

	2019	2020
	Responses (response rate)	Responses (response rate)
Agency X		
Regulatees	46 (51.7%)	42 (51.2)
Citizens	316	309
Danish Health Authority		
Regulatees	129 (61.1%)	98 (47.3%)
Citizens	315	317
Danish Veterinary and Food Administration		
Regulatees	69 (65.8%)	88 (78.6%)
Citizens	314	315

TABLE A3 Descriptive statistics for cross-sectional variables (panel) Employees

Variable	Description	Rnd	N	Mean	SD	Min.	Max.
Reputation management (managerial)	7-item summative index, 7-point Likert scale	1	193	.700	.163	0	1
		2	193	.710	.156	.287	1
Reputation management (organizational)	7-item summative index, 7-point Likert scale	1	193	.652	.187	.056	1
		2	193	.656	.199	0	1
Employee advocacy	3 items, 7-point Likert scale	1	193	.763	.167	.167	1
		2	193	.751	.179	.167	1
Perceived organizational reputation	5 items, 7-point Likert scale	1	193	.691	.134	.367	1
		2	193	.735	.129	.4	1
Education							
- School		1/2	-	.	.	.	.
- Vocational education		1/2	9	.	.	.	.
- High school		1/2	2	.	.	.	.
- Short higher education		1/2	11	.	.	.	.
- Medium-term higher education		1/2	19	.	.	.	.
Long higher education		1/2	154	.	.	.	.
Round 2	1 = second round of survey	1/2	396				
DVFA Round 2	1 = second round of survey DVFA employees	1/2	396			0	1
DHA Round 2	1 = second round of survey DHA employees	1/2	396			0	1
Gender	1 = female	1	193	0.674	.470	0	1
		2	193	.678	.468	0	1
Age	Employee age	1	193	43.8	11.248	23	71
		2	193	44.9	11.229	24	72

Table A4 Descriptive statistics for cross sectional variables (regulatees and citizens)

Variable	Description	Rnd	N	Mean	SD	Min.	Max
Regulatees							
Organizational reputation ⁱ	5-item summative index 5-point Likert scale	1	244	.632	.168	0	1
		2	228	.655	.183	0	1
Gender	1 = female	1	224	.335	.473	0	1
		2	221	.321	.468	0	1
Age	Respondent's age in years	1	192	51.96	8.53	21	82
		2	205	50.34	8.74	24	74
Citizens							
Organizational reputation	5-item summative index, 5-point Likert scale	1	333	.587	.158	0	1
		2	325	.624	.148	0	1
Education							
- School		1 (2)	30 (20)	8.5 (5.6)			
- Vocational education		1 (2)	59 (62)	16.7 (17.5)			
- High school		1 (2)	37 (53)	10.5 (14.9)			
- Short higher education		1 (2)	58 (52)	16.4 (14.6)			
- Medium-term higher education		1 (2)	100 (105)	28.3 (29.6)			
- Long higher education		1 (2)	69 (58)	19.5 (16.3)			
No education		1 (2)	(3)	(0.9)			
Gender	1= female	1	354	.506	.501	0	1
		2	354	.508	.501	0	1
Age							
<18		1 (2)	1 (10)	0.3 (2.8)			
18-24		1 (2)	20 (31)	7.0 (8.6)			
25-34		1 (2)	83 (68)	20.8 (18.8)			
35-42		1 (2)	26 (46)	9.9 (12.7)			
43-49		1 (2)	83 (64)	20.2(17.7)			
50-59		1 (2)	36 (58)	12.9 (16.1)			
60-60		1 (2)	107 (74)	24.9 (20.5)			
>70		1 (2)	10 (10)	2.7 (2.7)			

Table A5 Cronbach's alpha for reputation management measure and dimensions (Unbalanced Panel)

	Agency X		Danish Veterinary and Food Administration		Danish Health Authority		Combined	
	2019	2020	2019	2020	2019	2020	2019	2020
Identification	0.96	0.92	0.95	0.93	0.92	0.93	0.95	0.93
Communication	0.91	0.87	0.89	0.90	0.79	0.91	0.87	0.9
Prioritization	0.93	0.91	0.95	0.93	0.92	0.9	0.94	0.92
Whole measure	0.95	0.94	0.96	0.96	0.95	0.94	0.95	0.95

Table A6 Cronbach's alpha for reputation management measure and dimensions (balanced panel)

	Agency X		Danish Veterinary and Food Administration		Danish Health Authority		Combined	
	2019	2020	2019	2020	2019	2020	2019	2020
Identification	0.97	0.94	0.94	0.93	0.90	0.96	0.95	0.94
Communication	0.91	0.92	0.82	0.89	0.78	0.93	0.85	0.91
Prioritization	0.93	0.91	0.95	0.87	0.91	0.9	0.94	0.89
Whole measure	0.95	0.94	0.94	0.94	0.94	0.94	0.95	0.94

Confirmatory factor analysis: Reputation management

We specified a 3-factor model including two items to measure identification, two items to measure communication, and three items to measure prioritization. We conducted the CFA for both rounds of survey data (see Tables A7-A8), for each agency (not shown), and for both the full and balanced panel (see Tables A7-A8) which showed similar loadings across rounds, agencies, and panel type. All standardized factor loadings for the reputation management measure are well above the lower recommended threshold of 0.5. The specified models also perform significantly better than less complex models (a model in which all items were constrained to load on a single factor and a model where identification and communication were constrained to load on the same factor, not shown), which suggests discriminant and convergent validity.

Confirmatory factor analysis survey round 1

For survey round 1 data (table A7), the CFA models of immediate manager's reputation management and organization reputation management using the full panel fit our data well, with RMSEA of .053 and .076, respectively, SRMR of .014 and .022 (well below the recommended value of less than 0.08.), and CFI of .996 and .985, (which is above the recommended 0.95 cut-off and indicates that our models do 99.9% and 98.5% better than a null model, where we assume that the items are unrelated to each other (Acocck 2013, p. 23)). For the models of immediate manager's reputation management and organization reputation management using the full panel using the balanced panel, the fit to data is almost as good as for the full panel, albeit with an RMSEA score above threshold (0.106) for the measure of employee-assessed organizational reputation management.

Table A7 Measurement model of employee ratings of reputation management. 2019 (First survey round)

	UNBALANCED		BALANCED	
Questionnaire Item	Immediate Manager's reputation management Standardized factor loadings	Organization reputation management Standardized factor loadings	Immediate Manager's reputation management Standardized factor loadings	Organization reputation management Standardized factor loadings
Identification				
Makes an ongoing effort to gain insights into how our surroundings perceive [the organization].	.934	.924	.930	.929
Makes an ongoing effort to gain insights into which expectations our surroundings have towards [the organization].	.961	.831	.969	.841
Communication				
Strives to increase the knowledge of the outside world of the [organization] vision.	.875	.797	.859	.809
Tries to clarify the positive impact of [organization] on society to the outside world.	.885	.775	.859	.770
Prioritization				
Strives to target what [the organization] communicates to the outside world.	.931	.884	.914	.856
Strives to target the [organization] messages to selected stakeholders in our surroundings.	.931	.869	.925	.831
Strives to highlight specific aspects of [the organization] in his/her/its communication to the outside world.	.883	.782	.896	.764
N (employees)	428	453	193	193

n (organizations)	3	3	3	3
chi2	24.06	39.65	21.46	34.68
Df	11	11	11	11
RMSEA	.053	.076	.070	.106
CFI	.996	.985	.992	.970
SRMR	.014	.022	.018	.030
Note: Model with standardized factor loadings. Confirmatory factor analysis based on asymptotic distribution-free estimator. Unbalanced panel. All standardized factor loadings are statistically significant at the .001-level.				

Confirmatory factor analysis survey round 2

For round 2 data (Table A8), the CFA models of immediate manager's reputation management and organization reputation management using the full panel fits our data well, with SRMR of 0.024 and 0.026, respectively, and CFI of 0.973 and 0.984, but a poor fit in relation to the RMSEA score, which is .131 and 0.081 and thus above or just around the 0.08 threshold for a reasonably close fit (Acocck 2013). For the models with the balanced data, the tendency is the same, with good model fit measures in relation to CFI and SRMR as well as RMSEA for organizational reputation management, but .134 for immediate managers' reputation management. The poor fit to data in relation to the RMSEA scores is likely due to the small degrees of freedom under which RMSEA tends to falsely indicate a poor fit (Kenny et al. 2015).

Table A8 measurement model of employee ratings of reputation management. 2020 (second survey round)

	UNBALANCED		BALANCED	
Questionnaire Item	Immediate Manager's reputation management Standardized factor loadings	Organization reputation management Standardized factor loadings	Immediate Manager's reputation management Standardized factor loadings	Organization reputation management Standardized factor loadings
Identification				
Makes an ongoing effort to gain insights into how our surroundings perceive [the organization].	.924	.927	.947	.952
Makes an ongoing effort to gain insights into which expectations our surroundings have towards [the organization].	.936	.889	.937	.849
Communication				
Strives to increase the knowledge of the outside world of the [organization] vision.	.892	.806	.901	.82
Tries to clarify the positive impact of [organization] on society to the outside world.	.91	.794	.926	.721
Prioritization				
Strives to target what [the organization] communicates to the outside world.	.867	.870	.846	.896
Strives to target the [organization] messages to selected stakeholders in our surroundings.	.932	.859	.907	.835
Strives to highlight specific aspects of [the organization] in his/her/its communication to the outside world.	.867	.755	.831	.71
N (employees)	467	490	193	193
n (organizations)	3	3	3	3
chi2	99.05	46.17	49.03	21.55
Df	11	11	11	11
RMSEA	.131	.081	.134	.071
CFI	.973	.984	.970	.986
SRMR	.024	.026	.029	.026

Note: Model with standardized factor loadings. Confirmatory factor analysis based on asymptotic distribution-free estimator.

All standardized factor loadings are statistically significant at the .001-level.

Table A9 Measurement model of employee advocacy (balanced panel)

Questionnaire Item	2019 Standardized factor loadings	2020 Standardized factor loadings
"I talk positively about my organization in public"	.794	.872
"I routinely recommend my organization as a good place to work"	.747	.793
"I say good things to friends and neighbors about the agency"	.900	.855
N (employees)	193	193
n (organizations)	3	3

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¹ In the survey, the five items measuring organizational reputation were split into bundles with other items, each bundle consisting of items of the same dimension. At the point of the first round of survey, the Lee and van Ryzin (2019) article was a draft version with a larger number of items than in the published article.

**HOW PERCEIVED ORGANIZATIONAL REPUTA-
TION RELATES TO EMPLOYEE OUTCOMES:
LOOKING IN THE ORGANIZATIONAL MIRROR,
WHAT DO I SEE?**

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Abstract

Organizational reputation has become a dominant perspective in the study of the public organizations. A strong reputation is recognized as a political asset key to our understanding of public administration, and the behaviour and power of public organizations. Reputation scholars have taken important steps in terms of providing empirical evidence of reputational concerns as explanation for the behaviour of public organizations. However, what we lack in reputation research are theorizations and empirical examinations of how organizational reputations, which are embedded in audience networks and thus exist externally to public organizations, influence the attitudes, motivation and behavior of employees within the organizations. This study aims to address this gap by identifying the relevance of organizational reputation for employee outcomes. Panel analyses using repeated measures of 193 employees show that employee perceived organizational reputation relates to employee job satisfaction and to a lesser extent also employee organization identification.

Keywords: bureaucratic reputation theory, employee perceived reputation, job satisfaction, organizational identification, public service motivation.

Introduction

Public organizations seek to build strong reputations in order to secure organizational autonomy and legitimacy (Carpenter 2001; Maor 2015). This is one of the core claims of bureaucratic reputation theory (BRT). Reputations are thus a valuable political asset that can be used to generate support, increase formal discretion and protect the organization from hostile actors in their environment (Carpenter 2001; 2010). However, organizational reputation can also be expected to be important in relation to dynamics within public organizations and more specifically in relation to employee outcomes. In this article, I argue that the reputations of public organizations and especially employee perceptions hereof are important because these perceptions may influence the motivation, attitudes, behavior and ultimately the performance of employees. Reputations may thus also be a managerial or organizational asset.

Reputation is defined as “a set of beliefs about the unique and separable capacities, roles and obligations of an organization, where these beliefs are embedded in audience networks” (Carpenter 2010, 45). An audience is any actor that observes the organization and can monitor it (Blom-Hansen & Finke 2019). The concept of external audiences plays a key role within BRT, and a central argument is that public organizations are empowered or weakened by their audiences, for example political actors increasing or reducing the formal authority of an organization, or audiences (such as firms, interest groups or citizens) challenging or accepting the regulatory decisions or service delivery of public organizations. Public organizations therefore need to be attentive and adaptive towards their audiences (Carpenter 2001; 2010; Moffitt 2010; Wæraas & Maor 2015). The behaviour of public organizations is thus argued to be largely shaped by anticipation and reaction to audiences.

This emphasis on external audiences means that, up until recently, internal audiences (that is; employees) have been a blind spot within the BRT framework because attention has almost exclusively been directed towards external audiences relative to employees (Abolafia & Hatmaker 2013; Rho, Lee & Yun 2015). The BRT literature therefore tends to overlook how organizational reputations, as noted by Bustos (2021, 734) reside in “a network of internal and external audiences”, and therefor also overlook the potential impact of organizational reputation on individual level outcomes.

What we lack in BRT are theorizations and empirical examinations of how organizational reputations, which are embedded in audience networks and thus exist externally to public organizations, influence the attitudes, motivation and behavior of employees within the organizations.

Recently, research has begun addressing this gap by investigating how (actual or perceived) forces in the external environment relate to employee outcomes in terms of employee engagement (Dhir & Shukla 2018; Hameduddin & Lee 2021; Hamaduddin 2021), organizational identification and commitment (Rho, Yun and Lee 2015; Gilad, Bloom and Assouline 2018).

Most of these studies do not focus on organizational reputation per se, but on how employees perceive the support or satisfaction of the organization's environment (either the generalized public or specific audiences) with the organization's performance, mission or more generally (e.g., Rho, Yun and Lee 2015; Dhir and Shukla 2018; Hameduddin and Lee 2021, Hamaduddin 2021). In an experimental study, Gilad, Bloom and Assouline (2018) investigate the effect of reputation signals on employees' organizational identification and commitment. Thus far the ability to identify direct relationships between the actual or perceived forces in the external environment has been mixed.

This article builds on this recent work and contributes to expanding the empirical domain of BRT by focusing on employees. It departs from the argument by Abolafia and Hatmaker (2013), that reputations affect how employees perceive themselves and their organization, and shape the attitudes, motivation and potentially also the behavior of public employees.

In this context, the aim of this article is to investigate the relationship between employee perceived organizational reputation (or shortened; EPOR) and employee outcomes by posing the research question: *How is employees' perception of their organization's reputation related to their job satisfaction, public service motivation and organizational identification?*

I argue that these relationships may be especially relevant to investigate in the context of public organizations because of the function they serve in society. Public organizations operate within a unique environment where they serve multiple principals (Pandey and Wright 2006, 513) and seek multiple sources of legitimacy (Rainey 2014), while often also suffering from low levels of public support and relatively more negative than positive media coverage (Garrett et al. 2006, Gilad, Bloom and Assouline 2018). Still, research building on Perry and Wise (1990) has convincingly demonstrated that public employees are motivated by public service and altruistic motives, which are associated with job satisfaction, motivation, commitment and performance (Pandey and Stazyk 2009; Hamaduddin and Lee 2019). In line with this, social psychology research suggests that individuals develop their identities of organizational membership in part based on the perceptions they have about how their organization is assessed by their external audiences (Dutton, Dukerich and Harquail 1994), which also influence their motivation, attitudes and behavior (Rho, Yun and Lee 2015; Riketta 2005). It is therefore to be expected that reputations, although existing externally to public organizations, may influence employee level outcomes.

By investigating these three specific employee outcomes, the article sheds light on how EPOR relates to outcomes at different levels relative to the individual employee. Job satisfaction represents the relationship between the individual and his/her job (the micro-level), while public service motivation (PSM) reflects the individual's orientation towards society (the macro-level). Finally, organizational identification mirrors the relationship between the individual and the organization (the meso-level).

The main finding of this article is that the perceptions employees have of their organization's reputation relate to their job satisfaction, and to a lesser extent also to their organizational identification.

The article proceeds as follows. First, I conceptualize EPOR and argue why self-determination theory can be used to explain how EPOR may influence employee outcomes. I will then outline the article's three hypotheses regarding the relationship between EPOR and, respectively, job satisfaction, PSM and organizational identification. Next, I discuss research design, data and methods, and present the results of the empirical analysis where I test the proposed hypotheses using data from a balanced panel of 193 employees in three Danish agencies. The article concludes with a discussion of the main findings, their implications for research and practice and the limitations of the study.

Theory

In this section, I begin with a conceptualization of EPOR and theorize how EPOR – drawing on self-determination theory – may relate to employee job satisfaction (hypothesis 1) and public service motivation (hypothesis 2). Building on social identity theory, I will then outline the theoretical arguments for expecting a positive relationship between EPOR and employee organizational identification (hypothesis 3).

Employees form perceptions about their organization based on their personal experiences and from observing and understanding the beliefs their external audiences have about the organization. In this article, to clarify and distinguish whose perceptions (and beliefs) are of interest, I use the term 'employee perceived organizational reputation' (/EPOR) to describe employees' perceptions of external audiences' beliefs about the organization.

Organizational reputation refers (following Carpenter's 2010 definition) to external audiences' beliefs about the unique and separable capacities, roles and obligations of an organization; EPOR captures employees' own perceptions of these beliefs. Within bureaucratic reputation theory, organizational reputation is conceptualized as a multi-dimensional construct consisting of a *performative* dimension (does the organization have the ability to do its job, fulfil its core task and deliver high-quality outputs?), a *technical* dimension (does the organization have the technical skills and general capacity to reach goals, outputs and/or outcomes, regardless of actual performance?), a *procedural* dimension (are the procedures and processes performed by the organization just? Do they respect and follow accepted rules and norms?), as well as a *moral* dimension (is the organization working morally and ethically correct and able to meet and demonstrate commitment to the moral and ethical values and standards characterizing the polity and wider society in which the organization operates?) (Carpenter 2010, 47; Carpenter and Krause 2012, 27; Lee and van Ryzin 2019, 179; Overman, Busuioc and Wood 2020, 3).

In addition to forming beliefs about the different reputational dimensions, audiences also form a more general belief reflecting the *general favorability* of the organization's reputation (Lee and van Ryzin 2019, 179). Hence, organizational reputation refers to (specific) external audiences' beliefs about an organization based on their *perceptions* and *evaluative judgments* of the different reputational dimensions as well as their overall evaluation of the organization. EPOR can then be conceptualized as employee perceptions of external audiences' beliefs about the organization's performative, technical, procedural and moral reputation, as well as the organization's general favorability. EPOR is without an evaluative judgement and only captures the individual employee's perception of how the organization is perceived and judged by external audiences.

EPOR bears resemblance to the concept of "organizational image". Organizational image has been conceptualized in different ways, e.g., as what *employees themselves believe* about their organization, the way an organization *wishes* to be viewed by their external audiences, the way organizational members *believe external audiences* view the organization and as the *perceptions different people* (internal and external) hold of an organization (Dutton, Dukerich and Harquail 1994; Fuller et al. 2006; Rho, Yun and Lee 2015). Further, organizational image has been operationalized as e.g., perceived prestige from the external community (Fuller et al. 2006), public support for the organization's mission and performance (Hamaduddin and Lee 2019, Hamaduddin 2021), satisfaction with performance (Rho, Yun and Lee 2015), whether people in the community think highly of the organization (Dhir and Shukla 2019) and how organizational members hope the organization will be viewed in the future (Abolafia and Hatmaker 2013). The ability to identify direct relationships between these different measures of organizational image and employee outcomes has thus far been mixed.

EPOR is different from the various conceptualizations of 'organizational image' because EPOR draws on an understanding of organizational reputation developed within the framework of bureaucratic reputation theory. Both EPOR and organizational image concern the perceptions employees have of how the organization is viewed by outsiders, yet they differ in terms of what these views or beliefs are about.

According to BRT, public organizations and their employees watch their external audiences with "*the purpose of accurately gauging expectations regarding external demands placed on the organization*" (Carpenter and Krause 2012, 27). Dutton, Dukerich and Harquail (1994) argue that the perceptions employees have of how the organization is viewed by organizational outsiders act as a "*potentially powerful mirror, reflecting back to the members how the organization and the behavior of its members are likely seen by outsiders*" (1994, 249). This does not mean that EPOR is necessarily an accurate reflection of external audiences' beliefs, although reputation is likely to partly influence and construct employees' perceptions hereof. The perception that employees hold of their organization's reputation is unique to each

employee, and each employee's perception may or may not match the actual beliefs of external audiences (Dutton, Dukerich and Harquail 1994). Sometimes, an organization's reputation and employees' perceptions hereof are closely aligned, e.g., when an organization's reputation is widely affected by extensive press or media attention, sometimes the reflection in the mirror is distorted in either a positive or negative light (Dutton, Dukerich and Harquail 1994). A central claim in bureaucratic reputation theory is that public organizations have multiple and diverse audiences, and that these audiences may have different beliefs about the reputation of these organizations (Carpenter and Krause 2012, 27). Employees may either deliberately or unconsciously watch a specific audience more closely than other (important) audiences, which means that EPOR may also differ depending on, on which audiences the individual employees build their perceptions.

In the following, I first draw on self-determination theory to argue why employees are expected to internalize (their perceptions of) external audiences' beliefs, which is relevant in relation to hypothesis 1 and 2. Second, I outline the theoretical arguments for, why I expect EPOR to be related to employee outcomes oriented towards the micro-, macro- and meso-level.

Employee perceived organizational reputation and internalization of external audiences' beliefs

EPOR involves employees' perceptions of the beliefs external audiences have about the reputation of an organization, and in this article, I expect that these perceptions relate to employee level outcomes although organizational reputation is something that exists external to an organization. Drawing on the self-determination theory's (SDT) argument about internalization of external motivation, I will outline why I have this expectation.

According to SDT, individuals can internalize external regulations and integrate them with their own values. When an individual internalizes an activity (and value connected to the activity) to the extent that external consequences or rewards are no longer necessary, the motivation can be characterized as extrinsically autonomous (Gagné and Deci 2005). Crucial for the individual's internalization of extrinsic motivation is the fulfillment of the three basic psychological needs for autonomy, competence and relatedness (Deci and Ryan 2000). The need for autonomy concerns the experience of choice and feeling like the initiator of one's own actions (Baard, Deci and Ryan 2004). The need for competence concerns succeeding at challenging tasks, being able to achieve desired outcomes, and the feeling of being generally effective (Baard, Deci and Ryan 2004). Finally, the need for relatedness refers to the desire to feel connected to others; to establish a sense of mutual respect for and reliance on others such as beneficiaries, colleagues and supervisors (Baard, Deci and Ryan 2004, 2046; Battaglio, Belle and Cantarelli 2021).

Typically, SDT has been used to argue that employees can internalize external regulations or interventions. I extend this argument by arguing that employees may also internalize external beliefs (as they are perceived by the employees). I expect that internalization can take place when employees mirror themselves in the positive beliefs external audiences have of the organization, which particularly satisfies the needs for competence (succeeding in challenging tasks and achieving desired outcomes) and relatedness (feeling connected to others). Employees may, by being part of an organization, and by observing and experiencing how this organization is perceived and evaluated positively by external audiences, eventually internalize these perceptions and evaluations of the organization and perceive a positive organizational reputation as a reflection of their own competences and as a proxy for their actions. Similarly, EPOR may increase employees' sense of being meaningfully connected to each other (fulfilling the need for relatedness), because a positive reputation indicates that the organization is succeeding and that the individuals within the organization are succeeding together.

The relation between employee perceived organizational reputation and job satisfaction

Relying on Locke's (1976) definition of job satisfaction as "a pleasurable or positive emotional state resulting from the appraisal of one's job or job experiences" (quoted in Wright and Davis 2003, 70), this article understands job satisfaction as representing the level of congruence between what employees want from their jobs and what employees feel they receive from their jobs. According to Rainey (2014, 320-322), "job satisfaction is one of the most intensively studied concepts in organizational research" with "thousands of studies" on job satisfaction, its determinants and consequences. A meta-analysis by Cantarelli, Belardinelli and Belle (2016) showed that job satisfaction is also one of the most prominently studied concepts within the public management literature. This literature suggests an extensive list of individual and organizational factors that can influence employee job satisfaction with the most relevant in relation to the present study being interpersonal relationships with peers and leaders, recognition, feedback, autonomy and organizational environment (for an extensive overview see discussions in Rainey 2014; Cantarelli, Belardinelli and Belle 2016 or An et al. 2020), as well as provide empirical evidence for the link between job satisfaction and important individual and organizational outcomes such as performance, absenteeism and turnover (Andersen and Kjeldsen 2013; Rainey 2014, 323; Fernandez and Moldogaziev 2014).

Drawing on self-determination theory, I argue that EPOR can increase employees' job satisfaction through the internalization process that takes place when employees mirror themselves in the positive beliefs external audiences have of the organization as described above. Within SDT, satisfaction of the basic psychological needs is argued to promote full internalization of extrinsic motivation and yield important work outcomes such as job satisfaction (Gagné and Deci 2005, 337). I expect that if employees perceive that their external audiences

have positive beliefs about the organization, the former may internalize these beliefs into their own identities, which will contribute to the fulfillment of their needs for competence, relatedness and autonomy and increase their job satisfaction.

Employees' perceptions of external audiences' beliefs about the organization can be viewed as feedback on organizational performance which makes the work feel more meaningful and thus more likely to be integrated and internalized (Gagne and Deci 2005). Positive performance feedback is generally viewed as competence-promoting information (Deci and Ryan 1985, Fernandez and Moldogaziev 2014). When employees perceive that their organization has a positive reputation, they may feel a unique source of job satisfaction linked to a sense of competence because they make a difference (succeeding in challenging tasks and achieving desired outcomes). Within the field of public administration, Chen and Bozeman (2014) found that public managers were inclined to internalize public beliefs about the superiority of the private sector relative to the public sector, resulting in lower levels of job satisfaction.

Hence, I expect that when employees perceive that their external audiences have positive beliefs about their organization, it can positively influence the fulfilling of their basic psychological needs and contribute to their general job satisfaction.

Drawing on theoretical insights from SDT, I hypothesize the following:

H1: There is a positive relationship between employee perceived reputation (EPOR) and job satisfaction.

The relation between employee perceived organizational reputation and public service motivation

Public service motivation (PSM) is a specific prosocial type of motivation defined by Perry and Hondeghem (2008, 7) as “an individual’s orientation toward delivering services to people with a purpose to do good for others and society”. Motivation to contribute to the good of society through public service delivery can have three motivational reasons: normative, affective and instrumental (Perry and Wise 1990). Normative motives are orientations to serve the public interest due to loyalty, duty and concerns for social equity. Affective motives originate from emotions and commitment to public service due to its social importance, and finally instrumental motives to contribute to public service are typically linked to participation in the process of policy formulation and commitment to public programs because of personal identification and advocacy for certain interests (Perry and Wise 1990; Krogsgaard, Thomsen and Andersen 2014; Andersen, Jensen and Kjeldsen 2021, 244). Drawing on this framework, Perry (1996) developed a four-dimensional conceptualization of PSM consisting of commitment to the public interest, compassion, attraction to public policy making and self-sacrifice. The first three dimensions capture the normative, affective and instrumental motivational reasons,

respectively, while self-sacrifice represents the basic prosocial origins of PSM and relies on a both normative, affective and altruistic foundation implying a willingness to deliver services without or even at the expense of tangible personal rewards (Kim and Vandenabeele 2010; Andersen, Jensen and Kjeldsen 2021).

Public management research suggests that PSM is especially relevant for employees working in the public sector because PSM affects behavior and performance in the provision of public services. Existing research has consistently shown that PSM can influence employee and organizational performance (Vandenabeele 2009; Pandey and Stazyk 2009; Ritz, Brewer and Neumann 2016; Andersen, Jensen and Kjeldsen 2021).

PSM is a “specific kind of extrinsic motivation that has been internalized since the objective of the motivation is a result outside the individual: the benefit of others and society, but the motivation to act pro-socially is not a result of external influences such as force or incentivized regulation; it originates from within the individual as a personal desire” (Kjeldsen 2012, 26). When employees are public-service-motivated they invest great effort in activities that they think are important for others – even if these activities are not interesting or enjoyable. This type of motivation is extrinsic in character, but because the potential outcome is not directed at the person performing the activity, the motivation also has autonomous characteristics (Jensen and Bro 2018). An employee at the Danish Veterinary and Food Administration could, for example, value public health to the extent that she does not only understand why she should take part in unpleasant tasks in this regard (e.g. performing controls or taking part in emergency measures to fight outbreaks of infectious livestock diseases such as the culling of Covid-19 infected minks) but also appreciate the importance of doing so.

Drawing on SDT’s notion of internalization of external influences, I expect that EPOR can increase employees’ PSM because employees with this motivation will experience that their orientation for helping others and contributing to society on normative, affective and/or instrumental grounds is nurtured and cultivated if they perceive that external audiences have positive beliefs about their organization’s reputation. For example, it is conceivable that EPOR, which can be interpreted as support, legitimacy and recognition from external audiences may increase employees’ attraction to participate in policy processes (the attraction to public policy-making dimension). This could e.g. be in the form of participating in policy formulation and commitment to certain public programs for the advocacy for certain interests (Perry and Wise 1990).

In sum, the article argues that EPOR is positively related to PSM through an internalization process prompted by a higher sense of fulfillment of the basic psychological needs for autonomy, competence and relatedness among employees:

H2: There is a positive relationship between employee perceived reputation (EPOR) and public service motivation (PSM)

The relation between employee perceived organizational reputation and organizational identification

Organizational identification regards an individual's categorization of herself as a member of an organization, and of the organization as central to her self-concept (Ashforth and Mael 1989) and can be defined as "the degree to which a member defines him- or herself by the same attributes that he or she believes define the organization" (Dutton, Dukerich and Harquail 1994, 239). As such, organizational identification involves members' psychological attachment to their organization (Fuller et al. 2006).

Organizational identification has been relatively overlooked within public management research (but see Rho, Yun and Lee 2015 and Gilad, Ben-Nun Bloom and Assouline 2018) relative to organizational studies, where it has been linked to employees' outcomes such as job involvement and organizational citizenship behavior (Riketta 2005) as well as organizational effectiveness (Ashfort and Mael 1989).

But what makes employees identify with their organization?

Theorization of organizational identification is rooted in social identity theory (SIT), according to which individuals define themselves based on their group membership and identification, with some identities being more prevalent than others due to a specific context or situation (Ashforth and Mael 1989). March and Simon (1958) originally formulated the idea that people are more likely to identify with a social group when they feel that the group is held in high esteem by people outside the group. By applying SIT to membership in organizations, Ashforth and Mael (1989) proposed that the extent to which individuals define themselves in terms of the organization is reflected in the concept of organizational identification; the perceived oneness or belongingness to an organization (Ashforth and Mael 1989).

According to Dutton, Dukerich and Harquail (1994), identification depends on how employees perceive that external audiences see them. When employees perceive that these external beliefs about the organization match the qualities of the organization, it fulfills the individual employee's need for self-continuity (sense of self), self-esteem (positive self-evaluation) and self-distinctiveness (sense of uniqueness). Additionally, when employees perceive that their organization has a positive reputation, it indicates the possibility that the organization is believed to be distinctive or unique, which helps employees categorize their organization (and themselves) relative to other organizations (Ashfort and Mael 1989, 24). Finally, a perceived positive reputation helps an individual to maintain a positive view of himself or herself (Fuller et al. 2006). As such, organizational successes and failures merge with those of the self

(Ashforth and Mael 1989), and positive perceptions of external audiences' beliefs help employees to preserve their positive social identities and group prestige (Dutton, Dukerich and Harquail 1994).

Drawing on SIT, I argue that employees who perceive that their external audiences have positive beliefs about their organization will feel attached to or have a sense of belongingness to their organization. Identification is thus linked to EPOR through the cultivation of employees' cognitive and/or affective attachment to their organization, which takes place when employees believe that their external audiences see the organization in a positive light. Or as noted by Cialdine et al. (1976), employees "bask in the reflected glory" of the organization.

In organizational research, cross-sectional studies have found a positive relation between organizational image and organizational identification (e.g., Dukerich, Golden and Shortell 2002; Fuller et al. 2006; Riketta 2005). In a study of physicians, Dukerich, Golden and Shortell (2002) found that the physicians' perceptions of how others assessed a specific health care system was strongly related to the strength of their own identification with the system. Fuller et al. (2006) found similar results for employees of different health care professions. Within public management research, Rho, Yun and Lee (2015) found that what employees in US public and non-profit organizations perceived their clients believed about their organization was associated with the extent to which the employees identified with their organization. Also, within a public sector context, Gilad, Bloom and Assouline (2018) found that the relationship between exogenous reputation signals (framed as either public trust or distrust in the organization) and organizational identification was contingent upon the individual employee's organization-based self-esteem.

Based on the above, I expect that EPOR is positively related to employees' identification with their organization. Hence, I propose the following hypothesis:

H3: There is a positive relationship between employee perceived organizational reputation (EPOR) and employee organizational identification.

Research design, data and methods

To examine the three hypotheses, the article draws on a panel research design using a respondent-level-fixed effects approach aimed at making comparisons within individuals over time. The temporal variation allows me to investigate how changes in EPOR relate to changes in the three dependent variables.

Assessing the relationship between change in EPOR and change in job satisfaction, PSM and organizational identification for the individual employees ensure a more rigorous control strategy compared to cross-sectional designs often used in BRT research (Gilad, Bloom and Assouline 2018). At least three advantages to panel research relative to cross-sectional designs

are worth highlighting. First, that panel designs are better aligned with the underlying theoretical arguments and mechanisms, perhaps especially within research focusing on attitudes and perceptions (Oberfield 2014; Stritch 2017) because repeated measures allow the investigation of changes over time in the focal constructs and their relations: whether EPOR can change perceptions of e.g., overall job satisfaction. Second, that repeated measures effectively control for the fact that individuals tend to answer surveys in a way that conforms to social norms thus reducing the potential common-source bias problem relating to the issue of using employee assessments of both EPOR and the dependent variables. Third, that panel designs are less vulnerable to endogeneity, resulting, for example, from non-observed variables affecting both EPOR and the dependent variables or situations where the theorized relationships are actually reversed (Nielsen et al. 2019, 419). Repeated measures allow the study of within-unit variations over time and control for all other factors (observed and unobserved) at both the individual and agency level that do not change between the two survey moments (Favero and Bullock 2014; Wooldridge 2020). However, while panel designs ensure a more rigorous control strategy, endogeneity between the focal constructs might still exist. There are reasonable arguments for expecting that EPOR can affect the three employee outcomes, but also for expecting reversed causality or reciprocal influence e.g. as an argument raised by Gilad, Bloom and Assouline (2018) that employees who perceive their organization as central to their self-concept (thus identifying with their organization) may to a higher degree perceive that external audiences value their organization because such a perception allows them to maintain positive self-esteem. The design does not allow it to be ruled out that the relationships non-recursive as will be addressed in the discussion.

The panel research design consists of a balanced panel of 193 employees from three Danish agencies. The agencies are the Danish Veterinary and Food Administration (DVFA), the Danish Health Authority (DHA) and finally an anonymous agency; “Agency X”. Data were collected as an online questionnaire survey distributed to all employees at the two latter agencies and a sample of DVFA employees: employees working with administration, development, coordination and the formation of rules and regulations in the agency’s head office. The employees in that sample perform tasks that are similar to those performed by the employees in the DHA and Agency X. The surveys were collected twice with one and a half years between the data collection (spring 2019 and fall 2020). In the first survey moment, the questionnaire was sent to 181 DHA employees, 314 Agency X employees and 377 employees at the DVFA, giving a total of 872 employees with a 42.77% response rate (whole survey) ($n = 373$ respondents). The second survey round was planned for exactly one year after the first survey, however, due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the survey was postponed and instead distributed in September and October 2020. In the second survey moment, the questionnaire was also sent to new employees within the agencies, which meant that the survey was sent to 919 employees with a

response rate of 44.95% (n = 413 respondents). As I am interested in the temporal variation within the individual employees, the data used in the fixed effects analysis stem from respondents who completed the survey in both rounds. The 193 employees who completed both surveys give a response rate of 22.2%, which is an acceptable response rate for panel data, but with the drawback of the approach that the statistical power is reduced due to attrition. Descriptive tables can be found in appendices A1-A2.

The three agencies were chosen based on their common features aiming at creating as much comparability as possible. The agencies all have a primarily regulatory function, which leads me to expect that employees in these agencies have relatively high reputational awareness given that reputation is argued to be especially important for regulatory agencies (Carpenter 2010, 727; Overman et al. 2020, 416). Further, the three agencies are among the most media-salient within a Danish context and have all experienced periods with intense negative media coverage (Boon et al. 2019).

Measures

I measure EPOR on a five-item scale by Lee and van Ryzin (2019) designed to measure organizational reputation as perceived by external audiences. Their five-item scale combines questions on the reputational dimensions of bureaucratic reputation as well as a general reputation question. The items are: general dimension '[This agency] has a good reputation', performative dimension '[This agency] is a well-run organization', moral dimension '[This agency] maintains high ethical standards', procedural dimension '[This agency] treats people fairly' and technical dimension '[This agency] bases its decisions on evidence'. In the questionnaire, I asked employees about their perceptions of external audiences' beliefs about the agency's reputation in relation to each of the five items, e.g. 'Our stakeholders have the perception that [the agency] is a well-run organization'. Items were measured on a 1-7 Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (7). I acknowledge that Lee and van Ryzin (2019) define their scale as a latent measure, however, I define EPOR as a formative measure meaning that items or dimensions together shape the employee perceived organizational reputation and are thus not a reflection of the perceived reputation. I base this argument on the central notion by Carpenter and Krause within BRT that "a critical feature of these dimensions of any single organization's reputation is that they neither stay nor move in harmony. The effect of preserving, enhancing, or even "maximizing" one dimension implies that another dimension likely will suffer, rendering a full "optimization" among the various dimensions infeasible in practical terms. Therefore, agencies must choose which reputational dimensions will receive priority and which will not" (2012, 27). I generated a summative index for each respondent based on the five items.

Job satisfaction is measured using a single question asking respondents to indicate their general satisfaction with their current jobs on a scale from 0–10 ranging from very dissatisfied to very satisfied. This single-item measure of job satisfaction has often been used in existing research (e.g., Vandenabeele 2009; Caillier 2012; Andersen and Kjeldsen 2013) and is considered to be one of the few psychological constructs sufficiently narrow and unambiguous to the individual to be measured as a single-item measure (Kalleberg 1977; Fernandez and Moldogaziev 2015). As argued by Kalleberg “a person may be satisfied with one dimension of the job and dissatisfied with another. The assumption underlying the present view is that it is possible for individuals to balance these specific satisfactions against the specific dissatisfactions and thus to arrive at a composite satisfaction with the job as a whole” (1977, 126). Additionally, as multiple-item constructs are typically preferred, previous studies have validated the use of a single survey item of job satisfaction relative to multiple item measures and found fairly high correlations between the two types of measures (An et al. 2020).

PSM is measured using a version of the original scale by Perry (1996), which has been adjusted and validated in a Danish context (e.g., Andersen et al. 2014). Following the classical conceptualization by Perry (1996), PSM can be seen as a second-order construct consisting of four first-order dimensions: “compassion,” “commitment to the public interest,” “self-sacrifice” and “attraction to policymaking” (Perry 1996, Kim and Vandenabeele 2010). Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) shows that the four-factor model has an acceptable fit to data in survey moment 1: $\chi^2(48) = 93.26$, $p < 0.001$, CFI = 0.956, RMSEA = 0.070, SRMR = 0.064. In moment 2, the model has a poor fit in relation to RMSEA (0.094) and SRMR (0.085), which are above the 0.08 recommended thresholds for a reasonably close fit (Acock 2013). CFI is 0.936, $\chi^2(48) = 129.97$, $p < 0.001$. All standardized factor loadings are significant and high: $\lambda_{\text{mean}} = 0.78$, $\lambda_{\text{low}} = 0.63$ in round 1 ($\lambda_{\text{mean}} = 0.80$, $\lambda_{\text{low}} = 0.63$ in round 2), and Cronbach’s alpha for the four dimensions between 0.7 and 0.9 (0.8 and 0.89 in round 2). I focus on PSM as a single-second order construct in the analysis because I do not have different hypotheses for the different PSM dimensions. Thus, I generated a summative PSM score from the scores on the four first-order factors. The CFAs as well as Cronbach’s alpha can be found in table A3 and A4 in the appendix.

Following Gilad, Bloom and Assouline (2018), I measure organizational identification using three items from an index developed by Mael and Ashforth (1992). The items are “When someone criticizes [the agency], it feels like a personal insult”, “When I talk about [the agency], I usually say ‘we’ and not ‘them’” and “When someone praises [the agency], it feels like a personal compliment”.

The Cronbach alpha score for internal consistency was 0.70 in survey moment 1 and 0.73 in survey moment 2 and thus around the conventional minimum value standard (Acock 2013).

Cronbach's alpha for each agency as well as CFAs can be found in table A5 and A6 in the appendix.

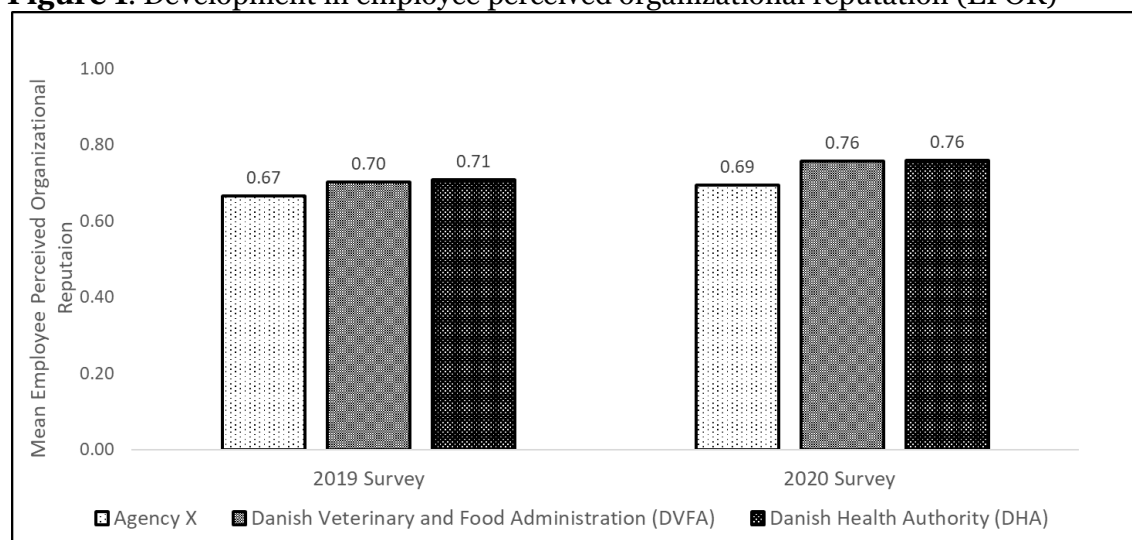
To ease interpretation of the relative effect of the variables, I rescaled all measurements to range from zero to one with one representing the maximum value. The appendix (table A2) presents descriptive statistics for the panel.

Findings

This section is structured in two parts. I begin by presenting descriptive figures of EPOR and the three employee outcomes in order to give an overview of the tendencies for each agency and construct, after which I turn to the hypotheses regarding the relationships between EPOR and, respectively, job satisfaction, PSM and organizational identification.

Figure 1 shows the mean level of EPOR for the three agencies at the two survey moments. Generally, the mean level of EPOR is fairly high and similar across agencies (scale 0–1). For all three agencies, EPOR increases on average between the two survey moments, however least for Agency X, and only significantly so for DVFA and DHA (see accompanying note). At both survey moments, DVFA and DHA levels of EPOR are similar, while Agency X employees on average perceive their organization's reputation relatively lower at both moments.

Figure 1. Development in employee perceived organizational reputation (EPOR)

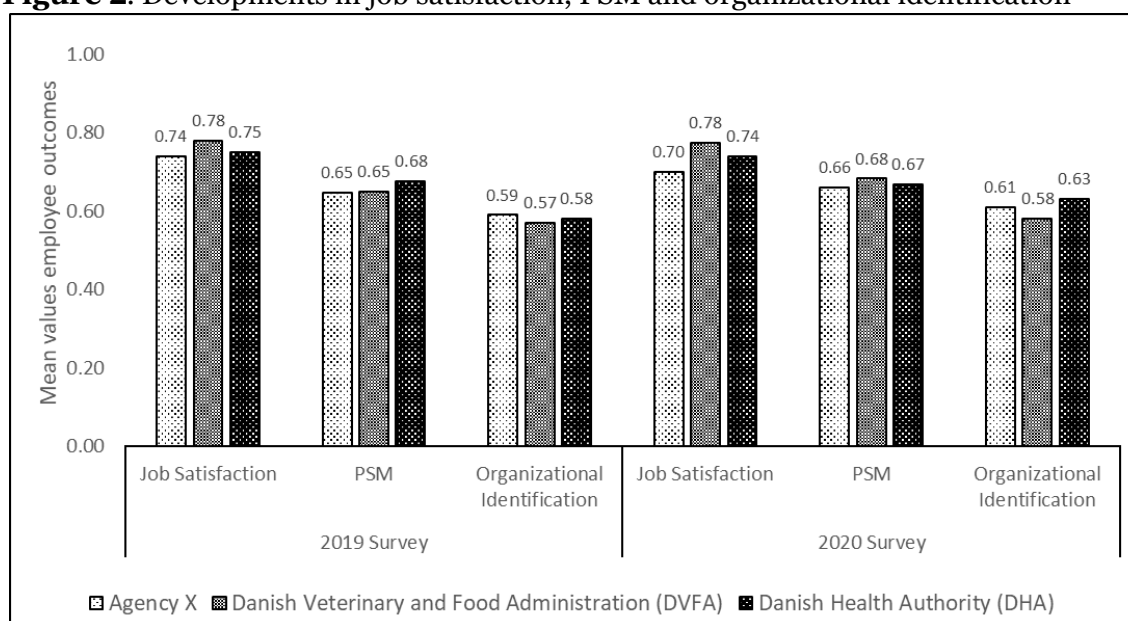


Note. T-test results for the mean difference in EPOR between the two survey moments is $p=.269$ for Agency X, $p=.0047$ for DVFA leaders and $p=.0399$ for DHA ($N=193$).

Figure 2 illustrates the mean levels of job satisfaction, PSM and organizational identification for the three agencies at the two survey moments. Starting with job satisfaction, the average level of job satisfaction appears to differ only slightly between the two survey moments; for Agency X there is a somewhat clear average decline (however, not enough to be statistically

significant), while the average level of job satisfaction does not differ between the survey moments for the DVFA and DHA. Next, in relation to PSM, figure 2 shows that the average levels of PSM are somewhat similar in the two moments and only increase (slightly) for DVFA employees. This increase is borderline statistically significant ($p=.084$). Third, for organizational identification the average level increases between the two moments for all three agencies, however more so for DHA employees relative to the remaining two agencies, where the average level of organizational identification among employees only increases marginally.

Figure 2. Developments in job satisfaction, PSM and organizational identification



Note. T-test for the mean difference in **job satisfaction** between the two survey moments is $p=.287$ for Agency X, $p=.723$ for DVFA and $p=.790$ for DHA ($N=193$). T-test for the mean difference in **PSM** between the two survey moments is $p=.510$ for Agency X, $p=.084$ for DVFA and $p=.825$ for DHA. T-test results for the mean difference in **organizational identification** between the two survey moments is $p=.5833$ for Agency X, $p=.6207$ for DVFA and $p=.1563$ for DHA.

Summing up, while figure 1 shows some variation in the average levels of EPOR between the two survey moments, there are less variations in relation to the three outcome variables. Most noteworthy changes are that organizational identification is at a higher average level in survey moment two among DHA employees, while PSM increases on average for DVFA employees, and average level of job satisfaction decreases between the two moments for Agency X employees. The rest appears to be similar at the two surveys moments, at least on average, and the three agencies do not appear very different from each other in relation to both average levels and changes in average levels.

In the second part of the analysis, I use the panel design to examine how EPOR relates to employees' job satisfaction, PSM and organizational identification. Table 1 shows the models for EPOR's direct relation to the three employee outcomes. The analysis is carried out using a

respondent-level-fixed effects design to control for all time-invariant confounders (measured or unmeasured) that do not change between the two survey moments. As the design does not control for confounders that vary between the survey moments, I have added a few control dummies to the models in table 1. I have created dummy-variables to account for the fact that the temporal development may be different for the three agencies, as illustrated in figure 1 and 2 above. I also added a dummy to control for employees changing employment type, e.g., from student assistant to full-time employee or from full-time employee to a senior scheme, and finally a section-fixed effect to control for employees changing section within their agency.

Now turning to the hypotheses and table 1, hypothesis 1 predicted a positive relation between EPOR and employees' general job satisfaction, and there is support in model 1.1 for this hypothesis. The model estimate shows a relatively strong and highly statistically significant relation ($\beta = 0.441$, $p < .001$). The estimate indicates that a change in EPOR from the scale minimum to the scale maximum value increases job satisfaction by 0.441 scale points (0-1 scale), corresponding to a 0.1 change in EPOR will increase job satisfaction by 0.044 on a 0-1 scale. Recalling hypothesis 2, I expected a positive relation between employee perceived organizational reputation and PSM. The estimate in model 1.2 shows a positive, but weak and not statistically significant relation between the two concepts. Finally, hypothesis 3 predicted that employees' perception of their organization's reputation would be positively related to their identification with their organization. The first thing to note is that model 1.3 shows a positive, and borderline statistically significant estimate for organizational identification, as the estimate is significant at the 0.1 level ($p = .075$). The regression coefficient indicates that a 0.1 increase in EPOR will increase organizational identification by 0.019 scale point on a 0-1 scale. The estimate indicates a positive relation because the somewhat weak statistical significance might well be attributable to the relatively small sample size, which reduces the statistical power of the analysis.

Table 1. Fixed effects panel regression of organizational identification, PSM and job satisfaction on employee perceived organizational reputation (EPOR). Unstandardized regression coefficients.

	1.1 Job satisfaction	1.2 PSM	1.3 Organizational identification
EPOR	0.441*** (3.75)	0.047 (0.70)	0.189† (1.79)
Section-fixed effects	x	x	x
Survey moment (dummy, second moment=1)	-0.060* (-2.48)	0.011 (0.73)	0.007 (0.32)
Second moment DVFA (reference: Agency X)	0.018 (0.65)	0.024 (1.27)	0.012 (0.41)
Second moment DHA (reference: Agency X)	0.019 (0.52)	-0.027 (-0.85)	0.009 (0.25)
Employment type (dummy, fulltime=1)	-0.087 (-0.61)	-0.050 (-1.15)	-0.070 (-0.89)
Constant	0.554** (3.12)	0.657*** (11.41)	0.480*** (4.96)
<i>N</i>	386	386	386
<i>R</i> ²	0.260	0.164	0.195

Notes: Fixed effects regression, t statistics in parentheses. Cluster robust standard errors at the individual level. †p < .1, *p < 0.05, **p < 0.01, ***p < 0.001. Two-wave panel with observations in spring 2019 and autumn 2020.

Hence, I find support in the analysis for hypothesis 1 regarding job satisfaction, partial support for hypothesis 3 concerning organizational identification, but not support for hypothesis 2 about PSM. In the following, I will discuss these findings, possible explanations and implications as well as limitations of the study.

Discussion

This article set out to examine whether employees' perception of their organization's reputation relates to their identification with their organization, their public service motivation and their general job satisfaction thereby aiming to contribute to the public administration and public management literatures concerned with organizational reputation (especially employee perceptions hereof) and employee outcomes. In relation to how organizational reputation can affect public organizations; the empirical analysis suggests the relevance of moving beyond

the emphasis on external audiences in public administration research (and especially within research drawing on the theoretical framework of bureaucratic reputation) in terms of also directing attention to how internal perceptions of organizational reputation can affect public organizations. By identifying how EPOR relates to job satisfaction and also appears related to organizational identification, the analysis points to the dual nature of organizational reputation as also residing in internal audiences, although existing research has had a tendency to overlook internal audiences relative to external audiences.

The main contribution of this article is therefore the demonstration of how employees' perceptions of their organization's reputation is related to job satisfaction and that EPOR also relates to employees' organizational identification. I argue that social identity and basic needs satisfaction are the mechanisms through which EPOR relates to, respectively, organizational identification and job satisfaction. Existing research has begun to shed light on how perceived forces in the external environment, primarily *organizational image*, relate to employee outcomes such as employee engagement, organizational identification and commitment (Rho, Yun and Lee 2015; Gilad, Bloom and Assouline 2018; Dhir and Shukla 2018; Hameduddin and Lee 2021; Hamaduddin 2021). While some of these studies link their understanding of organizational image to organizational reputation, this article is (among) the first to conceptualize employee perceived organizational reputation as concerning employee perceptions of external audiences' beliefs about the organization's performative, technical, procedural and moral reputation as well as the organization's general favorability. The operationalization of EPOR used in the empirical investigation also draws on an understanding of organizational reputation developed within the bureaucratic reputation theory, and this study can thus be viewed as a contribution to the advancement of the framework of bureaucratic reputation theory.

The empirical investigation does not lend support for the hypothesis regarding the relationship between EPOR and PSM. A possible explanation, besides the lack of statistical power of the analysis, is that as public organizations and their employees continuously consider which characteristics or beliefs their audiences ascribe to the organization, their perceptions of the organization's reputation may (whether positive or negative) be fragile and vulnerable to change (Abolafia and Hatmaker 2013; Carpenter 2001, 18), whereas PSM is usually described as relatively stable phenomena. In a panel research design with a respondent-level fixed effects approach aimed at making comparisons within individuals over time, some temporal variation is required at the individual level in order to establish a statistically significant relationship. Research on PSM has not fully established the stability or changeability of the concept (Jensen 2016, 17). Some longitudinal studies have found evidence of large fluctuations in PSM e.g., of graduating physiotherapists entering the job market (Kjeldsen and Jacobsen 2013), soldiers being deployed in Afghanistan (Brænder and Andersen 2013) or participation in public-service-focused training programs (Ward 2014). Jensen (2016, 17) proposes that PSM can

systematically change for two reasons, a) from systematic time-trends occurring when employees are employed in an organization and b) from significant events in the organizational context such as changes in administrative policies or from leadership behaviors targeting employee's PSM. Employees' perception of their organization's reputation might not be significant enough to affect individuals' orientation toward delivering services to people with a purpose to do good for others and society. This could also indicate that EPOR has greater potential to influence employee outcomes closer to the individual (as job satisfaction concerns the relation between the individual and his/her job at the micro-level, and organizational identification regards the relation between the individual and the organization at the meso-level) relative to employee outcomes reflecting the relation between the individual and the macro-level.

Moving back to the contributions of this article, the interesting question, also from a practitioner perspective, is then *what affects employee perceptions of their organization's reputation? - How do employees form perceptions of external audiences' beliefs?* In the article, I argue that employees form perceptions of their organization based on their personal experiences and from observing how others assess the organization, and that an organization's reputation (the external audiences' beliefs) reflects (more or less accurately) back on employee perceptions hereof; the "mirror effect" formulated by Dutton and Duckerich (1991).

The study points to the relevance for public management scholars to give attention to reputational aspects of public organizations and to continue bridging insights between scholars of BRT public management in explaining employee outcomes.

Limitations and future research

Although this study contributes to the empirical research on the relation between employee perceived organizational reputation and employee outcomes, there are several limitations that require attention.

First, although the panel design and fixed effects approach is preferable to cross-sectional designs, there is still risk of endogeneity, which may reduce the validity of the findings. This also means that caution is necessary before drawing causal interpretations of the findings because the nature of the research design does not allow the conclusion that EPOR *causes* job satisfaction or organizational identification. Confounders that vary between the survey moments and for which I have not been able to control, might potentially influence both EPOR and the three employee outcomes. Additionally, in principle and also theoretically, the causality could be reversed, making employees perceive their organization to have a (more) positive reputation when they are (more) satisfied with their jobs or identify (more) with their organization as a form of self-justification because it allows them to maintain positive self-esteem as argued Gilad, Bloom and Assouline (2018). The causality could also be two-way. Drawing on theories on e.g., wishful thinking, cognitive dissonance and self-affirmation/motivated

reasoning Stritch and Christensen (2013) argue that motivation and perception may reciprocally influence each other. In a study of employees from a US city, they investigate the relationship between PSM and perceived social impact and argue that PSM can influence perceived social impact although existing research has mainly theorized and investigated the opposite causal direction. Theoretical mechanisms they present may also apply to the relationships investigated in this article. It could thus be that employees who identify more with their organization engage in subconscious processes that drive their perceptions of their organization's reputation to defend their self-image. Similarly, that because individuals' need for self-affirmation affects how they perceive others and evaluate themselves (Balcetis and Dunning 2006, 612–13; Stritch and Christensen 2013; 831), employees job satisfaction and organizational identification might shape how they process information about their organization and assign a more favourable reputation to their organization to reaffirm their sense of competence and self-esteem.

Second, the empirical investigation is carried out in agencies that perform (primarily) regulatory tasks at the government level in a Danish context, and it is not given that the results can be extended to agencies with other types of tasks (e.g., service delivery) or other types of public organizations, let alone to public organizations in other national contexts. Additionally, the panel research design reduces the sample size due to attrition, which has implications for both the statistical power of the analysis and for the representativity of the panel relative to the whole sample.

Third, I have tried to ensure that the chosen agencies are as comparable as possible, however, I acknowledge their differences and that I must be cautious about comparing them using an apples-to-apples logic, as well as cautious about including different agencies in the same sample as interchangeable units of analysis, as argued by Wilson (1989) and Carpenter (2020). However, as the descriptive analysis showed, the agencies appear to have quite similar levels of average EPOR, organizational identification, PSM and job satisfaction, and the developments between the two survey moments also appear similar for the three agencies, at least on average and with the proviso that the averages might hide large changes at the individual level.

Fourth, the second survey moment was carried out in a context heavily influenced by the Covid-19 pandemic, especially for employees at the DHA and DVFA. This may have influenced their survey responses in the second survey moment and acted as a time-variant confounder in the study. I would therefore encourage scholars to replicate the study in order to improve our understanding of the potential of EPOR in fostering positive employee outcomes. This could include studies carried out in different types of organizations; across country and cultural contexts; and by applying measures of the e.g., three basic needs in the self-determination theory in order to empirically validate the theoretical mechanisms suggested in the article.

Investigations of the antecedents of EPOR, would also be highly relevant given that the concept appears to be related to (at least some) important employee outcomes.

As a very last point, the study raises questions worth pursuing by scholars of bureaucratic reputation theory in relation to the measure of EPOR. The scale used to measure EPOR has been recently developed by Lee and van Ryzin (2019) as an attempt to create a multidimensional scale of organizational reputation within a BRT and thus needs further testing and validation in different contexts. What we do not know yet, for example, is whether some dimensions are more important in relation to employee outcomes than others, and maybe even for employees working in specific organizations? Are employees' perceptions of their organization's technical or procedural reputation more important in e.g., regulatory agencies relative to employees working in other types of organizations? Are employees able to distinguish one dimension from another in their perception of the organizational reputation? Is their evaluation of their organization's overall reputation more important relative to the reputational dimensions? And relatedly, does the type of external audience matter? In the questionnaire, employees were asked how their "stakeholders/audiences" perceive the organization without specifying which audiences or stakeholders. Do employees form a perception of the general favourability of their organization, or does it matter which type of audiences' employees perceive to have certain beliefs about the organization's reputation? Disentangling some of these aspects would be an interesting next step in BRT studies of organizational reputation and employee perceptions hereof.

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Appendices

Table A1 Employee response rates

	2019: completed questionnaire	2020: completed questionnaire	Included in the panel (effective response rate)
Agency X	127 (40.5%)	163 (50.2%)	69 (21.9%)
Danish Health Authority	110 (61.1%)	94 (50.8%)	48 (26.67%)
Danish Veterinary and Food Administration	136 (36.5%)	156 (38.9%)	76 (20.3%)
Total	373 (43%)	413 (45.33%)	193 (22.2%)

Table A2 Descriptive statistics for cross-sectional variables (panel)

Variable	Description	Rn d	N	Mean	SD	Min.	Max.
Employee Per- ceived Organiza- tional Reputation (EPOR)	5 items, 7-point Likert scale	1	193	.691	.134	.367	1
		2	193	.735	.129	.4	1
Job Satisfaction	Single-item, 0-10 scale	1	193	.761	.171	.2	1
		2	193	.742	.186	.1	1
Organizational Identification	3 items, 7-point Likert scale	1	193	.577	.183	.111	1
		2	193	.602	.188	.111	1
Public Service Moti- vation (PSM)	12-item additive scale, 7- point Likert scale	1	193	.656	.107	.278	.90
		2	193	.671	.125	0	.917
Education - School - Vocational education - High school - Short higher education - Medium-term higher education Long higher education							
		1/2	-	.	.	.	.
		1/2	9	.	.	.	.
		1/2	2	.	.	.	.
		1/2	11	.	.	.	.
		1/2	19	.	.	.	.
		1/2	154	.	.	.	.
Round 2	1 = second round of survey	1/2	396				
DVFA Round 2	1 = second round of survey DVFA employees	1/2	396			0	1
DHA Round 2	1 = second round of survey DHA employees	1/2	396			0	1
Gender	1 = female	1	193	.674	.470	0	1
		2	193	.678	.468	0	1
Age	Employee age	1	193	43.8	11.25	23	71
		2	193	44.9	11.23	24	72

Table A3 Measurement model of employee ratings of public service motivation (panel)

Questionnaire Item	2019 Standardized factor load- ings	2020 Standardized factor loadings
Compassion		
“It is difficult for me to contain my feelings when I see people in distress”	0.730	0.784
“For me, considering the welfare of others is very important”	0.839	0.869
“I am often reminded by daily events about how dependent we are on one another”	0.626	0.800
Commitment to the public interest		
“Meaningful public service is very important to me”	0.642	0.769
“It is important for me to contribute to the common good”	0.973	0.817
“I consider public service my civic duty”	0.674	0.730
Self-sacrifice		
“I am prepared to make sacrifices for the good of society”	0.89	0.932
“I believe in putting duty before self”	0.949	0.937
“I am willing to risk personal loss to help society”	0.761	0.720
Attraction to policy making		
“I generally associate politics with something positive”	0.668	0.628
“The give-and-take of public policy making doesn’t appeal to me (reversed)” ^a	0.674	0.767
“I do not care much for politicians” ^a	0.876	0.895
N (employees)	193	193
n (organizations)	3	3
chi2	93.26	129.97
Df	48	48

RMSEA	.070	.094
CFI	.956	.936
SRMR	.064	.085

Note: Confirmatory factor analysis based on asymptotic distribution-free estimator. Balanced panel of 193 employees. All standardized factor loadings are statistically significant at the .001-level. ^aItem reverse coded.

Table A4 PSM: Cronbach's alpha (panel)

	Agency X		Danish Veterinary and Food Administration		Danish Health Authority		Total	
	2019	2020	2019	2020	2019	2020	2019	2020
Compassion	.714	.815	.810	.808	.765	.915	.769	.848
Commitment to the public interest	.713	.62	.859	.874	.771	.882	.778	.806
Self-sacrifice	.885	.873	.916	.912	.879	.9	.895	.892
Attraction to policy making	.795	.779	.694	.776	.837	.876	.779	.803
Whole measure	.769	.785	.738	.842	.834	.867	.701	.830

Table A5 Measurement model of employee ratings of organizational identification (panel)

Questionnaire Item	2019 Standardized factor loadings	2020 Standardized factor loadings
"When someone criticizes [the Agency], it feels like a personal insult"	.784	.803
"When I talk about [the agency], I usually say 'we' and not 'them'"	.366	.466
"When someone praises [the Agency], it feels like a personal compliment"	.88	.815
N (employees)	193	193
n (organizations)	3	3

Table A6 Organizational identification: Cronbach's alpha (panel)

	Agency X		Danish Veterinary and Food Administration		Danish Health Authority		Combined	
	2019	2020	2019	2020	2019	2020	2019	2020
Organizational identification	.693	.784	.724	.686	.716	.685	.703	.729

CHAPTER 8. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

“

For the Administration, the politics of reputation management with these audiences is difficult, complicated, and absolutely necessary.“

(Carpenter 2010, 396)

This dissertation set out to answer the following research questions: 1) How can we conceptualize and measure (public) reputation management? 2) How can reputation management affect external audiences and employee outcomes? In this final chapter, I summarize and discuss the dissertation's answers to these related questions. First, I present the conceptual and empirical findings based on the four articles presented in chapters 4-7 and discuss the dissertation's contribution first and foremost to the advancement of bureaucratic reputation theory, and secondly to the literatures on public administration and management. Next, I evaluate the methodological strengths and limitations of the dissertation and reflect upon potentially critical aspects of reputation management. Finally, I outline suggestions for future research as well as the practical implications of the dissertation.

8.1. Key Conclusions

Based on this dissertation, I suggest that we conceptualize reputation management a type of management that is characterized by the intent to affect the beliefs of external audiences of an organization and create a favourable reputation for the organization. This management type consists of three core behaviours; namely to *identify* perceptions and expectations held by external audiences, to *prioritize* between different audiences (and expectations), and to *communicate* the vision of the organization to these (specific) audiences (Paper I).

The dissertation argues that the three behaviours are closely related and each behaviour more effectful when used in combination with the other two. The statistical analysis of the correlations between the behavioural dimensions reflects that the behaviours are indeed closely related. Confirmatory factor analyses show how the three behavioural dimensions reflect the same latent construct in the developed second-order reflective scale measuring reputation management. The dissertation finds that reputation management correlates with, but also discriminates from transformational leadership which suggests that the measurement scale succeeds in capturing unique variation in reputation management behaviour, which differs from transformational leadership.

In terms of external audiences, the dissertation investigates how reputation management relates to external audiences' beliefs about the organization's reputation. The dissertation is not able to provide a clear answer to this question as the findings revealed mixed results.

Reputation management efforts to affect the organization's reputation are generally considered challenging, as many other factors may affect external audiences' beliefs, including reputational intermediaries (Rindova and Martins 2012). Additionally, reputation management has been recognized to be a type of behaviour where the effect in terms of reputational judgments may have a long-term perspective.

Regarding employee outcomes, the dissertation discloses how employees' attraction to the organizational vision (mission valence) on average increases with reputation management. Further, the empirical analysis indicates that the alignment of organizational and employee values (value congruence) on average increases with both reputation management and attraction to the organizational vision (Paper II).

Additionally, the dissertation reveals how employees' perceptions of the organization's reputation are increasingly favourable when their managers engage in more reputation management behaviour. Moreover, that employees' tendency to engage more in advocacy behaviour increases when their managers exert more reputation management, and that when employees take part in more advocacy, they also tend to perceive that their organization's reputation increases (Paper III).

Finally, the dissertation sheds light upon how employees' perception of their organization's reputation can be of relevance for employee outcomes. I do not investigate what employees themselves think of their organization, but how they perceive that other (i.e., their audiences) think about the organization. Specifically, the repeated measures reveal how employees' job satisfaction tends to increase, when they perceive that the favourability of their organization increases. I find indications of a similar tendency (although less pronounced) in relation to employee organizational identification, i.e., employees who perceive an increasingly favourable reputation also tend to identify more with their organization.

The theoretical expectations and explanations of how reputation management can relate to external audiences and employee outcomes are discussed in detail in the different papers in Chapters 4-7 and outlined in Chapter 2.

8.2. Theoretical Contributions

The theoretical contribution of the dissertation is first and foremost that it provides a conceptual framework for understanding and studying how public managers engage in processes to affect the reputation of their organization. The dissertation does so by developing a conceptualization of reputation management that bridges bureaucratic reputation theory with public leadership theory (Yukl, 2006; van Wart 2013; Jensen et al., 2019) while also drawing on Frombrun and Rindova's (1998) conceptualization of corporate reputation management. The refined conceptualization developed in the dissertation is adjusted to the characteristics and context of public organizations and some of the key notions of the bureaucratic reputation

framework. The dissertation contributes with a conceptualization of reputation management that captures the centrality of the communication of the organizational vision and its positive impact on society more broadly, while also including the identification of the perceptions and expectations held by external audiences and prioritization between audiences and expectations, which are two key aspects of bureaucratic reputation theory. Thus, the dissertation is first and foremost a contribution to the advancement of bureaucratic reputation theory. By conceptualizing reputation management as a managerial behaviour, the dissertation opens the black box of intra-organizational behaviour and illustrates the empirical relevance of reputation management as a distinct type of management behaviour that public managers perform when they attempt to cultivate a favourable reputation for their organization. The conceptualization enables identification of reputation management as it materializes in both reactive responses to criticism and more proactive reputation-building behaviours.

The dissertation outlines three core behaviours of reputation management that are focused and limited in scope in order to clarify what we mean when we talk about reputation management as a leadership approach. The behavioural aspects of reputation management are captured by three behaviours that are logical parts of a managerial ambition to create a favourable reputation: attempts to identify the perceptions and expectations held by external audiences, prioritize between different audiences, expectations and reputational aspects, and to communicate the vision of the organization to these (specific) audiences.

The dissertation contributes to public management literature by directing attention towards externally oriented aspects of the behaviour of public managers, i.e., when they lead outwards. Existing public management research primarily direct attention towards internal aspects of public management, i.e., leadership directed at the followers (O'Toole & Meier 2011; Orazi et al. 2013; Van Wart 2013; 't Hart 2014; Tummers & Knies 2016). This is of course highly relevant given the well-established importance of these kinds of leadership for individual and organizational level outcomes. The contribution of the dissertation for public management literature is thus pointing to the fact that externally oriented management (and leadership) approaches should not be investigated in isolation in relation to their intended external effects, because these externally oriented approaches may also be of relevance for employee and organizational outcomes. Additionally, Vogel and Masal (2015) argue that public management research must focus more on the *publicness* of management. The dissertation contributes to this by developing a measure of reputation management especially relevant in the public sector context.

8.3. Empirical Contributions

The empirical studies investigating the research question of how reputation management can affect external audiences and employee outcomes also hold a potential as empirical

contributions for the understanding of reputation management and its role within public administration and management literatures. The mixed findings in relation to organizational reputation point to the complexity of cultivating and maintaining a favourable reputation. In line with this finding, Carpenter and Krause (2012, 26) note that “the management of organizational reputation among multiple constituencies is necessary work in which full success is an impossibility.” Carpenter (2010, 66) makes a similar argument stating that “organizational reputation inevitably concerns forces that lie beyond the power of an individual to control. While managerial influence is possible, such influence is necessarily limited”.

The findings regarding employee outcomes point to the relevance of directing attention towards how leadership behaviours that are not directly targeted at employees may nevertheless hold a potential to influence employee outcomes. The empirical investigation also revealed that reputation management appears related to employee perceived organizational reputation. This is an important contribution, as existing research has found that how employees perceive their organization’s reputation relates to outcomes such as employee engagement, job satisfaction and individual-level performance (Dutton, Duckerich & Harquail 1994; Dühr & Shukla 2019; Hameduddin 2021; Hameduddin & Lee 2021). A relation between employee perceived organizational reputation and job satisfaction and organizational identification, respectively, is also found in the empirical analysis of the dissertation.

Additionally, the dissertation’s finding that reputation management significantly relates to employee advocacy behaviour is interesting because employee advocacy is associated with employee identification with the organizational vision, motivation, and engagement (Fombrun & van Riel 2004; Men 2014). Moreover, that employees appear to ‘mirror’ the organizational and managerial reputation management behaviour by advocating the organization externally suggests a cascading effect of reputation management inside the organization, and points to a potential effect of external communication on the intra-organizational dynamics. As such, reputation management might strengthen the engagement, identification, and motivation of employees (Boehm et al. 2015) (Paper III).

The importance of using missions and visions when leading public organizations is well-established in public management research (e.g., Selznick 1957; Boin 2001; Goodsell 2011) although predominately investigated in relation to transformational leadership (Vogel & Masal 2015, 1175; Tummers & Knies 2016, 438). However, as noted by Mayfield, Mayfield, and Sharbrough (2015), visions often target both internal and external actors. Adding to existing knowledge of how public managers can cultivate mission valence among their employees, the dissertation demonstrates how reputation management can also increase employees’ attraction to the organizational vision. This finding suggests the relevance of expanding our theoretical repertoire when studying how public managers can foster mission valence. Public managers can make their employees feel attracted to the organizational vision through other

means than (just) transformational leadership. While the relevance of reputational aspects vis-à-vis external audiences' mission valence has been demonstrated by Willems, Faulk and Boenigk (2021), the dissertation suggests also the relevance of reputation management for employees' mission valence (Paper II).

Finally, the findings also suggest that reputation management may increase value congruence between employees' own values and organizational values, which subsequently fosters mission valence. By theorizing and empirically demonstrating how reputation management provides for yet another opportunity for public managers to foster mission valence, and by identifying the partially mediating role of value congruence, the dissertation adds to research demonstrating the relevance of also investigating the 'softer' levers available to public managers when affecting employee outcomes more indirectly (Wright et al. 2012, p. 212) (Paper II).

It is an important contribution to public management research (and practitioners alike) that the dissertation finds that reputation management relates to employee outcomes. The effectiveness of some of the more established leadership approaches such as transformational leadership is influenced by factors such as span of control and face-to-face communication. For example, Jensen, Moynihan and Salomonsen (2018) found that the positive effects of transformational leadership on employee attraction to the organizational mission is stronger when managers rely extensively on a face-to-face dialogue approach to communication. A such approach is, however, time intensive and difficult in larger organizations, where leaders have less capacity to engage with all employees. Communicating the vision externally towards external audiences is less affected by span of control and potentially also less time intensive because managers (and organizations) are able to communicate to large audiences – including their employees - simultaneously.

8.4. Empirical Context

Before addressing methodological strengths and limitations of the dissertation, I will briefly discuss the empirical context because the context in which the research questions were investigated holds both advantages and disadvantages.

I chose to investigate regulatory agencies because reputation is argued to be of special importance for this particular type of public organizations (Carpenter 2010; Rimkutė 2018; 2020), and because existing research has mainly focused on regulation and national/federal agencies (for a systematic overview see Bustos 2021). The aim of this dissertation has been to contribute to the further development of this line of research by investigating reputation management as a managerial behaviour with potential effects on both organizational reputation and employee outcomes. Because a central ambition of the dissertation has been to develop a new concept of reputation management, I have chosen to investigate the theorized relationships within the empirical domain of regulatory agencies where reputation sensitive behaviour

has been identified by previous research instead of in a new empirical context such as agencies with e.g., a service delivery task or even other types of public organizations at other governance levels. In the context of regulatory agencies, citizens are often the rule beneficiaries of the regulatory actions performed by the agencies, whereas citizens are service recipients (of services with either positive or negative consequences for the individual citizens) for organizations with service delivery tasks. Organizations with service delivery tasks are also more likely to have direct contact with citizens and users relative to organizations with regulatory tasks (Van Thiel & Yesilkagit 2014). This also means that for regulatory agencies, audiences' often form perceptions and beliefs based on communication (Müller & Braun 2021, p. 672;); either mediated by news coverage, or by the direct and unmediated communication from the agencies themselves, whereas audiences of service delivery organizations to a higher extent base their beliefs on interactions with the organizations.

Additionally, a central claim within bureaucratic reputation theory is that public organizations will attempt to cultivate a reputation for a unique and distinctive contribution to the public good (e.g., Carpenter 2001; 2010; Maor 2010; Maor, Gilad & Bloom 2013) as a means to achieve autonomy relative to their political principals. With the words of Carpenter 'reputation uniqueness' refers to the demonstration by organizations that they can create solutions and provide services found nowhere else in the polity (2001, 5). Government agencies differ from other types of public organizations because they have jurisdiction and discretion to perform certain task within a certain geographic area such as within a country or state. In contrast, other types of public organizations such as e.g., schools are in competition with other, similar organizations and thus might also face challenges of demonstrating uniqueness and added value relative to other organizations, to secure audience support and public support more broadly (Carpenter 2001; Wæraas & Byrkjeflot 2012; Wilson 1989; Overman, Busuioc & Wood 2020). These aspects have implications for the generalizability of dissertation's findings as will be discussed in section 8.5.

The three agencies were chosen based on their similarities on parameters such as tasks (regulatory), media salience and reputational history (having experienced several periods with extensive, negative media coverage during the last approx. 15 years) in order to ensure that they were as comparable as possible at the starting point of the empirical investigation. I was hoping for a certain amount of variation to occur between the two survey moments, and this wish was more than fulfilled with the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic. In the dissertation, I use the panel design to make comparisons within respondents over time. This means that temporal variation is required at the respondent-level in order to establish statistically significant relationships when using a respondent-level fixed effects approach.

The outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic and the subsequent involvement of some regulatory agencies in the management of the crisis caused a lot of unique variation for the three

agencies. The pandemic thus served as an exogenous shock to the agencies that induced variation in the reputation management behaviours of the organizations and their managers. The first wave of the pandemic in Denmark meant that people had to work from home and that face-to-face contact was replaced with virtual meetings, emails and phone calls. This changed the context, and for both managers and employees it meant new ways to engage with each other, peers and external audiences. The agencies were affected differently in relation to their roles during the pandemic. As argued in Paper III, the pandemic served as a “crisis as an opportunity” for the Danish Health Authority who was extensively involved in managing the crisis. For this the agency and the Agency Head received primarily appraisals and positive attention in the media, social media, and among citizens (especially at the time of the second survey). For the Danish Veterinary and Food Administration, the pandemic resulted in an emerging crisis situation due to the agency’s involvement in the process of culling the entire Danish mink population and the controversy which it caused. Much of the criticism was directed towards how the government handled the situation but it had spill-over effects in terms of negative coverage of the agency itself (see Paper III for details). Agency X was not specifically involved in the administrative handling of the pandemic beyond the implications of handling the pandemic’s influence on the regulatees of the agency.

The pandemic’s role as an exogeneous shock has implications for the internal validity and generalizability of the dissertation’s findings regarding employee outcomes. In some respects, it serves to increase the internal validity of the dissertation’s key conclusions. The dissertation thus finds positive, significant relationships between reputation management and employee outcomes even though the agencies and their employees were affected differently by the pandemic. This indicates that reputation management can indeed affect employee outcomes such as mission valence and employee advocacy. The diverse impact of the pandemic on the three agencies also increases the generalizability of the findings, i.e., the ability to infer the results to similar types of organizations regardless of whether they are in a more stable periods or are exposed to either positive or negative media coverage.

In relation to the relationship between reputation management and external audiences, the dissertation found mixed results. This does not mean, however, that reputation management does not influence organizational reputation as it could be that the increased reputation management by managers of the Danish Veterinary and Food Administration actually prevented a drop to the organization’s reputation. Regulatory agencies are also a hard test for the ability of reputation management to influence organization reputation as found in Verhoest et al. (2021).

8.5. Strengths and Limitations

The dissertation holds important methodological strengths and limitations necessary to consider when reading the key conclusions and contributions described above. In this section, I will address the main strengths and weaknesses of the dissertation. Starting with the main strengths, I will highlight three.

First, the dissertation constitutes a first attempt to develop and validate a reliable measurement scale reputation management as a distinct managerial behaviour performed by public managers. This comprehensive work provides a solid foundation for studying the potential effects of this type of management behaviour as is e.g., seen in Papers II and III and which can also be used and further developed in future research.

Secondly, that the dissertation provides an attempt to combine intra-organizational behaviour with the external environment of public organizations by including both external audiences and employees in the empirical investigation of the potential effects of reputation management. Additionally, the dissertation includes two different but both highly relevant types of external audiences; citizens and regulatees.

Third, the panel design holds several methodological advantages. In the dissertation, all analyses regarding employee outcomes use a respondent-level fixed effects approach that allows comparisons within individuals over time. The temporal variation allows investigations of how changes in e.g., reputation management relate to changes in employee mission valence, which ensures a more rigorous control strategy compared to cross-sectional designs often used in bureaucratic reputation research (Gilad, Bloom & Assouline 2018) as discussed in Chapter 2. The dissertation is the first empirical investigating which uses repeated measures within the bureaucratic reputation framework. Existing studies of organizational reputation and reputation-conscious behaviour of public organizations have had a strong tendency to be either qualitative in-depth case studies that try to disentangle reputational processes (e.g., using thick description, archival data, and/ or relying on interviews) or quantitative studies that focus on measuring specific reputational aspects (such as “reputational threats” and regulatory responses to these threats) (Overman, Busuioic & Wood 2020, 416).

Although the dissertation contributes to the empirical research on reputation management and related outcomes, there are several limitations that require attention. I will emphasize four methodological limitations in the following.

First and foremost, caution is essential before drawing causal interpretations of the findings in the dissertation. I have applied a panel design to increase the internal validity of the empirical investigations (thereby limiting the threats e.g., of common source bias, observable and unobservable time-invariant confounders and social desirability bias). Still, I cannot rule out problems of endogeneity and selection bias. Although panel designs ensure a more rigorous control strategy relative to cross-sectional designs, there is still a threat of reversed causality

or reciprocal influence. This has the implication that I cannot infer that reputation management positively influences employee outcomes such as mission valence, employee advocacy behaviour and employee perceived organizational reputation. Additional studies such as experiments are necessary in order to draw causal interpretations. Although two-wave panels are generally considered a common form of longitudinal design within public management research when the unit of analysis is the individual employees (Stritch 2017, 224), scholars in related fields such as organization or management studies tend to emphasize the need for minimum three repeated measures in longitudinal studies (Ployhart & Vandenberg 2010, 97). The reason for this is that while two-wave panels show linear relationships between variables, three-waves or more allow for consideration of the shape of these relationships e.g., whether an effect of an increase in reputation management on employee outcomes persist, for how long, whether these temporal changes are linear, nonlinear, or discontinuous (Ployhart & Vandenberg, 2010) and also whether changes occur at different tempi (Stritch 2017). Two-wave panels are also more vulnerable to measurement errors e.g., that a measurement error in a variable is suppressed at the first moment, but appears at the second moments which could incorrectly lead to the conclusion that real changes occurred in the variable between the two moments. However, including more survey moments also increases attrition both in relation to the individual employees and the willingness of organizations to agree to participation.

Relatedly, the second limitation concerns the multi-level structure of the data, which the dissertation has not been able to investigate further in terms of its implications as to the relationship between reputation management and employee outcomes. Including managers in the balanced panel would have limited the common source bias in these analyses. Additionally, while the parallel surveys of managers and employees made it possible to validate the measurement scale for both groups, the sample size did not allow a multi-level confirmatory factor analysis to accommodate for the nested structure of the data also within the agencies (the different managerial levels within the agencies).

The third limitation relates to the generalizability of the findings. The dissertation validates the measurement scale of reputation management across three Danish regulatory agencies operating across different policy areas. A conservative interpretation would be that measurement scale and the findings of the dissertation is only valid and relevant in the context of these three specific agencies, and maybe even that this does not hold due to issues with attrition. A more optimistic and perhaps even more just assessment would be that the findings probably also bear relevance for the other regulatory agencies including government agencies with other types of tasks. Potentially also for agencies in countries that are similar to Denmark and with similar administrative cultures.

The extent to which the findings of the dissertation are of relevance for other types of public organizations such as organizations in the front line of public service delivery is less certain,

although definitely not excluded as other types of public organizations can be expected to communicate their vision externally to affect how external audiences perceive them. In 2013, a survey among Danish Mayors, Municipal Directors and Communications Directors within the Danish municipalities showed that 89 % of Danish municipalities contend that they have a strategic approach to their reputation in the form of a specific reputation strategy (30%), a reputation strategy as part of their communications strategy (22%), or that they work strategically with their reputation, however without a specific reputation strategy (Byrkeflot, Salomonsen & Wæraas 2013). I have no reason to suspect that the reputation-awareness or -consciousness among local governments has decreased since then, which favours an expectation that the findings may also hold some relevance for local governments/municipalities in Denmark.

This further leads to a reflection of whether the dissertation's conceptualization of reputation management exclusively has public sector relevance. The conceptual framework draws heavily on bureaucratic reputation theory, but also corporate reputation management, and is thus not *necessarily* sector specific. Presumably, the two behavioural dimensions inspired by Fombrun and Rindova (1998); identification and communication, are of relevance for public and private organizations alike, while it is less clear regarding prioritization. When comparing private and public organizations, it is often highlighted how public organizations have multiple and ambiguous goals, while private organizations pursue profit as their primary goal (Boyne 2002), just as they differ in relation to the heterogeneity, multiplicity and power of their external stakeholders. While the distinction might be more nuanced than outlined here, it serves to illustrate that the conceptualization of reputation management put forth in the dissertation might not bear the same relevance for private organizations as their public sector counterparts given the differences in relation to goals, tasks and stakeholder environment.

As this dissertation is a first attempt to investigate reputation management as a managerial behaviour in a public sector context, a fair assessment would likely be that the findings are primarily of relevance for organizations that are somewhat similar to those studied in the dissertation, i.e., (primarily) government agencies in Denmark.

8.6. A Critical Perspective on Reputation Management

The introductory chapter motivating the dissertation argued that reputation has instrumental value because it affects the ability of public organizations to perform their core tasks at a practical level and thus fulfil their mission. In this view, reputation management also has value because reputation management is a way for public managers to cultivate a favourable reputation for their organization. And while this may certainly be true, there are also more critical aspects of reputation management that could be argued. I will raise some of these aspects in this section because they may potentially have substantial normative implications for how we

perceive reputation management as a management behaviour, but not discuss the extent to which they occur in practise.

The dissertation argues that the ambition of reputation management is to create a favourable reputation for the organization in the eyes of external audiences, and that one of these behavioural aspects is to communicate the organization's vision and positive impact on society to these external audiences. Potentially, managers might not be completely accurate in their communication, e.g., communicating something that is overestimated or exaggerated. A somewhat innocent or excusable explanation could be cognitive and related to how managers make sense of information, while a more critical explanation would be rooted in conceiving public managers as strategic actors who deliberately attempt to convey a distorted image of their organization.

First, public management research has convincingly demonstrated that public managers tend to overestimate the performance of their organization relative to its actual performance (e.g., Andrews et al. 2010; Meier & O'Toole 2013a; 2013b), and also their own contribution to realizing organizational goals while underestimating the influence of externally induced advantages (Meier & O'Toole 2013a; Meier et al. 2015). Hence, managers are inclined to display a 'positivity bias' (Meier et al 2015: 1091) or 'positive illusion' (Meier & O'Toole 2013a) when assessing their organization, which could cause them to also externally communicate an overly favourable image of the organization.

Second, the more critical perspective would be that an overly favourable image is conveyed for strategic purposes. Drawing on Goffman (1959), public managers may strategically present a positive image of their organization by highlighting certain aspects or communicating symbolic actions when it is more difficult to solve real problems through real actions. Applying a principal-agent logic, public managers may succeed in doing so because an information asymmetry between the managers and external audiences works for the benefit of the managers thereby allowing inaccurate presentations of performance. As an example, Alon-Barkat and Gilad (2017) found that the use of familiar promotional symbols can compensate for the effect of poor performance and shape citizens' attitudes when the organizational aspects are sufficiently ambiguous.

Bertelli and Busuioc (2021) discuss potential democratic implications in the form of unchecked bureaucratic power and weakened accountability in representative government in relation to reputation-sourced authority of public organizations. For politicians, reputation can function as a heuristic or cue for political overseers in relation to actual performance of public organizations and can as such be a helpful proxy for better targeting oversight (Bovens, Schillemans & 't Hart 2008; Bertelli & Busuioc 2021, 42). However, a strong organizational reputation, which transforms the principal-agent relationship into more of a negotiated/transactional authority rather than a delegated, constrained authority (Carpenter & Krause 2015) also

increases the political costs of using and enforcing ex post controls such as monitoring (Busuioc & Lodge 2017) or oversight in the form of e.g., ‘fire alarms’ (McCubbins & Schwartz 1984), and displaces ex ante controls such as procedural requirements (Bertelli & Doherty 2019) because coalition-building with external audiences can empower public organizations vis-à-vis their political principals (Carpenter 2000, 124; Busuioc & Lodge 2016).

That reputation-sensitive public organizations and their managers are strategic and sometimes even opportunistic actors is also argued by Maor (2015), noting that agencies are adaptive in order to cope with criticisms by external audiences and able to manipulate external audiences’ opinions and expectations. In other words, “they can act to shape the criteria by which they are assessed rather than acting only to influence the assessment of their reputation” (Maor 2015, 24). Abolafia and Hatmaker (2013, 533) refer to this rather negative connotation of reputation management behaviour as “fine-tuning”; i.e., strategic practises whereby organizations ‘spin’ the signals that they communicate with the intent to shape how external audiences judge the organization’s abilities. However, as Agostino and Arnaboldi (2017) found, overly favourable reputations are likely to eventually get caught up by reality. Additionally, and as also recognized by Maor (2015, 25), building a strong and favourable reputation is not an easy task. Reputation first becomes a strategic or political asset after substantial and sustained behaviour aimed at building a strong reputation that is also judged as such by the organization’s multiple audiences over a substantial period of time. Strategic reputation management behaviour is thus a risky endeavour; seeming manipulative might endanger the very authority and legitimacy intended to upbuild (Ashforth & Gibbs 1990).

8.7. Implications for Research and Practice

I will end this dissertation by addressing avenues for future research and discussing which implications of relevance for practice can be drawn from my dissertation. The former seems like an easier task than the latter, as research has a way of generating more questions than providing answers.

8.7.1. Suggestions for Future Research

The dissertation provides a theoretical framework for how we can think about reputation management as a public management approach and identifies employee outcomes related to this particular type of management behaviour. Thus, it fills gaps in the bureaucratic reputation and public management literatures, while also pointing to much needed work in terms of theory building and testing. I begin this section by outlining themes for theory building relating to the advancement of reputation management, after which I outline suggestions for how different research design could supplement and provide valuable insights to the findings and non-findings of the dissertation.

First, I would encourage future research to investigate the potential effects of combining reputation management with transformational leadership and other management/leadership strategies. Distinct management and leadership behaviours are most often performed in combination, and how reputation management interacts with, strengthens, or weakens other leadership and management behaviours relative to various outcomes if performed simultaneously is important to pursue in future research.

Second, the dissertation finds that reputation management relates to employee outcomes such as mission valence, value congruence, employee advocacy and employee perceived organizational reputation. While these are indeed interesting, there is reason to suspect that reputation management may also affect other outcomes such as the ability of public organizations to attract and retain staff. It would therefore be relevant to theorize further on the potential internal consequences of reputation management, e.g., by focusing on performance or intention to quit.

Third, the dissertation provides a conceptual framework for investigating how public managers perform reputation management with the ambition of affecting external audiences' beliefs about the organization. The finding in Paper III that reputation management relates to employees' self-reported advocacy behaviour is something that is worth pursuing further as it relates to the increased attention in public management research to distributed and collaborative leadership approaches (Orazi, Turrini & Valotti, 2013; Jakobsen, Kjeldsen & Pallesen, 2021). The finding taps into the notion put forth by Vogel and Masal (2015, 1181) that 'followers are active participants rather than passive recipients in the leadership process'. Within the bureaucratic reputation framework, there are disagreements regarding whether reputation-building behaviour is conducted at all organizational levels, including employees, or whether it is behaviours primarily performed at the upper echelons of the managerial hierarchy. For example, drawing on social identity theory Carpenter (2010, 67) argues that "protection and maintenance of organizational reputation may be more common among higher officials within an organization". A next step for future research would be to disentangle the extent to which reputation management is performed across the executive vis-à-vis the middle-level and lower-level management in public organizations as well as to what extent reputation management evolves into dynamics of distributed leadership.

This aspect also relates to one of the methodological limitations of the dissertation, which I also encourage future research to address.

First, the inherent hierarchical structure of the three agencies investigated in the dissertation raises interesting questions regarding multilevel issues, which the panel design does not allow the dissertation to pursue due to the sample size of the data. Dyer, Hanges and Hall (2005) argue that the relationships between the different constructs can vary at different levels of analysis (2005), and I encourage future studies to pursue this using larger samples that

allow multi-level analysis. This would also contribute to disentangling the extent to which reputation management is performed across the managerial hierarchy as well as strengthening the statistical power of the analyses.

Second, the dissertation should be viewed as a first, important step toward developing a multidimensional concept and scale to measure reputation management per se, to investigate its relation to other established leadership constructs, including transformational leadership, and to study causes and consequences of both external and internal character. The validation of measurement instruments is an ongoing process as argued by DeVellis (2003), and future studies are needed to further test and potentially refine the scale in different organizational contexts. A next step could be to expand the empirical domain beyond regulatory agencies, which would entail agencies with other types of tasks, other types of public organizations, across different governance levels, administrative cultures and national contexts.

Third, the mixed findings in relation to the relationship between reputation management and external audiences' beliefs about the organization point to the need for further investigations. This could either be in the form of studies with an in-depth focus on the context and processes (e.g., case-studies or process-tracing), survey experiments or perhaps large N studies of a longitudinal nature.

Finally, the dissertation does not measure theoretical mechanisms such as auto-communication and mirroring empirically, which limits our understanding of the causal mechanisms in relation to how reputation management can influence employee outcomes. Survey experiments e.g., inspired by Gilad, Bloom and Assouline (2018) could contribute to improving our understanding of some of the mechanisms proposed in the dissertation.

8.7.2. Implications for Practice.

Why should practitioners care about reputation management and how is this dissertation relevant for public managers? My answers to these questions should be read in the light of the methodological limitations discussed and the sparse theoretical and empirical knowledge of reputation management as a managerial approach in a public sector context. I will outline two implications that I hope public managers may find useful.

First, I suggest that public managers can draw inspiration from the dissertation to think about how they may be able to affect the reputation of their organization through their own behaviour, how they can strengthen these efforts in different ways and also whether (and how) they include (or should include) employees in these aspirations to create, maintain or protect a favourable reputation. I also hope that public managers will think about the need for prioritizing and balancing different audiences, expectations and reputational aspects, and maybe reflect on questions such as: what do we want to be known for? Why, when and to whom do we want to be known?

Second, reputation management has mainly been seen as a management behaviour directed towards external audiences of the organization. As also found in the dissertation, these efforts are generally considered challenging, as many other factors may affect audiences' beliefs. This does not mean that public managers should stop caring about reputation management. I hope that public managers will assess the value of reputation management, also in terms of its potential, positive effects on employees. As mentioned earlier, leadership approaches directed towards employees such as transformational leadership, are often time intensive and more effective when relying extensively on a face-to-face communication with employees. I suggest that public managers consider the value of supplementing these efforts with efforts to communicate the values, vision, mission as well as the organization's positive impact on society externally towards the organization's audiences and environment. Auto-communication research suggests that simultaneous communication to external audiences and employees is a powerful way for public organizations to tell themselves who they are and what they should strive for in the future because such messages are perceived as having more authority and credibility when also being communicated externally (Christensen 1995; 1997). This, of course, requires that public managers in a more general sense align what they communicate internally with what they communicate to external audiences.

9. REFERENCES

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10. CO-AUTHOR STATEMENTS

Declaration of co-authorship*

Full name of the PhD student: Mette Østergaard Pedersen

This declaration concerns the following article/manuscript: Conceptualizing and Measuring (Public) Reputation Management

Title:	Conceptualizing and Measuring (Public) Reputation Management
Authors:	Mette Østergaard Pedersen, Heidi Houlberg Salomonsen

The article/manuscript is: Published ☐ Accepted ☐ Submitted ☒ In preparation ☐

If published, state full reference:

If accepted or submitted, state journal: Perspectives on Public Management and Governance (PPMG)

Has the article/manuscript previously been used in other PhD or doctoral dissertations?


No ☒ Yes ☐ If yes, give details:

The PhD student has contributed to the elements of this article/manuscript as follows:


- A. Has essentially done all the work
- B. Major contribution
- C. Equal contribution
- D. Minor contribution
- E. Not relevant

Element	Extent (A-E)
1. Formulation/identification of the scientific problem	A
2. Planning of the experiments/methodology design and development	B
3. Involvement in the experimental work/clinical studies/data collection	B
4. Interpretation of the results	A
5. Writing of the first draft of the manuscript	A
6. Finalization of the manuscript and submission	A

Signatures of the co-authors

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Title:	How transformational leadership and reputation management relate to employee mission valence: A two-wave study of mission valence in public agencies
Authors:	Mette Østergaard Pedersen, Heidi Houlberg Salomonsen

The article/manuscript is: Published ☐ Accepted ☐ Submitted ☒ In preparation ☐

If published, state full reference:

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1. Formulation/identification of the scientific problem	C
2. Planning of the experiments/methodology design and development	C
3. Involvement in the experimental work/clinical studies/data collection	C
4. Interpretation of the results	C
5. Writing of the first draft of the manuscript	C
6. Finalization of the manuscript and submission	C

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Title:	Does reputation management matter for regulatory agencies' reputations as perceived by their external and internal audiences?
Authors:	Mette Østergaard Pedersen, Koen Verhoest, Heidi Houlberg Salomonsen

The article/manuscript is: Published ☐ Accepted ☐ Submitted ☒ In preparation ☐

If published, state full reference:

If accepted or submitted, state journal: Regulation & Governance

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- B. Major contribution
- C. Equal contribution
- D. Minor contribution
- E. Not relevant

Element	Extent (A-E)
1. Formulation/identification of the scientific problem	A
2. Planning of the experiments/methodology design and development	B
3. Involvement in the experimental work/clinical studies/data collection	B
4. Interpretation of the results	A
5. Writing of the first draft of the manuscript	B
6. Finalization of the manuscript and submission	A

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Til min mor.

Jeg tænker på dig

Jeg savner dig

Jeg elsker dig