GOVERNMENT INTELLIGENCE INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY PROJECT

MANAGERS' INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATION COMPETENCE DURING

CONTRACTOR INTERACTIONS: A PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY

by

Christopher M. Powell

A Dissertation Presented in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Management in Organizational Leadership

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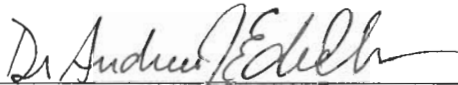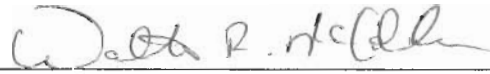Christopher Maurice Powell

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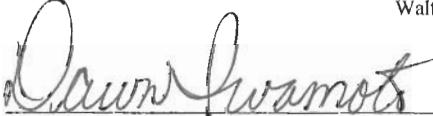
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ABSTRACT

United States government intelligence IT project managers lack effective interpersonal communication skills during leadership interactions with their IT contractor(s). The purpose of the qualitative, phenomenological case study, using a modified van Kaam method by Moustakas (1994), explored the experiences and perceptions of a sample of 20 government intelligence IT project managers, from Washington, DC. The study identified how interpersonal communication interaction with their IT contractor(s) affected intelligence organization's performance effectiveness and efficiency. The study found that many IT leaders in the intelligence community (IC) lacked interpersonal communication skills and transformation leadership competencies. The research suggested that ineffective interpersonal communications between IT leaders, IT project managers and IT contractors affected IT projects and organizational IT projects outcomes. Findings from the study indicated that cultural climates exist within the IC that negatively affect the relationship among IT leaders, IT project managers and IT contractors. Data from the study indicated that improved interpersonal communication encouraged clarity and minimized ambiguity when government intelligence IT project managers are leveraging leadership interactions with IT contractors, leadership, stakeholders, and customers.

DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my wife (Veronica Powell) who inspired me to believe and dream much greater than my humble beginnings. I would also like to dedicate this dissertation to my children, Tionti, Shantia, Mario, Charles, and Aviah. Finally, I dedicate this dissertation to my mother Ann and siblings, Kardice, Yolanda, and Kahamari.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

The intelligence community (IC) is a federation of 18 executive branch agencies independently and collectively working to protect the national security of the U.S. (United States Intelligence Community, 2005b). Executive Order 12333 indicated that intelligence agencies in the U.S. provide intelligence services to influence foreign relations and protect the citizens of the United States. The intelligence agencies accomplish the protection of the United States in several ways.

The agencies collect and provide information to the top leaders of the country so that they can perform their duties and responsibilities effectively. The agencies collect information on terrorist, drug, and aggressive activities in foreign countries for officials to protect the U.S. from foreign associates, companies, citizens, and other foreign agency personnel. The duty of the intelligence agencies is to distribute the information collected to those parties responsible for the protection of the U.S. and its citizens. The agencies are responsible for all special, administrative, and supportive activities to ensure the protection of the U.S., as well as any other activities the President of the U.S. may define and identify at any given time (United States National Archives and Records Administration, n.d.). To perform these tasks, the agencies use information technology (IT).

Tenet suggested that the IC use IT, innovation, commitment, creativity, and the workforce to realize organizational performance effectiveness and efficiency (as cited in United States Intelligence Community, 2005a). IT is relevant in most aspects of every organization. IT allows the staff in a business to share their knowledge globally (Lee, 2003). Yamada et al. (2004) explained that the definition of IT includes a variety of

computer hardware, computer software, and support and telecommunication services (p. 3).

The use of IT will continue to increase globally, as will the amount of resources allocated towards IT (Remenyi & Brown, 2002). Forrester researchers estimated that IT spending in the U.S. would continue to increase and showed that IT spending grew from $752 billion in fiscal year 2003 to $795 billion in fiscal year 2005, a 5.7% increase (as cited in Schwalbe, 2006). Yamada et al. (2004) predicted that organizational leaders would increase global IT investments from $2.1 trillion in fiscal year 2002 to $3 trillion annually by fiscal year 2008. Bartels (2006) concurred with Yamada et al. that global IT spending would increase and suggested that global IT spending would exceed the 2007 figure of $2.13 trillion, which was a 6% increase from 2006 (para. 1).

The annual budget for the IC is classified. As a result, a total breakdown of the IC budget is not available. The IC announced its budget only twice in history. Tenet noted the fiscal year 1997 budget was $26.6 billion and fiscal year 1998 budget was $26.7 billion (as cited in Daggett, 2004). According to Daggett, the IC's estimated budget was $40 billion in fiscal year 2004.

Despite the large amount of resources allocated to IT intelligence organizations, the organizations are not realizing performance effectiveness and the efficiency outcomes expected from their IT investments. Stang (2004) noted that only 30% of global IT project investments initiated in 2004 realized the desired outcome. The Standish Group described that yearly, 20% of IT projects are canceled before completion and that less than a third fail to meet performance, cost and schedule (as cited in Kappelman, McKeeman, & Zhang, 2006, p. 31). Caruso and Gentry (2005a) hypothesized that

competent IT leaders and managers can help produce the desired outcomes expected from their organizations' IT investments.

Caruso and Gentry (2005) suggested that the most significant IT leadership attributes are establishing a shared vision, communicating the vision, and empowering employees and others to realize the planned vision. Hoving (2007) found that leadership requires innate knowledge of the technologies and natural intuition to know which ones are going to pay off. Hoving suggested most important of all, a leader is an executer with a keen sense of what it takes to get the right things done (p. 153).

Managers are also significant contributors to organizational effectiveness. According to Remenyi and Brown (2002), controlling, coordinating, directing, organizing, and planning are significant competencies for managers. Mingay, Mahoney, McDonald, and Bell (2004) found that managers influence organizational effectiveness, efficiency, and outcomes by focusing on an organization's performance.

A central figure in the level of success projects achieve is the project manager. Alexandrou (2007) defined a project manager as the person responsible for making decisions. Project managers leverage leadership competencies to manage projects.

Prescribing leadership and management training is important because leadership is a core competency for project managers (Project Management Institute [PMI], 2006). The PMI promotes a structured project management process offering project management certification upon completing and passing a core set of competencies. The project manager, much like the leader, is responsible for effectively communicating to others in various ways. Interpersonal communication is an effective and essential communication medium.

The PMI (2004) indicated that the management of interpersonal skills is essential for organizations to achieve desired outcomes. According to the PMI, interpersonal skills include effective communication, influence in the organization, leadership, motivation, negotiation and conflict management, and problem solving. Leaders often award government supervisors their positions based on technical knowledge without any consideration of interpersonal or leadership skills (United States Office of Personnel Management [USOPM], 2001b). The USOPM indicated that serious workforce morale and mission accomplishments problems are the result of staff not performing as well as supervisors (p. 3).

Competent intelligence IT managers with sound interpersonal communication skills can help organizations achieve their desired outcome. Little research exists exploring the effectiveness of intelligence IT project managers who lack effective interpersonal communication skill proficiency during leadership interactions with their supporting IT contractors. The purpose of this qualitative, phenomenological case study, using a modified van Kaam method by Moustakas (1994), was to explore the lived experiences and perceptions of 20 U.S. government intelligence IT project managers in the metropolitan Washington, DC area, who leveraged interpersonal communication skills during leadership interactions with their IT contractors. The data from digital audio-taped and transcribed unstructured interviews aided in identifying emergent themes related to the potential lack of interpersonal communication skills proficiency during leadership interactions with supporting IT contractors that might result in reduced organizational performance effectiveness outcomes.

Background of the Problem

Field and Stoddard (2004) suggested that global organizations began using IT in the early 1960s. Many organizational leaders depend on IT to support organizational infrastructure and business objectives. The U.S. government IC, Department of Defense (DoD), Veterans Administration (VA), and most other organizations depend on IT to realize desired outcomes. Gillard (2004) reported the following:

> According to industry analyst Standish Group, only one-third of all IT projects can be deemed successes. The report also shows time overruns in projects have increased significantly from a low of 63% in 2000 to 82% in 2003. According to industry research from Gartner, poor [IT] project manager competency accounts for the bulk—60 percent—of project failures. (p. 381)

Remenyi and Brown (2002) contended that IT challenges are usually due to human factors rather than IT factors. One such non-IT-related challenge is interpersonal communication skills. The PMI (2004) indicated that the management of interpersonal skills is essential for organizations to achieve desired outcomes. Gatling (2005) emphasized that interpersonal communication is one of eight key competencies for leaders and managers.

The lack of interpersonal communication skills contributed to the less than optimal result of IT organizations' outcomes. Research indicated that government managers have concerns about the lack of verbal and nonverbal communication skills of government technical staffs. Government managers suggested that government technical staffs are less knowledgeable about agency procedures than their non-technical colleagues (United States Government Accountability Office [USGAO], 1990, p. 2). The

USGAO (1989) observed that senior managers of the VA identified the lack of interpersonal communication skills and relationships between doctor and patient as a leading cause of patient complaints and poor performance.

The USGAO (2007) noted the Deepwater Program approved by Congress for the integration of U.S. Coast Guard (USCG) systems as an initiative challenged with interpersonal communication efforts. The purpose of the Deepwater Program is to design, construct, deploy, support, and integrate all assets to meet USCG requirements. The USGAO suggested that government agencies turn to the system integrators approach when they do not believe they have the competencies and capabilities to design, develop, or manage complex acquisitions. The USGAO assessment found that the Coast Guard lacked personnel with the required competencies to effectively manage or oversee the system integrator.

A final initiative that indicates a lack of interpersonal communication skills is the Federal Bureau of Investigation's (FBI) Trilogy Project. The Trilogy Project involved upgrading the FBI's IT infrastructure and investigative application systems. Missed milestones and escalating costs that plagued the project resulted from lack of definition of initial requirements, lack of internal controls, questionable payments, and oversight by government IT project leaders and managers (USGAO, 2007). The identified challenges cost taxpayers about $10.1 million. The results of IT initiatives such as the VA, the USCG Deepwater Program, and the FBI Trilogy Project might become more wide-spread unless organizations realize interpersonal communication competencies to complement technical competencies.

Statement of the Problem

Organizations make significant investments in IT. Yamada et al. (2004) estimated that globally organizations would invest $2.6 trillion in IT in 2005 and would exceed $3 trillion annually by 2008. Bartels (2006) suggested that global IT spending would exceed $2.13 trillion in 2007 from $2.02 trillion in 2006 (para. 1). The USOPM (2001b) noted that many government supervisors are hired for their technical knowledge without any consideration of interpersonal or leadership skills. The USOPM also found that when supervisors do not perform effectively, there are negative mission challenges that impact people, material and technology (USOPM, 2001b). The problem is that U.S. government intelligence IT project managers may lack effective interpersonal communication skills proficiency during leadership interactions with their supporting IT contractors, resulting in reduced organizational performance effectiveness outcomes. This study involved identifying how the lack of interpersonal communication skills by government intelligence IT project managers, during leadership interactions with supporting IT contractors, affects outcomes expected from the government intelligence organization.

Purpose of the Study

This qualitative, phenomenological case study, using a modified van Kaam method by Moustakas (1994), with digital audio-taped and transcribed unstructured interviews, explored experiences and perceptions of a sample of 20 government intelligence IT managers in the metropolitan Washington, DC area. The study involved exploring how the participants used interpersonal communication during leadership interactions with their IT contractors. A qualitative, phenomenological case study was

employed for the research study. Kaplan and Maxwell (1994) and Yin (2004) pointed out that a phenomenon takes place in a natural setting, where experience makes a difference.

Significance of the Study

Approximately 608 U.S. federal government IT projects are at high risk, excluding the Department of Homeland Security IT projects (United States Office of Management and Budget [USOMB], 2007b). The USGAO (2005) reported to Congress that the DoD invests billions in IT modernization without adequate oversight. Yamada et al., (2004) suggested that global IT investments might exceed $3 trillion by 2008. Gomolski (2005) reported the average organization proposed to devote a substantial amount of its gross income toward IT investments.

A significant problem is managing an organization's IT resources. Field and Stoddard (2004) argued that since the introduction of IT, organizations have not been able to manage their IT resources. This is evident by the trillions of dollars spent globally on IT investments with minimal success. Gillard (2004) reported that one-third of all IT projects achieve their desired outcomes. One reason for the lack of success is ineffective project management. Gillard also referred to a report by the research firm Gartner that found that 60% of failed IT projects are a result of IT project managers not having proper project management competencies.

A project management competency that is essential to IT project managers effectively managing IT projects is interpersonal communication. The PMI (2004) indicated that the management of interpersonal skills is essential for organizations to achieve their desired outcome. Interpersonal skills include effective communication, influence in the organization, leadership, motivation, negotiation and conflict

management, and problem solving. Interpersonal skills are crucial components of management if an organization is to realize its desired outcome. The USOPM (2001b) noted that many government supervisors are hired based on technical knowledge without any consideration of interpersonal or leadership skills.

Significance of the Study to Leadership

The study might provide leadership with information about factors that contribute to productive IC IT project management outcomes. Tannenbaum, Weschler, and Massarik described leadership as "interpersonal influence exercised in a situation and directed through the communication process, toward the attainment of a specified goal or goals" (as cited in Bass, 1990, p. 13).

This study involved gathering information about the government intelligence IT project managers' interpersonal communication skills during leadership interactions with their IT contractors. The information may help leadership, managers, and IT project managers improve organizational effectiveness and efficiency, and achieve desired outcomes. The information may also help government IT project managers more effectively communicate with their IT contractors. This qualitative, phenomenological case study may add meaningful data to the body of knowledge related to government intelligence IT project management and organizational effectiveness.

Nature of the Study

The purpose of the study was to discover how government intelligence IT project managers' lack of effective interpersonal communication skills during interaction with their government IT contractors affected their organizations' expected outcomes. The research study took the form of a phenomenological case study, using a modified van

Kaam method by Moustakas (1994) and unstructured interviews to obtain the experiences and perceptions of 20 government intelligence IT project managers. The interviews were analyzed to capture consistent and emerging themes.

Moustakas (1994) indicated that the phenomenological approach uses seven steps for analyzing and transcribing data:

Listing every expression or comment that is relevant to the experience

Coding each expression or comment for meaning and description

Clustering and labeling similar experiences identified through the interviews to identify themes

Identifying meanings and common themes among the participants' responses

Validating common themes, patterns, and meanings of the responses given by participants

Constructing individual structural descriptions for each participant

Developing a comprehensive textual description for the entire group to determine a commonality of themes and patterns within their experiences (pp. 120-121).

This qualitative, phenomenological study was an attempt to understand participants' perceptions, and experiences with the topic under study (Leedy & Ormrod, 2001).

Appropriateness of the Research Method

Most researchers use one of three research methods to study a problem. The three most popular research methods are qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods. A qualitative, phenomenological research method was appropriate for the study because the method provided opportunity to explore insight into the phenomenon, develop concepts

about the phenomenon and realize problems that maybe associated within phenomenon" (Leedy & Ormrod, 2001, p. 148).

A lack of literature about government intelligence IT project managers and their interpersonal communication with their government IT contractors is evident. Cooper and Schindler (2003) noted that the qualitative research method is appropriate when there is a lack of available literature about a problem or the research will be general and broad. Creswell (2005) suggested that qualitative research methods allow researchers the opportunity to develop emerging questions based on participants' open responses. This qualitative research case study provides an examination of the experienced perceptions of government intelligence IT project managers' interpersonal communication skills with their government IT contractors.

The qualitative, phenomenological case study was appropriate for the research study. The phenomenological case study allowed the research participants to describe their interpersonal communication experiences as government intelligence IT project managers' during leadership interactions with IT contractors. The participants selected for the research study were IT intelligence project managers who managed a minimum of two government projects/programs with supporting IT contractors. Bernard (2000) stated a nonrandom sample of respondents is best when interested in individuals' experiences. The participants provided detailed information regarding their perceptions and the effects of interpersonal communication on their organizations' performance effectiveness. Leydens, Moskal, and Pavilich (2004) supported Bernard's position suggesting that the overall purpose of qualitative research is to comprehend human perspectives and describe a particular phenomenon.

Participants' answers to open-ended questions guided the interviews. Bernard (2000) described unstructured interviews as a clear focused plan without managing respondent's feedback. Bernard explained that the idea behind unstructured interviews is to get people to feel comfortable and discuss their perspectives on a given topic or experience. Bernard further praised unstructured interviewing for revealing lived experience.

During unstructured interviews, open-ended questions allow the participants to express their thoughts openly without being confined or restricted to a specific thought process. The participants answered exploratory questions during the interview based on their responses for greater clarity. Each interview lasted approximately 30 to 60 minutes and was digitally audio-taped to ensure accurate transcription. The interview data was analyzed to identify consistent, similar, and emergent themes relating to the effectiveness of interpersonal communication skills between U.S. government intelligence IT project managers and supporting IT contractors.

A quantitative research method was not chosen because it would not yield the type of descriptive, rich, unstructured, and pure information desired. Leydens et al. (2004) emphasized that quantitative approaches are limited by lack of rich detailed description of human perceptions and experience. Cooper and Schindler (2003) and Creswell (2005) suggested that a quantitative case study is more appropriate when extensive literature about a problem is available and when the ambition is to explain the problem in more detail. Creswell further suggested that a quantitative case study is appropriate when attempting to identify trends or examine the relationships between variables using numbers and statistical analysis.

A quantitative research method may require the researcher and participant to be separated, use a deductive approach, and design a research instrument to test hypotheses through statistical analyses (Cobb & Forbes, 2002). Cobb and Forbes suggested quantitative research assumed objectivity and generalizability to other locations and populations. In contrast, the focus of this dissertation study was participants' perceptions and experiences. A study goal was to capture exact words and the context in which the participants used them. A qualitative interviewer must be in close proximity to research participants to observe, hear and discern the meaning of information they provide.

Case studies are instrumental to researchers. Case studies allow the researcher to explore one or more research participants, events, activities or in-depth analysis of programs (Creswell, 2003). The USGAO (1990) suggested that a case study represents a method for learning about complex instance, based on a comprehensive understanding of that instance, obtained by extensive description and analysis of the instance, taken as a whole and in its context (p. 15). Yin (2003) observed that a descriptive case study can provide a complete description of a phenomenon within its context.

<div align="center">Contribution to Current and Future Studies</div>

The results of this dissertation study may provide information about the government intelligence IT project managers' interpersonal communication skills during leadership interactions with their government IT contractors. The information may help leadership, managers, and project managers improve organizational effectiveness, efficiency, and desired outcome. The information may help the government IT project managers communicate with their IT contractors more effectively. The study may be significant because it may result in data regarding government intelligence IT project

managers' interpersonal communication skills with their IT contractors. The qualitative, phenomenological case study may add meaningful data to the body of knowledge related to government intelligence IT project management and organizational effectiveness.

Research Question

The research question that guided this study was: How do the interpersonal communication skills between U.S. government intelligence IT project managers and their government IT contractors affect the performance effectiveness and efficiency of organizational outcomes? The focus of this study included first, an attempt to describe the participants' lived experiences as U.S. government intelligence IT project managers who completed intelligence IT projects leveraging IT contractors. Second, the study explained how interpersonal communication skills might have affected IT project(s). Third, the study included a focus on how U.S. government intelligence leadership might help IT project managers gain the interpersonal communication skills needed to improve organizational performance effectiveness outcomes.

Theoretical Framework

The purpose of the qualitative, phenomenological case study, using a modified van Kaam method by Moustakas (1994), with digital audio-taped and transcribed unstructured interviews was to explore the perceptions of 20 U.S. government intelligence IT project managers living in the Washington, DC, metropolitan area. Specifically, the study included an exploration of how U.S. government intelligence IT project managers lack effective interpersonal communication skill proficiency during interactions with their supporting government IT contractors resulting in reduced organizational performance effectiveness outcomes. Two theoretical frameworks guided

the study: Watzlawick's interactional theory and Lin's Tao of IT leaders theory (as cited in Lane, 2004).

Andersen and Nussbaum claimed interactional skills are necessary to engage in successful verbal and nonverbal communication activities (as cited in Daly, Friedrich, & Vangelisti, 1990, p. 303). The University of Twente (2004) concurred with Andersen and Nussbaum noting that all communications are based on meaning and interaction. The University reported that communication is an exchange of information between individuals who are able to act or apply the exchange of information during an activity or given situation. Watzlawick's interactional theory addresses interpersonal communication. According to the University of Twente, the interaction approach is an exchange of communications between people who interpret their real situation and form the communications in a framework for social and cultural context. Griffin (1997) suggested Watzlawick's interactional theory includes five axioms:

1. One cannot not communicate.

2. Human beings communicate both digitally and analogically.

3. Communication has a content and a relationship aspect.

4. The nature of a relationship depends on how both parties punctuate the communication sequence.

5. All communication is either symmetrical or complementary.

Regarding the first axiom, one cannot not communicate, Watzlawick noted, communication does not require a verbal exchange. The author suggested nonverbal communication is just as important as verbal communication and that nonverbal communications are emitted when trying not to speak. (as cited in University of Twente,

2004, para. 2). Watzlawick characterized the second axiom; human beings communicate both digitally and analogically, as both verbal and nonverbal communications. Watzlawick (as cited in Krebs, 1999) described nonverbal communication as communication without voice. Nonverbal communications can consist of body position, facial expressions or influx in vocal tone.

The third axiom, communication has a content and a relationship aspect, illustrates what is communicated and how it is communicated. Watzlawick noted the tone of voice, emphasis on some words, facial expressions etc. played an important role in how messages was interpreted (as cited in University of Twente, 2004, para. 2). Griffin (1997) further explained that the content of what is communicated between individuals is extremely important. The author noted that content is what is communicated between individuals and that how communication is articulated must be described.

Watzlawick (as cited in University of Twente, 2004) described the fourth axiom, the nature of the relationship depends on how both parties punctuate the communication sequence. Watzlawick explained the fifth axiom as all communication has power. Communication is based on equal power or a hierarchal structure (as cited in University of Twente, 2004, para. 2). Watzlawick described the fifth axiom as communication about communication, or *metacommunication*.

This dissertation study involved exploring government intelligence IT project managers' ability to use interpersonal communication skills proficiency effectively during leadership interactions with supporting IT contractors. The University of Twente (2004) advocated that all communication should be based on perceived intent and

interactions between individuals that are communicating. Watzlawick and Beavin (1967) explained that communication is what is loosely gathered under the rubric interaction.

This dissertation study was also based on Lin's Tao of IT leaders theoretical framework (as cited in Lane, 2004). Lin suggested Tao IT leadership was based on leaders having the right competencies to lead rather than dictating to those being led (p.51). According to Lin, the Tao of IT leaders framework was developed to recognize IT management and leadership challenges. IT leadership competencies are necessary if IT leaders and managers are to help their organizations achieve desired business outcomes.

Hoving (2007) also explored leadership challenges and cautioned that while leadership challenges presented significant issues in the past, they will pale in comparison to future leadership challenges (para. 1). Hoving provided a reflective view of IT leadership challenges, which include using technology wisely, adding business value, managing the available resources and performing the required tasks.

Lin (as cited in Lane, 2004) declared that an organization's ability to achieve a level of success, when managing IT, depends on an IT leader's ability to lead and manage. The Tao of IT leaders framework consists of five fundamentals of leading by example, five strategies for uniting the forces, and two practices for sustaining success. As suggested by Lin, the five Tao of IT leaders framework fundamentals are leading with humility, openness, agility, clarity, and passion (as cited in Lane, 2004, p. 54).

Passion is a leadership trait that cannot be emphasized enough. Lin found that passion is critical to the performance of a Chief Information Officer (CIO). Passion for the people, industry and business is instrumental to an organization's performance effectiveness, efficiency and desired outcome. Lin stressed the need for IT leaders to

have passion. Lin described without passion, leaders will have difficulty developing insight, acumen and understanding the enterprise perspective needed to achieve business goals (as cited in Lane, 2004, p. 57)

The Tao of IT leaders framework illustrates the need for IT leaders to have humility. Lin suggested IT leaders should not feel intimidated by technology or technically savvy customers, instead the IT leader should listen with humility, understand and trust their partners. Lin also noted that only by understanding our constituents can we possibly become a trusted partner and help IT become more closely aligned with the business (as cited in Lane, 2004, p. 58). Collins (2001) supported Lin's position regarding humility when he noted that one of the most powerful transformation leadership traits is humility.

A third component of Lin's Tao of IT leaders framework is openness. Lin explained that IT leaders should promote transparency and openness throughout IT organizations. IT staff are more inclined to be creative, think outside the box, take risks, and perform at their optimal level (as cited in Lane, 2004, p. 59).

Lin (as cited in Lane, 2004) explained clarity is a key to the Tao of IT leaders framework by suggesting that clarity allows leaders the ability to see the fundamentals and to turn complex, muddy issues into simple, clear concepts and solutions. As a result, clarity according to Lin is a necessary skill for leaders. Lin announced that clarity allows leaders to direct others (as cited in Lane, 2004, p. 59).

The final pillar of Lin's Tao of IT leaders framework is agility, or the ability to move effectively and with quickness. Lin explained that leaders should make timely and effective business decisions to keep the organization moving. Lin further claimed

passion, humility, openness, and clarity when combined and implemented should almost always produce a competitive advantage in the form of increased organizational effectiveness and efficiency (as cited in Lane, 2004, p. 60). Lin expressed that the leadership framework was modeled after the most enlightened expression of leadership.

This dissertation study involved exploring the effectiveness of the government intelligence IT project managers' ability to leverage interpersonal communication during leadership interactions with their government IT contractors. The results of the study might improve organizations' IT projects performance, cost, and schedule with the ultimate goal of improving organizations' effectiveness and efficiency.

<div align="center">Definition of Terms</div>

For the purpose of the research, the following operational definitions provide a basis for understanding the context of specific terms contained within the research study:

Communication. Communication is a process of sending and receiving messages with attached meanings (Schermerhorn, Hunt, & Osborn, 2003).

Communication effectiveness. Communication effectiveness is the goal-oriented behaviors that enhance or facilitate the outcome of an interpersonal encounter (Campbell, 1989).

Contractors. A contractor is a person, firm, corporation, or other legal entity obligated under the contract with the agency (United States Department of Agriculture, 2006).

Effective Communication. The balance of intended message from the sender is received with the same perceived meaning. Effective communication requires active

listening of both parties (sender/source and receiver) during verbal conversations (Roger, 1961).

Information technology (IT). IT is "computer hardware and software used in the acquisition, storage, manipulation, management, movement, control, display, switching, interchange, transmission, or reception of knowledge, information, or data" (Defense Acquisition University, 2002, p. 199).

Intelligence Community (IC). The IC is a federation of executive branch agencies and organizations that conduct intelligence activities necessary for the conduct of foreign relations and the protection of the national security (United States Intelligence Community, 2005a, para 1).

Interpersonal communication. Interpersonal communication refers to "the process of communicating and interacting with other people" (Long Beach City College Foundation, 2004, p. 2).

Leadership. Leadership is the process of directing individuals and instilling motivation and desire (Adair, 2002; Bennis & Nanus, 1985).

Phenomenological case study. A phenomenological case study is a study that includes attempts to understand experiences and perspectives to gain a better understanding of a phenomenon (Leedy & Ormrod, 2001; Moustakas, 1994).

Project manager. A project manager is the person assigned by the performing organization to achieve the project objectives (PMI, 2004).

<div align="center">Assumptions</div>

An initial assumption was that 20 government intelligence IT project managers within the metropolitan Washington, DC, area would be willing to participate in the

proposed study. Many government intelligence IT projects are classified. The researcher assumed that government intelligence IT project managers who have managed government intelligence IT projects would be able to discuss their interpersonal communication during leadership interactions with their government IT contractors openly. A further assumption was that the participants would understand the confidentiality of the study and provide candid and honest feedback based on their perceptions as government intelligence IT project managers and their interpersonal communication interactions with their government IT contractors. The final assumption was that the participants would openly discuss their organizations' outcome effectiveness and efficiency based on the interpersonal communication between the study participants and their government IT contractors.

Scope

The scope of the study was limited to U.S. government intelligence IT project managers or previous U.S. government intelligence IT project managers who completed a minimum of two IT projects within the IC. The success or failure of the project was not be a factor for selection; the participants leading or managing the projects were required to have direct interactions with their government IT contractors. A sample of 20 government intelligence IT project managers participated in interviews. The participants were interviewed using open-ended questions to identify themes (Creswell, 2005).

Limitations

The research study was limited to U.S. government intelligence IT project managers or previous U.S. government intelligence IT project managers from the IC in the metropolitan Washington, DC area. Each participant led a minimum of two IT

projects or served as a government IT project manager assigned to a government intelligence organization. Each participant managed an IT project that leveraged government supporting IT contractors. Many of the research participants worked in classified environments and this may have limited responses because of the security sensitivity involved. A final limitation was potential bias from the participants and the researcher (Dereshiwsky, 1999).

Delimitations

The study was limited to interviewing U.S. federal government intelligence IT project managers. Creswell (2003) suggested that delimitations narrow the scope of a study. The perspectives of 20 U.S. government intelligence IT project managers in the metropolitan Washington, DC area, who completed a minimum of two IT projects with supporting IT contractors, were explored. Emergent themes relating to interpersonal communication skills proficiency during leadership interactions with supporting IT contractors were sought. The researcher hypothesized that the data from the study would indicate that interpersonal communications affect the organizations' desired outcome.

Summary

IT leaders invest heavily in IT and by 2008, organizations will invest an estimated $3 trillion annually in IT (Yamada et al., 2004). Stang (2004) found that only 30% of global IT projects in 2004 realized expected outcomes. The IC is a federation of 15 executive branch agencies working independently and collectively to protect the United State's national security (United States Intelligence Community, 2005a). Government intelligence IT project managers' lack of effective interpersonal communication skill proficiency during leadership interactions with their supporting IT contractors affects

their organizations' performance outcomes. Chapter 1 included an introduction to the research topic, a discussion of the purpose of the study, and an explanation of two theoretical frameworks that led the study.

A qualitative, phenomenological case study design allowed a synthesis of the study participants' lived experiences and perspectives. Twenty government intelligence IT project managers participated in unstructured, digitally audio-taped interviews, which were transcribed. The data was analyzed using the modified van Kaam method by Moustakas (1994). Chapter 2 presents a comprehensive literature review on the importance of the U.S. government and the services it provides. Chapter 2 includes an exploration of the U.S. government resources; contractor human resources; IT; IT management competencies, knowledge, and skills; IT project management; and communication.

CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The purpose of the qualitative, phenomenological case study, using a modified van Kaam method by Moustakas (1994), with digital audio-taped and transcribed unstructured interviews was to explore perceptions of 20 U.S. government intelligence information technology (IT) project managers in the metropolitan Washington, DC area. A focus of the study was on how the participants leveraged the use of interpersonal communication during leadership interactions with their IT contractors to improve their organizations' effectiveness and efficiency outcomes. A common problem is that many government intelligence IT project managers lack effective interpersonal communication skill proficiency during leadership interactions with supporting IT contractors, resulting in reduced organizational performance effectiveness outcomes. The phenomenological research design was appropriate because, as Moustakas concluded, the purpose of the study was to determine what an experience means for the individuals who have had the experience and are able to offer a comprehensive description of the experience (p. 13).

Conducting the study involved qualitative thematic analysis. For the purpose of the study, the first step involved describing the participants' interpersonal communication skill proficiency during leadership interactions with supporting IT contractors. Second, the study involved explaining how participants' interpersonal communication enhanced organizational effectiveness outcomes. Third, the study focused on explaining how the participants' interpersonal communications skills may have reduced organizational effectiveness outcomes. Fourth, the study involved examining what interpersonal communication skills government intelligence IT project managers require during leadership interactions with supporting IT contractors.

Refinement of the data from the participant interviews resulted in common, similar, and emergent themes relating to the lack of interpersonal communication skill proficiency during leadership interactions with supporting IT contractors. Organizational leaders may benefit from the findings on interpersonal communication competencies and the lack of effective interpersonal communication between government IT project managers and their supporting IT contractors. The results may reveal organizational mentoring opportunities as they relate to interpersonal communication.

Chapter 2 includes a review of literature relevant to leadership and government intelligence IT project managers' interpersonal communication skill proficiency during leadership interactions with their supporting IT contractors. A definition of leadership and the historical perspective of IT, as well as information on the U.S. federal government, the purpose and services of the U.S. federal government, and the purpose of intelligence are presented. Chapter 2 includes a discussion of U.S. federal government resources, government and contractor human resources, IT, IT leadership, IT project management, communication, effective communication, and interpersonal communication. The literature review highlights a gap in the research literature related to the exploration of government intelligence IT project managers' interpersonal communication skill proficiency during leadership interactions with supporting IT contractors.

Literature Review

A comprehensive literature review involved the major theoretical concepts of leadership, IT leadership, and the U.S. federal government. The literature review also included the U.S. federal government lines of business, U.S. government intelligence, IT,

contractor human resources, government human resources, government contract

managers, government intelligence contract managers, government intelligence IT

contract program managers, and interpersonal communication. Table 1 illustrates the

sources reviewed, categorized by the theories and search topics that supported the study.

The review of literature resulted in 100 references.

Table 1

Summary of Literature Reviewed by Search Topic

Theoretical concept & search topic	Peer-reviewed journal article	Dissertation	Web site	Book/ report	Total
Leadership	8		2	4	14
U.S. federal government	10		3	2	15
Intelligence	1		8		9
Government human resource	1		7		8
Contractor human resource			5	1	6
IT	12		3	5	20
Communication	12		7	9	28
Total	44	0	35	21	100

Leadership

Leadership forms a critical component in past, present, and future environments

(Safferstone, 2007). Leadership will continue to have a purposeful outcome within

organizations. Deming (as cited in Safferstone, 2007) contended that the purpose of

leadership is to help organizations perform more effectively and efficiently using

available resources. Bennis and Nanus reported that four themes or strategies describe the foundation of leadership: attention through vision, meaning through communication, trust through positioning, and the deployment of self (as cited in Safferstone, 2007).

Leadership competencies are critical to organizations achieving their desired outcome. Latham and Vineyard (2005) cited leadership competencies as including core purpose, mission, values and vision. Contemporary authors, such as Bennis, Drucker, and Kotter concurred with Latham and Vineyard in identifying critical leadership components in organizations (Safferstone, 2007). Authors continue to advocate the need for leadership in organizations because effective leadership influences organizational performance effectiveness. Safferstone highlighted the emphasis academics and practitioners place on leadership as a crucial component for everyone involved in organizational performance (para. 2).

Kelly and Nadler (2007) supported the idea of leadership not being limited to the people holding designated positions in organizations. Kelly and Nadler suggested that organizations need leadership at all levels. The authors further indicated that leadership from below is a powerful force for creating change, promoting creativity, realizing flexibility, and helping organizations become more efficient and effective.

Regarding the importance of leadership, Bennis (as cited in Leadership Trust Foundation, 2007) explained that no one capability or process leads to the success of an organization; however, the entity with the most significant impact would be leadership. Krause described leadership as the single most important task for society, and Krause and Bennis (as cited in Leadership Trust Foundation, 2007) believed that organizations need

to do what is necessary to develop current and future leaders. Leadership characteristics are essential to becoming an effective leader.

Leadership Characteristics

Safferstone (2007) observed that the following individuals might be leaders or individuals appropriate for leadership positions: People who present a clear vision of the future, set strategic directions, and realize desired results; who consciously and positively motivate, influence, and develop others; and who build long-lasting relationships and establish collaborative networks. In addition, leaders include people whose ethical behavior and value systems result in doing the right things right and people who integrate intellect, empathy, and action. Katz and Salaway (2004) suggested that effective communicators are essential.

The U.S. Office of Personnel Management (USOPM) leadership competencies align with Safferstone's (2007) qualities. The USOPM (2007) described the following as leadership competencies for U.S. federal government senior executives: leading change, leading people, being results driven, exhibiting business acumen, and building coalitions. According to Safferstone (2007), Drucker, Bennis, and Kotter are gurus of leadership and management. The authors' ideas align with USOPM leadership competencies. Safferstone noted the following about Drucker:

> Drucker instructs organizational leaders to accomplish the right things …. He counsels executives to plan and manage their time, understand their skills and capabilities, appropriately design jobs, staff positions and promote people accordingly, prioritize job tasks and exercise self-control, and make effective decisions. (para. 1)

Drucker (as cited in Safferstone, 2007) further suggested that technology, the knowledge economy, and knowledge workers would affect future leaders. Bennis (as cited in Safferstone, 2007) contended that leaders possess three key leadership attributes, which include a sense of purpose; passion and the ability to effectively communicate that passion to others; and integrity, which comprises self knowledge, candor, and maturity (para. 3). Kotter proposed that leadership functions include establishing organizational direction; aligning people in accordance with the strategic plan of the organization; and motivating and inspiring people, which might result in organizational change (as cited in Safferstone, 2007).

Distinction between Leadership and Management

Bennis and Nanus (2003) indicated a difference between leadership and management. The authors defined management as accomplishing or being responsible for and defined leadership as guiding or influencing a course or action. Bennis and Nanus argued that managers do things right and leaders do the right thing. The authors further explained the distinction as one of efficiency versus effectiveness (p. 21). Bennis and Nanus conducted extensive research on both management and leadership in private and public sectors and revealed another compelling difference between leadership and management. The authors implied that managers surrender to social and organizational situations, but leaders often master those situations and provide the necessary personal characteristics to predicate future individual and organizational success.

Kotter (1990) conducted research on the difference between leadership and management. The author suggested that organizations can no longer ignore leadership or management as they undergo development, redesign, or restructuring. Kotter proposed

that leadership and management complement each other and enhance businesses seeking globalization.

Kotter (1990) identified roles and responsibilities that distinguish leadership from management. The primary functions of leadership are to establish directions within an organization, align people with the vision of the organization, motivate and inspire people, and produce change. Management functions within an organization include planning and budgeting, organizing and staffing, controlling and problem solving, and producing a degree of predictability and order. Kotter firmly stated that both leadership and management are necessary for success.

Maccoby (2000) concurred with Kotter (1990) observing that managers are administrators, planners, and monitors of business processes. Maccoby acknowledged that leaders are responsible for change. Kotter (2007) suggested that many organizations exhibit paralysis because they do not understand the relationship between leadership and management. The author further explained that managers are responsible for business execution and risk management while leaders are responsible for strategic directions.

Types of Leaders

Types of leaders include strategic and operational (Maccoby, 2000). The strategic leader envisages the company's future and invests the necessary resources to accomplish the proposed visions. The operational leader implements the vision of the strategic leader. Common attributes of both leaders include selecting talent; motivating people; coaching; and building trust among stakeholders, employees, and customers.

Burns (as cited in Safferstone, 2007) presented germinal research on the historical, political, psychological, and social perspectives of leadership. The work

illustrates two distinct types of leadership: transactional and transformational. Burns described a transactional leaders as those who anticipate quid pro quo and transforming leaders as those who anticipate their followers' needs and demands. Burns (as cited in Korkmaz, 2007) added that leaders motivate or direct others to accomplish organizational outcomes by defining rules, roles, and responsibilities. Bass described transactional leadership as a leader punishing or rewarding their personnel according to their behavior (as cited in Korkmaz, 2007, p. 22).

Transformational leaders inspire followers and help move followers beyond their own self-interests (Bass, 1999). Posner and Kouzes (2002) agreed with Bass (1999) and mentioned inspiration as a key theme. Posner and Kouzes believed that transformational leaders provide vision and strategic directions to an organization allowing the organization to define a desired future state. Agreeing with Posner and Kouzes, Porterfield and Kleiner (2005) described a transformational leader as a skillful communicator who inspires followers, translates vision into reality, and leads an organization in times of change.

Many leaders pursue the spotlight. Posner and Kouzes (2005) pointed out that leadership does not require one to be boastful; however, leadership does require one to believe in and develop people. Bass (1999) expressed that charisma is evident when a transformational leader's followers respect, trust, and like him.

Handford and Coetsee (2003) conducted a study in South Africa on the transformational leadership characteristics that are critical for leaders to introduce change and mobilize people. Leaders who are able to address and create natural changes within an organization may be the most successful in leading organizations. Such leadership

describes a transformational leader. Handford and Coetsee concluded that the critical transformational leadership skills needed to mobilize people includes developing a strategic plan, communicating a vision, empowering people and prioritizing commitments (p. 25).

<div align="center">U.S. Federal Government</div>

Several researchers provided a definition of government. Magleby et al. (2006) argued that government includes the mechanisms that people use to govern themselves, such as procedures and institutions. Magleby et al. further described government as those people elected or appointed to promote the nation's welfare and liberty.

The U.S. Constitution established the framework for the U.S. federal government (Magleby et al., 2006). The Business Dictionary (2008) indicated that the definition of government includes a group of people who may define, initiate, and carry out policy, exercising executive, opinionated, and sovereign power throughout government. Hatfield (2007) supported Magleby et al. and further explained that the Constitution outlines federal government authority. The Constitution established three government branches, strategically empowering each branch, and distinguished their functions (United States Department of State, 2006). The government branches are the Executive Branch represented by the President of the United States, the Judicial Branch represented by the Supreme Court, and the Legislative Branch represented by Congress.

Purpose of the U.S. Federal Government

Many authors have described the purpose of the U.S. government. Ladd suggested that the purpose of government is to protect people from injuring each other (as cited in Watts, 2005). Paden (2007) explained that the purpose of government is to protect the

rights of U.S. citizens. Powell (2005) suggested that the role of government is to protect and secure the rights of U.S. citizens, not to grant rights. United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan (as cited in Goldsmith & Krasner, 2003) stated that the government's main role is to protect individual rights.

Hobbes explained that the sole purpose of government is to protect and preserve U.S. citizens' property (as cited in Henry, 2005). Foster (2005) believed that the function of government is to protect the rights and freedoms of all human beings. Smith agreed by suggesting that the purpose of government is to protect all U.S. citizens (as cited in Powell, 2004). Lakoff (2004) elaborated that the role of government is to prevent corruption and protect ethics.

Kantz believed that the purpose of government is to protect the right to life, liberty, and pursuit of happiness as the inalienable endowment of humankind (as cited in Jeffries, 2004). Confucius contended that government is responsible for the wellbeing of all people (as cited in Armstrong et al., 2004). The FY07 Budget Formulation Federal Enterprise Architecture (FEA) Consolidated Reference Model Document (2005) indicated that the purpose of government is to provide services to and on behalf of the citizens of the United States of America. Many scholars, authors, and politicians have an opinion about the purpose of government. The literature illustrates that the purpose of government may vary for different people; the fact that government provides a service to citizens remains.

Services of the U.S. Federal Government

Weber explained that when people work together in complex organizations, goods and services are provided more efficiently (as cited in Heineman, Peterson, &

Rasmussen, 1995, p. 205). Heineman et al. noted that America was founded in 1789 and that during this time, Americans did not expect much from the U.S. federal government. However, 200 years later, citizens' requirements reflect a significant increase in government services. Government plays a major role in the lives of its citizens. Heineman et al. supported the notion that government is critical and suggested that government is instrumental in people's lives from birth to death.

The U.S. federal government employs approximately 2.7 million civilian workers to provide services to and on behalf of its citizens (FY07 Budget Formulation, 2005). The U.S. federal government includes numerous organizations to assist with providing services to its citizens. Scholars classify the organizations that provide services to the government as (a) departments, (b) independent agencies, (c) independent regulatory commissions, and (d) government corporations (Magleby et al., 2006).

Magleby et al. (2006) explained that 15 executive branches exist at the highest level to provide services:

1. Department of State

2. Department of the Treasury

3. Department of Defense

4. Department of Justice

5. Department of Interior

6. Department of Agriculture

7. Department of Commerce

8. Department of Labor

9. Department of Health and Human Services

10. Department of Housing and Urban Development

11. Department of Transportation

12. Department of Energy

13. Department of Education

14. Department of Veterans Affairs

15. Department of Homeland Security (p. 344).

Congress strategically aligns the independent agencies, independent regulatory commissions, and government corporations to the executive departments. The agencies support lines of businesses that provide services to U.S. citizens.

The federal government has 39 lines of business (LOB) that support services provided to citizens (FY07 Budget Formulation, 2005). The business reference model serves as a framework for the services provided in the government's LOB. The federal government's 39 LOB include defense and national security, economic development, education, energy, environmental management, law enforcement, litigation and judicial activities, transportation, natural resources, and intelligence operations. The federal government identified the LOB as follows: (a) defense and national security (b) disaster management (c) economic development (d) education (e) energy (f) environmental management (g) law enforcement (h) litigation and judicial activities (i) transportation (j) natural resources and (k) intelligence operations (FY07 Budget Formulation, 2005). Because intelligence was a central component of this study, the intelligence LOB warrants further exploration.

Intelligence Lines of Business

Tenet (as cited in United States Intelligence Community, 2005b), a former director of the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), defined intelligence as handling the unknown and issues related to what the United States' enemies hope to conceal. Executive Order 12333 (as cited in United States Intelligence Community, 2005b) noted that intelligence is timely and accurate information about the activities, capabilities, plans, and intentions of foreign powers, organizations, persons and foreign agents. The Executive Order explained that the information is essential to the national security of the U.S. (para. 1).

The FY07 Budget Formulation (2005) indicated that intelligence operations serve as a LOB within the United States government. Activities within the intelligence LOB include five operations. The first operation, Intelligence planning and direction/needs, establishes policymakers, the President, the NSC, military commanders, and other officials' intelligence requirements. The next operation, intelligence collection, involves gathering raw data from multiple sources. The third operation, intelligence analysis and production, involves processing the data to created finished intelligence. This processing might involve the translation, decryption, and interpretation of data stored on various forms of media. The fifth operation involves disseminating and delivering the intelligence to others.

The intelligence LOB has existed and been a necessity within the federal government for centuries. Jefferson was responsible for the first covert attempt between 1804 and 1805 (CIA, 2005a). The intelligence community (IC) continues to leverage espionage to achieve a level of success. Espionage is the world's second oldest profession

(Pieciak, 2004). America's founders agreed that obtaining good intelligence is necessary and most people agree that intelligence is needed to keep the country safe from foreign and domestic enemies (as cited in CIA, 2005a).

Purpose of Intelligence

Many authors have identified the purpose of intelligence. McConnell (n.d.) proposed that the U.S. faces more threats today than ever before and that the country must not delay its response. McConnell emphasized intelligence customer service, integration, improved analysis, transparency, and technology capabilities to penetrate the seemingly impenetrable. Strickland (2004) concurred by advocating that the purpose of intelligence is to collect relevant information and to develop and implement reliable strategies that may influence the nation. The function of intelligence services is to provide analysis relevant to national security, provide early warnings of potential crisis, assist with global crisis management, provide input for defense planning and military operations, protect sensitive information and the sources of the information, and covertly influence activities and outcomes in favor of national interests (Law, Schreier, & Stocker, 2006).

The IC consists of eight organizations: National Security Agency, Defense Intelligence Agency, National Reconnaissance Office, National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency, Air Force Intelligence, Army Intelligence, Navy Intelligence, and Marine Corps Intelligence Department (Hula, n.d.). The three major intelligence agencies in the Department of Defense are the National Security Agency, National Reconnaissance Office, and National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency (United States Intelligence Community, 2005b). Each intelligence agency has a specific intelligence mission.

The National Security Agency is responsible for signals intelligence and has collection sites throughout the world. The National Reconnaissance Office develops and operates reconnaissance satellites. The National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency prepares geospatial data ranging from maps and charts to sophisticated computerized databases necessary for targeting in an era dependent upon precision-guided weapons (United States Intelligence Community, 2005b).

In 1947, President Truman signed the National Security Act establishing the CIA (CIA, 2007b). The CIA's mission is to provide senior policymakers with national security intelligence. This mission involves collecting information, producing timely analysis, and conducting covert actions. Intelligence is a resource of the federal government. The following section includes a discussion of other forms of government resources.

Government Resources

The Bureau of Justice Assistance (2006) defined resources as "assets available and anticipated for operations. They include people, equipment, facilities, and other things used to plan, implement, and evaluate public programs whether or not paid for directly by public funds" (para. 24). The federal government uses several resources to service its citizens, including human resources, contractor resources, and IT.

Government Human Resources

Tracy (as cited in Heathfield, 2006) defined human resources as those people responsible for operating and maintaining an organization. Government leaders often depend on human resource management to realize organizational performance effectiveness and efficiency. Human resource management has far-reaching implications for the management of the Department of Defense and for civil service across the federal

government (USGAO, 2006). An example of the far-reaching implications inherited by government human resources is distinguishing between activities that are inherently governmental and activities that might best serve the citizens of the U.S. if outsourced. Goodsell (2007) warned that the implications might present certain moral and economic challenges.

The President's Management Agenda indicates and sets the priority areas where federal managers should focus their attention to provide the most efficient and effective administrative support and infrastructure for achieving the government's mission (USOMB, n.d.). The Human Resources Service Division supports the top five initiatives in the President's Management Agenda. Knight (2003) listed the five management agenda initiatives as strategic management of human capital, expanded electronic government, competitive sourcing, improved financial performance, and budget and performance integration.

To further realize the importance of human resources, Congress passed the Civil Service Reform Act of 1978 (CSRA) recognizing Congress, the President, and the USOPM as the principle authorities behind the civil service (Litak, 2005). The USOPM is directly responsible for identifying mission-critical occupations and competencies needed in the United States federal government (USOPM, n.d.). The USOPM is the only independent government human resource management agency. The mission of the USOPM is to build and train a highly competitive and diverse federal government workforce that supports the citizens of the United States. The basis of the workforce is its ability rather than its political connections. Because of the explosion, impact, and lack of government competencies in the area of automation and computers in the workforce, the

USOPM created the IT work series (also known as the GS-2210 series) within the federal government (USOPM, 2001a). The USOPM explained that the scope of the GS-2210 series is planning, coordinating, controlling, directing, organizing and administering IT principles, concepts, and methods. The USOPM also established academic and technical competencies fore each pay grade within the GS-2210 series (USOPM, 1999).

Contractor Human Resources

Human resources for IT contractors often serve as a liaison between the federal government and a contracting agency that may perform work for the federal government. Many government agencies define contracting as a legally binding agreement. Cooper and Schindler (2003) suggested that contracts are resources federal government employees serving in a decision-making capacity use to perform services on behalf of U.S. citizens.

The United States Department of Agriculture (2006) indicated that a contractor is a person, firm, corporation, or other legal entity obligated under a contract with an agency. The New York State Department of Transportation (2004) illustrated that a contractor is an individual, firm, or corporation undertaking the execution of work under the terms of the contract and acting directly or through agents or employees. Turco noted that contractors provide many services and supplies to the federal government at stated prices for a specific time frame within the 48 contiguous states, the District of Columbia, Alaska, Hawaii, and overseas (as cited in United States General Service Administration, 2006).

Contractors provide the required services to government agencies, and as a result, the contractors' human resources are required to maintain all transactions including job

offers, applications, and resumes, interview notes, tests and test results, written employment policies and procedures, and personnel files. Moreover, contractors' human resources must be both acquainted with and practitioners of numerous government policies, acts, laws, executive orders, and hiring practices (United States Department of Labor, 2006). The Department of Energy (1998) emphasized the importance of contractor human resource management by issuing an order (DOE O 350.1) outlining their contractor human resource management program. The program supports the strategic plan, mission, and vision of the Department of Energy with a primary focus on contractor human resource management activities.

Information Technology

Pohle (as cited in Locher, Lynch, Wailgum, & Walsh, 2007) maintained that IT is a critical resource with global implications. The mid-20th century brought the realization of IT capabilities. Since that period, IT capabilities are essential for organizations to achieve their desired outcomes.

The IT industry emerged approximately 40 years ago with the advent of the IBM 360 (Field & Stoddard, 2004). Few organizations have learned to leverage and manage technology to achieve their desired outcome. Lee (2003) asserted that IT would significantly affect organizations' overall performance outcomes. Lee further noted that IT is a major driver toward an economy. Mott agreed and explained that IT is critical in business practices. Mott further described IT as a game changer and can elevate an organizations standing within their respective industry (as cited in Locher et al., 2007, p. 38).

Mutsaers, van der Zee, and Gierz (1998) explained that IT was becoming increasingly important to organizations. Chambers (2007) suggested that, over the past decade, IT changed the way people live, work, play, and learn. The author warned that changes have been minimal compared to the global impact IT will have in the future. The United States Bureau of Labor Statistics (as cited in Chambers, 2007) noted that computer-based jobs will be one of the fastest growing occupations through 2012 with a growth rate in the U.S. of 40-70%.

<center>Information Technology Leadership</center>

Effective IT leadership is critical for organizations to achieve organizational performance effectiveness and efficiency. IT is instrumental in current and future initiatives in many organizations. Transformational leadership is necessary for organizations to optimize their desired future outcomes. CNET (2007) suggested that a transactional leadership style typically works best with information technology evaluation.

Mingay et al. (2004) stated that IT leadership involves understanding the strategic plan, inspiration, motivation, values and the organizational environment (p. 2). Understanding and applying leadership in the business environment are critical to enabling IT leaders to support their organizations' ability to achieve business objectives. Mingay et al. pointed out that a difference exists between leadership and management. The focus of management is on how to get the job done through execution, organization, planning, control, performance, and coordination while ensuring continual improvement.

While IT leadership is important for organizations to realize desired business outcomes, the study of IT leadership is new. IT leadership has become a primary focus

area within the last 10 years (Schubert, 2004). However, IT leadership has not been a focus area for public or private industries.

Shpilberg, Berez, Puryear, and Shah (2007) reported that IT remains a challenge for most organizations because leaders focus on symptoms rather than the root causes of IT challenges. Leadership at the highest level of organizations does not understand IT challenges (Hawkins, Rudy, & Wallace, 2002). Hawkins et al. stated that a new kind of leadership is needed.

The role of IT leaders has evolved as IT has become more prevalent within organizations. The position of IT leader in many organizations has expanded to the business executive level (Rockart, 1987). For organizations to achieve their strategic objectives, they must realize four IT leadership characteristics. According to Rockart, these IT leadership characteristics include significant business knowledge, an ability to lead using a variety of pathways, and the ability to educate themselves line management and other staff about their new responsibilities.

Interpersonal communication skills are essential to IT leaders. Schubert (2004) emphasized that the IT leader is responsible for key organizational planning and strategy. IT leaders must assume a robust role in communicating within an organization (Hawkins, 2004). Hawkins recommended that leaders serve as teachers, facilitators, coaches, and mentors. He further recommended that the IT leader able to communicate at all levels and possess the ability to listen before being heard. IT leaders must be transparent when communicating across organizations.

Numerous modern-day chief information officers (CIOs) supported Hawkins' (2004) view that the CIO's position is critical to IT organizations. The modern-day CIOs

described internal and external relationships as essential to IT organizations' success. Bailar described the most important aspect about being an IT leader is the ability to engage with the right people, who will support and rally around the right ideas and help make them possible (as cited in Locher et al., 2007, p. 43). Boushy (2007) concurred and explained that an extension of IT within an organization is the relationships established with customers (as cited in Locher et al., 2007).

According to Carter (as cited in Locher et al., 2007), establishing trust among stakeholders and employees is a critical success factor for creating relationships internal and external to IT organizations. Doucette (as cited in Locher et al., 2007) observed that organizations often laud CIOs for their technical competencies instead of their business knowledge. Ford (as cited in Locher et al., 2007) posited that focusing on technology is essential; however, focusing on people and relationships is paramount. Ford suggested that providing people with opportunities is most important.

Katz and Salaway (2004) proposed that the most effective IT leaders are those who understand and adopt transformational leadership qualities. IT leadership competencies include being visionary, communicating, inspiring, empowering, motivating, and encouraging. Transformational leadership skills are necessary at the top of an organizational hierarchy if an organization is to achieve long-term success. Many organizations are realizing the necessity of transformational leadership and are developing leaders with transformational leadership skills.

Caruso and Gentry (2005b) noted the importance of presenting a clear, compelling vision to the organization's internal and external stakeholders and empowering others to follow the leader in accomplishing a goal. Caruso and Gentry

prescribed that IT leaders provide a vision for their organization, communicate their vision, and inspire and empower others to achieve organizational and personal outcomes. IT leaders also possess a great deal of integrity. According to Caruso and Gentry, many IT organizations seldom utilize effective leadership selection methods. Mingay (2004) described the following leadership capabilities and skills as instrumental in positioning an IT leader for success: (a) delivering on commitments; (b) setting and communicating a clear vision and agenda; (c) assessing and establishing direction with stakeholder support and sponsorship; (d) engaging with business executives and facilitating discussions on how technology can help them; (e) inspiring and motivating staff; (f) influencing senior executives, the business and third parties; (g) improving sourcing management skills; and (h) developing commercial skills.

Credibility is an important characteristic of leadership. Mingay et al. (2004) believed that credibility is a key IT leadership characteristic. Mingay et al. suggested that IT leaders adopt a 21st century mindset. They argued that the latter would allow IT leaders to make better strategic and operational decisions while building business credibility.

The literature review illustrates that IT leadership is paramount to organizations achieving their desired business outcomes. IT leaders and managers must be able to communicate, understand, and employ key IT leadership competencies effectively to help organizations achieve the desired outcome from IT investments. The study involved exploring 20-government intelligence IT project managers' perceptions of their relationship with their IT contractors. IT leadership is related to Lin's Tao of IT leaders theoretical framework (as cited in Lane, 2004).

Lin's Tao of IT leaders framework leverages IT leaders displaying leadership characteristics to help organizations to achieve desired business outcomes. Lin (as cited in Lane, 2004) described passion for the profession and people within the industry as a necessity for leaders. Without passion, leaders will experience problems understanding and developing the institutional knowledge needed to achieve business objectives (Lane, 2004, p. 57).

Lin (as cited in Lane, 2004) recommended that IT leaders listen with humility and learn to understand their staff to gain trust. Lin also emphasized that leaders need clarity for leadership effectiveness. Clarity is the ability to make issues simple and a necessary competency for leaders. Lin defined agility as the ability to move swiftly and effectively. Lin explained that agility is the collective result of passion, humility, openness, and clarity.

The fundamentals described by Lin (as cited in Lane, 2004)., when combined and implemented, may produce a competitive advantage in organizational efficiency. Lin's Tao of IT leaders framework illustrates an approach that IT leaders and managers can use to help organizations achieve business goals and objectives. Shpilberg et al. (2007) insisted that executives are responsible for aligning IT with the organization's business processes and indicated that lack of alignment can lead to IT failing or being irrelevant.

Information Technology Project Management

The literature aligns with the belief that government intelligence IT project managers' lack of interpersonal communication skills proficiency during leadership interactions with their government IT contractors affects their organizational effectiveness and efficiency. This study involved an exploration of the perceptions of 20

government intelligence IT project managers of their ability to leverage interpersonal communication with their government IT contractors. The government intelligence IT project managers' ability to manage IT projects are significant to achieving a level of IT project management success.

PMI notes that a project is a temporary endeavor undertaken to create a unique product, service, or result (PMI, 2004, p. 5). The PMI further indicated that project management is the application of knowledge, skills, abilities, tools, and techniques to project activities to meet project requirements. Schwalbe (2006) explained that IT projects involve the utilization of networks, hardware and software to create products or results. There is no definitive date for the discovery of project management; however, Schwalbe suggested that modern project management concepts began with The Manhattan Project, which led to the creation of the atomic bomb.

IT project management reflects continuous challenges. The Standish Group (as cited in Schwalbe, 2006) surveyed 365 IT executives in the U. S. who managed in excess of 8,380 IT application projects. The report concluded that many of the IT projects surveyed were in a state of chaos. The Standish Group reported spending of more than $2.5 billion each year in the early 1990s on approximately 175,000 IT application development projects.

The Standish Group survey illustrated that IT application development exceeded $2.3 million for large projects, $1.3 million for medium-size companies and $434,000 for small companies (as cited in Schwalbe, 2006). The survey showed that the overall success rate of IT projects was approximately 16.2% and that cancellation of more than 31% of IT projects occurred before completion costing U.S. companies and government

agencies more than $81 billion. The research indicated a need for more effective project management in the IT industry. The Standish Group (as cited in Kappelman et al., 2006) revealed that roughly 20% of IT projects are canceled before completion and less than a third are finished on time and within budget with desired outcomes (p. 31).

The literature illustrates that organizations spend billions of dollars on failed IT projects. Failure in IT project management does not happen in a vacuum. (2006) indicated that there are early warning signs before IT project failure. The authors explained that early warning signs of project failure include six process failures. According to Kappelman et al., these six process failures focus exclusively on top management, subject matter experts (SMEs), project management, project team members and stakeholders.

Schwalbe (2006) argued that organizations might realize early warning signs through the triple constraint (project scope, time, and cost), which constrain every project. Scope refers to work done as part of the project and the customer or sponsor expectations. Time refers to the length of time required to complete the project. Cost refers to the project budget and what it costs to complete the project.

Shpilberg et al. (2007) conducted a study on aligning IT. Shpilberg et al. noted that Charles Schwab and Company, in an attempt to distance itself from competitors by leveraging technology, found that improper management of IT projects led to IT projects that did not meet the project constraints of performance, goal cost, and schedule. The latter impacted business outcomes. The authors also suggested that shared ownership and governance are necessary. Organizations should tightly couple IT, organizational priorities, and strategic goals to achieve a level of success.

Christenson and Walker (2004) studied the impact of leadership on project success. The researchers reported, communicating a clearly defined shared vision is one of the most significant contributions any leader can contribute to an organization or project (p. 39). The research illustrated that project managers and leaders who leveraged leadership vision influenced the success of their projects.

The PMI (2002) illustrated the importance of project management by outlining project management competencies in the Project Manager Competency Development (PMCD) framework. The PMI indicated that the PMCD framework could be used to achieve individual and organization competencies. The PMCD framework includes the following competencies: (a) project integration management, (b) project scope management, (c) project time management, (d) project cost management, (e) project quality management, (f) project human resources management, (g) project communication management, (h) project risk management, and (i) project procurement management.

<div align="center">Communication</div>

According to Reilly (as cited in Kinsman, 2008), communication can be the key to great success or the key to failure. Bolton and Bolton (1996) suggested that communication is a key leadership component, which can affect the success or failure of an organization's mission. Gray and Robertson (2005) proposed that senior leadership assume an active role in communication to improve employees' satisfaction within an organization. Communication challenges often appear at the top or close to the top of an organization's strategic view (Imundo, 1993).

Communication is central to any organization and the vehicle through which organizations plan, organize, and implement all activities (Ahmad, 2006). The PMI (2004) defined communication as the multi-faceted manner in which information is exchanged. Communication is a process of sending and receiving messages using verbal or nonverbal mediums (Schermerhorn et al., 2003). Darling and Beebe (2007) suggested that communication is the way organizations can align groups with their goals. Darling and Beebe discussed listening as an important part of the communication process:

> A key way to enhance confidence and respect is through skillfully listening to others. Of the 90% of the time a leader spends communicating, almost half of that time is spent listening to others (Klemmer & Snyder, 1972; Nichols, 2004). Thus, listening and leadership go hand in hand. Listening, more than speaking, is what leaders do; at least what good leaders should do. (p. 85)

Garrett and Watson (2007) studied transformational leadership during a Farm Credit Canada (FCC) multiyear cultural transformational program. Leaders who received training in open and responsive communication communicated better. Garrett and Watson reported that effective organizational leaders paid particular attention to delivering clear, consistent messages about strategic enterprise outcomes. Maxwell (2007) added that communication is an important aspect of all communication.

Ahmad (2006) pointed out that a positive communication environment contributes to organizational transparency, effectiveness, and efficiency. Ahmad described performance, productivity, and organizational commitment as by-products of communication (p. 330). According to Bolton and Bolton (1996), authors often omit communication processes from organizational literature or training efforts.

Communication is one of the nine key project management competencies with project management competencies consisting of the following clusters: (a) initiating, (b) planning, (c) executing, (d) controlling, and (e) closing (PMI, 2002). Each of the communication competency clusters impacts effective entrepreneurial communication in organizational development: Excellence based on leadership strategies and values is critical to individuals and organizations achieving their desired outcomes. Boddie (2008) developed the vision, integrity, communication, inspiration, and empowerment (VICIE) transformation leadership model. Boddie cited communication as a critical transformational leadership competency. To advance IT project management, government IT leaders must communicate effectively.

Effective Communication

Without effective communication, an organization might not achieve its desired outcome. Imundo (1993) stated the following:

> Effective communication involves the transfer of information in ways that permit those who receive the information to interpret it and act upon it in the way intended. In other words, communication is the process of imparting ideas in ways that are understood by others. (p. 94)

Being able to make an informed and timely decisions are critical to most organizations. Clear precise communications can yield higher productivity and organizational effectiveness and efficiency (Fruchter, Swaminathan, Boraiah, & Upadhyay, 2007). Maxwell (2007) explained that if a leader could not communicate, he or she could not effectively lead others. The author noted three standards a leader can live by when communicating with others: consistency, clarity and courtesy. Reilly (as cited in

Kinsman, 2008) warned that if leaders do not communicate effectively with employees, employees might draw their own conclusions using incorrect information.

Teska (2003) emphasized that leaders must understand themselves and their communication style, suggesting that leadership and communication go hand in hand. Harris (2008) explained that when leaders can communicate their vision, they positively affect the organization's desired outcome as well as the personal achievements of employees. Communication influences the direction, attitude of subordinates, tone, and make of an organization (Gray & Robertson, 2005). Communication has important implications for leadership of all organizations.

The ultimate goal of communication is ensuring that the recipient receives and understands the message (Blair, n.d). According to Wyatt (as cited in Trahant, 2006), effective communication may improve employees' commitment, morale, and behavior which, in turn, directly influences organizational performance. Public and private sectors can realize desired outcomes through effective communication (Trahant, 2006).

Bennis and Nanus (2003) proposed that effective communication, trust, and positive self-regard are necessary for organizations to achieve their desired outcomes. The authors suggested that effective communication is essential to organizational outcomes, and an organization with effective communications empower, inspire and maximize their employees' full potential through education and proper alignment within the organization. Effective communication promotes efficiency and effectiveness within an organization.

Trahant (2006) explained that organizations with effective communication processes are more effective and efficient than organizations without effective

communication processes. The author qualified his findings by noting, companies that communicate effectively are 19.4% more effective with their business outcomes than companies that do not (p. 14). Wyatt announced managers execute the vision of transformational leaders (as cited in Trahant, 2006). Trahant found that 65% of high-performing organizations credited effective communication as a contributor to effective business shrewdness for managers and employees.

Effective communication is a critical transformational leadership competency. McShane and Von Glinow (2005) described effective communication as the process that transformational and transactional leaders leverage to encourage people to achieve organizational objectives. Transformational and transactional leaders either formally or informally exchange organizational communication at all levels of an organization (Bolman & Deal, 2003). Kotter (1995) offered a germinal perspective of transformational leadership and communication and discovered the following:

> Transformation is impossible unless hundreds or thousands of people are willing to help, often to the point of making short-term sacrifices. Employees will not make sacrifices, even if they are unhappy with the status quo, unless they believe that useful change is possible. Without credible communication, and a great deal of it, the hearts and minds of the troops are never captured. (p. 64)

Taylor (2006) further supported this by suggesting the communication is crucial to organizational functioning and success.

Clark (2005) believed that a key to effective communication is ensuring that the recipient of the information understands what is being conveyed. Kotter (1996) explained that leaders can be good horizontal and vertical communicators by communicating

frequently, keeping communications simple, using multiple medians, communicating with integrity and by setting an example for others to emulate. The author explained that listening and providing feedback is important. Effective communication will help leaders convey their strategic vision more effectively.

Interpersonal Communication

Interpersonal communication might influence individual and organizational outcomes. Interpersonal communication is humanity's greatest accomplishment, but the average person is ineffective when using interpersonal communications (Bolton, 1979). Rooney (2004) maintained that while humans constantly communicate, some of our communications could be misunderstood.

Bolton (1979) warned that misunderstood communication could lead to a lack of effectiveness. Wyatt (as cited in Trahant, 2006) reported that 46.5% of high performing companies ensured their managers received formal interpersonal communication skills training to enhance their leadership competencies however, only 18.3% of lower performing companies do so (p. 16). Interpersonal communication skills are integral to supervisory success (USOPM, 2001b).

Interpersonal communication consists of both verbal and nonverbal messages. Verbal and nonverbal communications are key components that allow productive work to thrive within organizations (Drucker, 1973). Trahant (2006) observed communication drives people's performance within an organization.

Borchers (1999) believed that when people communicate, they emit verbal and nonverbal cues. The author emphasized four reasons why people engage in interpersonal communication. The first reason for engaging in interpersonal communication is to gain

knowledge about another person. Social penetration theory suggests that gaining information about others can help people interact more effectively

A second reason for engaging in interpersonal communication suggests that people engage in interpersonal communication is to establish context and clarity (Borchers, 1999). The author cautioned that people could easily take what one says out of context if one does not maintain perspective (understanding the communication of ideas). A third reason people engage in interpersonal communication is to establish their identity (Borchers, 1999). Borchers asserted that realizing the rules and roles played in relationships is essential to interpersonal communication. The fourth and final reason for engaging in interpersonal communication, according to the author, is to convey interpersonal needs. Schutz (as cited in Borchers, 1999) suggested that there are three interpersonal needs: inclusion, control and affection.

Tallia, Lanham, McDaniel, and Crabtree (2006) agreed that relationships are instrumental to successful working relationships. The seven characteristics of successful work relationships are as follows:

1. Trust is the foundation for any successful collaboration. People in trusting relationships seek input from one another (and actually use it), and they allow one another to do their jobs without unnecessary oversight.

2. Diversity is the way people view the world. Whether it stems from difference in age, race, gender, education or experience, some diversity of thought will occur in any work setting.

3. Mindfulness relationships suggest people are open to new ideas.

4. Interrelatedness occurs when people are sensitive to the task at hand and understand how their work affects one another. In addition, they are continually aware of how each person contributes to the goal of the practice and the larger community.

5. Respect—Respectful interactions are considerate, honest, and tactful.

6. Varied interaction—Relationships in practices can be described as social or task related. Social relationships are personal and often based on activities that exist outside of work; task-related relationships are focused on professional issues.

7. Effective communication—Communication between individuals can be described as rich or lean. Rich channels, such as face-to-face interaction or telephone conversations, are preferred for messages with potentially unclear meaning or emotional content. (p. 48)

Watzlawick's (as cited in Griffin, 1997) interactional theory guided this study because, as noted in Watzlawick's first axiom, individuals cannot not communicate. Even if one is not actually talking, moving, or doing anything, one is still communicating a message (University of Twente, 2004). According to Andersen and Nussbaum (as cited in Daly et al., 1990), interactional skills are a prerequisite for successful discussions and an important by-product of effective communication processes. Many authors believe that Watzlawick's (as cited in Sonnendecker, n.d.) five axioms are the key to effective communication between individuals. The first axiom is that one cannot not communicate; the second axiom is that people communicate digitally and analogically. The fact that communication involves content and relationships is the third axiom. The fourth axiom is that relationships depend on how communication is punctuated sequentially. The fifth

and final axiom, based on Watzlawick's theory, is that communication should be complementary.

This research study centered on a suggestion that United States government intelligence IT project managers lack interpersonal communication skills during leadership interactions with their government IT contractors. If Watzlawick's interactional theory and axioms are correct, government intelligence IT project managers must effectively communicate with their IT contractors if their organizations are to achieve desired performance outcomes. Watzlawick's interactional theory and axioms are essential to organizational effectiveness.

Conclusion

Heineman et al. (1995) described the federal government as playing a major role in the lives of its citizens. Various researchers, such as Powell, Foster, Lakoff, and Kantz (as cited in Jeffries, 2004), indicated that the purpose of the United States federal government is to protect or provide services to U.S. citizens. A service that the federal government provides to its citizens is the intelligence LOB (FY07 Budget Formulation, 2005). According to Tenet (as cited in United States Intelligence Community, 2005b), the intelligence LOB involves exploring the unclear, the unknown, and the deliberately hidden. Tenet explained that what the enemies of the United States hope to deny, we work to reveal (para. 2).

A challenge of the federal government is an inability to manage IT projects. As previously mentioned, The Standish Group (as cited in Schwalbe, 2006) illustrated that many information technology projects are never completed. According to Kappelman et al. (2006), IT project management failures centered on project team members, top

management, project management, stakeholders in general, and subject matter experts (SMEs).

U.S. government intelligence IT project managers' ability to leverage interpersonal communication effectively during leadership interactions with their supporting IT contractors might influence the effectiveness, efficiency, and desired outcomes of their organizations. Leadership and their ability to communicate might be the two most important processes within an organization. Bennis (as cited in Leadership Trust Foundation, 2007) declared that leadership is a key factor in organizations' success. Maxwell (2007) emphasized the criticality of communication by noting, communication is the single most important instrument of leadership (p. 63). Leaders cannot lead others effectively if they cannot communicate effectively.

<div align="center">Summary</div>

The Standish Group (as cited in Schwalbe, 2006) surveyed 365 IT executives in the U.S. who managed in excess of 8,380 IT application projects. The report indicated that the identified IT projects reflected a state of chaos. The overall success rate of IT projects was 16.2%, and cancellation of more than 31% of IT projects occurred before completion costing U.S. companies and government agencies more than $81 billion. As of September 30, 2007, the federal government reported over 603 high-risk IT projects (USOMB, 2007b). Schwalbe (2006) described every project as constrained by scope, time, cost, or a combination of the three.

Several authors emphasized the importance of IT. Pohle observed that IT matters, and Doucette concurred explaining that organizations must have IT if they are to have any chance at optimizing or achieving their desired outcome (as cited in Wailgum, 2007).

A critical component of IT success within an organization is transformational leadership and the ability of the transformational leaders to communicate their vision. Katz and Salaway (2004) described the most effective leaders as those who understand and adopt a transformational leadership style.

Communication is a key characteristic of a transformational leader. Hawkins (2004) found that the IT leader should be a good communicator capable of dealing with a variety of audiences. Hawkins explained the IT leader must assume several communication roles. An IT leader must be effective as a teacher, facilitator, coach and partner.

Numerous modern-day CIOs support the notion that communication and relationships are paramount in achieving success in leading IT organizations (Locher et al., 2007). Garrett and Watson (2007) studied transformational leadership for numerous years during the FCC multiyear cultural transformational program. The areas of success within the program included leaders who were taught to communicate properly and provide effective feedback.

Interpersonal communication consists of both verbal and nonverbal messages. Verbal and nonverbal communications are key components that allow productive work to thrive within organizations (Drucker, 1973). Trahant (2006) observed that communication plays a major role in binding an organization together and is crucial to successful performance.

Wyatt (as cited in Trahant, 2006) conducted research in the area of interpersonal communications within organizations and discovered that a fair percentage (46.5%) of high performing companies formally train managers in interpersonal communications

skills, compared to only 18.3% of lower performing companies. According to the USOPM (2001b), interpersonal communication skills are a key to supervisory success. IT leaders and managers who lack the ability to communicate effectively might adversely affect their organizations' desired outcomes. Conversely, leaders and managers who can communicate effectively might help their organizations to improve effectiveness and efficiency.

Chapter 2 reflected a comprehensive literature review illustrating the major theoretical concepts of leadership, IT leadership, and the U.S. federal government. The literature review included discussion of U.S. federal government LOB, U.S. government intelligence, IT, contractor human resources, government human resources, government contract managers, government intelligence contract managers, government intelligence IT contract program managers, and interpersonal communication. Chapter 3 includes a description of the qualitative methodology used in this study. The chapter includes a discussion of the research design, appropriateness of the research design, research question, population, sampling frame, and informed consent. Details of the study related to participants' confidentiality, geographical location, instrumentation, data collection, data analysis, and validity and reliability of the data complete the chapter.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHOD

The purpose of the qualitative, phenomenological research study, using a modified van Kaam method by Moustakas (1994), with digital audio-taped and transcribed unstructured interviews, was to explore the perception of 20 government intelligence information technology (IT) project managers in the metropolitan Washington, DC area. The study involved examining the government intelligence IT project managers' lack of interpersonal communication skills during leadership interactions with their supporting government IT contractors. Chapter 3 includes discussions of the research method, the research design, and the rationale and appropriateness of the research design. An explanation of the research questions, study population, and confidentiality follows. Finally, the chapter includes an explanation of the research instrument, data collection approach, sampling frame, geographical location of interviews, and data analysis.

Research Design

Researchers are not limited to a research study design when conducting a qualitative research study. The case study, historical research, ethnography, and phenomenology research designs are viable options. A qualitative, phenomenological case study was an appropriate design for this research.

Creswell (2003) suggested that phenomenological research captured the essence of human experiences concerning a phenomenon described by the participants in a study (p. 15). The study involved describing the essence of the participants' perceptions regarding interpersonal communication experiences between the research participants and their government IT contractors. The phenomenological case study design was

appropriate because the study involved investigating and describing human perceptions based on phenomena the participants experienced.

Sanders (1982) supported the appropriateness of the phenomenological case study advocating that phenomenology moves straight to the point of a pure, logical experience. Giorgi (1997) provided further insight into the phenomenological research design by noting that the design consists of a rigorous descriptive approach that allows researchers to articulate the intentional objects of consciousness within the constraints of intuitive evidence. The study involved describing the perception of government intelligence IT project managers and describing the intentional objects of consciousness from inside of the perspective of the phenomenological reduction (p. 237).

Moustakas' (1994) modification of the van Kaam method aided in analyzing the phenomenological data. Moustakas' modification included the following steps:

(a) listing and preliminary grouping; (b) reduction and elimination; (c) clustering and thematizing the invariant constituents; (d) final identification of the invariant constituents and themes by application; (e) using relevant, validated invariant constituents and themes, construct for each co-researcher an individual textual description of the experience; (f) construct for each co-researcher an individual structural description of the experience based on the individual textual description and imaginative variation; and (g) construct for each research participant a textural-structural description of the meanings and essences of the experience, incorporating the invariant constituents and themes. (pp. 120-121)

The study reflected an exploration of the interpersonal communication interactions between government intelligence IT project managers and their government

IT contractors and the potential impact of such communication interactions on organizational effectiveness and efficiency. Case studies may provide an in-depth analysis of events, programs, activities, processes, or one or many individuals (Creswell, 2003). Yin (2003) described a case study as an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clear (p. 13).

<center>Appropriateness of Design</center>

Researchers use four common research designs: the case study, historical research, ethnography, and phenomenology. The phenomenological research design using a modified van Kaam method was appropriate for the study. The participants consisted of 20 government intelligence IT project managers or previous government intelligence IT project managers who responded to open-ended questions during interviews. Moustakas (1994) explained that the aim of phenomenological research is to determine what a specific experience means for the person who experienced it.

According to Moustakas (1994) explanation of phenomenological research, the phenomenological approach was appropriate for this study. Dowling (2004) discussed three approaches to phenomenological research: descriptive, interpretive, and a combination of the two. Dowling suggested that the descriptive phenomenology approach includes obtaining knowledge of phenomena, the he interpretive approach involves discovering hidden meaning, and the combination phenomenology approach is a combination of the descriptive and interpretive approaches.

The ethnographic design was inappropriate for this study. Creswell (2003) described ethnographies as focusing on a specific cultural group over an extended period

using observation techniques. This research study did not involve studying groups of people in cultural settings who share behavior, patterns, and beliefs.

The historical research design was also inappropriate for this dissertation study. Neuman (2003) noted that the historical research design includes examining different cultures or different periods to gain a comparative perspective. The study did not involve exploring different cultures or periods.

The purpose of the phenomenological case study was to identify the government intelligence IT project managers' interpersonal communication skills proficiency during leadership interactions with their supporting IT contractors. The study followed the seven-step modified van Kaam method to construct meaning from the research participants' perceptions (Moustakas, 1994).

<center>Research Question</center>

The following research question guided the study: How do the interpersonal communication skills between U.S. government intelligence IT project managers and their government IT contractors affect the performance effectiveness and efficiency of organizational outcomes? The study's central theme and its complementary foci included describing the participants' experience as U.S. government intelligence IT project managers who have completed intelligence IT projects leveraging IT contractors. The study also involved explaining how interpersonal communication skills might affect IT projects. Finally, there was a focus on how U.S. government intelligence leadership might help IT project managers gain the interpersonal communication skills required to improve organizational performance effectiveness outcomes.

Population

The study involved exploring the experienced perceptions of 20 U.S. federal government intelligence IT project managers or previous government intelligence IT project managers in the metropolitan Washington, DC area. The focus was on how the participants leveraged interpersonal communication with their government IT contractors to help organizations realize IT project management outcomes. Only federal government intelligence IT project managers participated in interviews for the study. The participants were required to have managed at least two IT government projects and have had direct oversight of the government IT contactors to be eligible to participate in the study.

Sampling Frame

Research participants should be willing and available during the phenomenon sampling. Meadows (2003) supported that position and described that a convenience sample consists of participants who are willing and available for survey. The study involved interviewing 20 available and willing participants. Creswell (1998) claimed that a typical sample size is 5 to 25 participants, with all having direct experience of the phenomenon under study. The participation criteria were that the participants serve or had served as government intelligence IT project managers who directly interacted with their government IT contractors as part of their project teams.

Hycner (1999) articulated, the phenomenon dictates the method and the type of participants (p. 156). The study involved purposeful sampling, which Welman and Kruger (1999) considered an important kind of nonprobability sampling that allows researchers to identify research participants. The basis of the sample selected was a specific demographic and skill set within the federal government intelligence community

(IC). Babbie, Grieg and Taylor, and Schwandt (as cited in Kruger, 1988) suggested that research participants should have experience with the phenomena being studied. Sampling involved using cold-call techniques via telephone or email to approach prospective participants from numerous government intelligence organizations. Referrals from government intelligence IT project managers and members of the IC formed the basis of the list of prospective participants. Scheduling of individual interviews at a mutually acceptable location in the metropolitan Washington, DC area occurred after identifying and selecting 20 participants who met the criteria for the study and confirming their availability.

<div align="center">Informed Consent</div>

All respondents indicated consent to participate in the study. Each participant received communication via telephone, mail, or email. Holloway (1997) emphasized that ethical research that involves humans is important, as is obtaining consent from the research participants. Bailey (1996) added that a good consent agreement should indicate the following: (a) the purpose of the study, (b) the research procedures, (c) the risk and benefits of the research, (d) the voluntary nature of research participation, (e) the participant's right to stop the research at any time, and (f) the procedures used to protect confidentiality.

Bailey (1996) suggested that honesty, coupled with confidentiality, reduced suspicion and promoted sincere responses. At the beginning of each interview, participants received an explanation of the informed consent form and signed the form (see Appendix A).

Confidentiality

Leedy and Ormrod (2001) discussed the importance of keeping personal data confidential and suggested assigning pseudonyms to distinguish between participants but maintain anonymity. The study included a pseudonym plan to identify each participant before and after data collection by interview order, month, day, and year. For example, in the pseudonym 00112242007, 001 indicates where in the sequence of interviews the interview occurred, 12 represents the month of the interview, 24 illustrates the day of the interview, and 2007 indicates the year of the interview. The data was locked in a safe, controlled and accessed only by the researcher and will be maintained for at least three years after the conclusion of the study.

Geographic Location

All interviews occurred at a mutually agreed upon location within the Washington, DC metropolitan area. The environments chosen to conduct the interviews were nondistracting and comfortable.

Instrumentation

Recording of data involved the use of a digital audio recorder during face-to-face, unstructured interviews with research participants. The audio-taped unstructured interview sessions were scheduled to last between 20 and 45 minutes. Bernard (2000) emphasized the following:

There is nothing at all informal about unstructured interviewing and nothing deceptive either. You sit down with another person and hold an interview. Both of you know what you're doing, and there is no shared feeling that you're just engaging in chit-chat. (p. 191)

Bernard noted that the basis of unstructured interviews should be a clear plan and that interviewers should not control the respondents. Interviews that exceeded the time allotted did not end until the research participants concluded that they had no more meaningful data to add to the research study.

The participants received all information pertaining to the research interview. The participants were aware of the data collection method (digital audio-taping). Each participant signed an informed consent form (see Appendix A) before the interview. The focus of the interview was the participant's perception rather than hypothetical instances. Creswell, Eisner, and Silverman (as cited in Leedy & Ormrod, 2001) suggested that researchers should allow participants to say what they want and how they want to say it.

Data Collection

Data collection included digital audio-taped and transcribed face-to-face, unstructured interviews. The participants received the informed consent form through the mail and returned it prior to the interview. Participants also received a description of the purpose of the study and the interview process, including that the process would be digitally audio-taped, analyzed, and transcribed.

Data Analysis

The NVivo 2.0 computer software application and Moustakas' (1994) modification of the van Kaam method aided in analysis of the descriptive, phenomenological data. Moustakas' modification of the van Kaam phenomenological data analysis method included the following steps:

1. Listing and preliminary grouping: The step involved listing every expression relevant to the experience (known as horizontalization).

2. Reducing and eliminating: The step involved determining the invariant constituents.

3. Clustering and identifying preliminary invariant constituents: The step involved clustering the invariant constituents of the experience that are related into a thematic label. The clustered and labeled constituents were the core themes of the experience. The NVivo 2.0 computer software application and Moustakas' (1994) modified van Kaam analysis method aided in analysis of data. NVivo 2.0 is the up-to-date version of QSR's NVivo product. NVivo 2.0 is useful for researchers who need to combine subtle coding with qualitative linking, shaping, and modeling. The NVivo 2.0 computer software integrates the processes of interpretation and focused questioning. NVivo 2.0 aids in freely editing, coding, and linking rich-text records with multimedia. The NVivo 2.0 computer software enables researchers to take qualitative inquiry beyond coding and retrieval, supporting fluid interpretation and theory emergence (QSR International, 2005).

4. Identifying the final invariant constituents and themes by application: This step involved checking the invariant constituents and their accompanying themes against the complete record of the research participant.

5. Constructing an individual textual description for each participant's interview responses using the relevant, validated invariant constituents and themes.

6. Constructing an individual structural description for each participant based on the individual textual description and imaginative variation.

7. Constructing a textual-structural description of the essences and meanings for each participant's experiences and incorporating the invariant constituents and themes.

8. Developing a composite description of the meanings and essences of the experience that represents the group as a whole using the individual textual-structural descriptions.

Validity and Reliability

Creswell (2005) explained that reliability represents stability and consistency while validity indicates that data are meaningful, make sense, and enable researchers to reach a good conclusion based on data collected. Researchers must demonstrate the validity and reliability of their research study (Cooper & Schindler, 2003). Trochim (2006) warned that the validity and reliability of data directly affect the inferences and truths that researchers might glean from their study.

Trochim (2006) further suggested qualitative research described the phenomena from the participant perspective (para. 3). Huberman and Miles (2002) explained, a concern of most qualitative researchers is how factual or accurate is the information being presented by the research participant (p. 45). Huberman and Miles defined descriptive validity as what the researcher reported seeing or hearing, as well as what was omitted.

Priest (2002) reasoned that validity, integrity, accuracy, usefulness, and believability are necessary when a research study is being considered for review. Priest also recommended, "making explicit presuppositions and acknowledging subjective judgments, prolonged engagements with the data, and verification with the source" (p.

59). The author suggested increasing the validity of data by using participants' verbatim r

quotes as examples and sharing the findings with peers.

Every attempt was made to ensure the data analysis and interpretations were clear. Subjectivity may have occurred; however, subjectivity was acknowledged and minimized wherever possible. Validation of the data occurred through reviewing the responses with the participants for concurrence.

Priest (2002) noted that realizing the start-to-finish processing of data is essential. Priest argued that establishing an audit trail for data would increase data reliability and further recommended, grounding interpretations within the data, using verbatim illustrations and ensuring the technical accuracy of the unstructured interview session recording and transcribing (p. 55). The study included an audit trail and involved ensuring data capture in its purest form by using a digital data recorder during the interview sessions.

Researcher bias can affect the validity and reliability of a research study. Creswell (2005) suggested that researchers may display bias towards the hypothesized results, therefore, causing research errors that skew the results. Kaptchuk (2003) concurred that researcher bias may produce inaccurate or skewed results.

Improving the validity and reliability of the research study involved asking the same questions of each research participant. Asking the same open-ended questions ensured consistency, mitigated confusion, and allowed for equal participation. The research participants reviewed their responses prior to formal submission. Using the NVivo software application to identify exact themes and patterns and to analyze content

helped mitigate researcher bias and aided in establishing the validity and reliability of the information.

Summary

Chapter 3 included an exploration of the purpose of the qualitative research study using a modified van Kaam method by Moustakas (1994). The participants received an explanation of the purpose of the study and the interview process to obtain their consent. The interviewees participated in a digitally audio-taped, unstructured interview process. The NVivo 2.0 software application aided in analyzing and transcribing the data to explore the perceptions of 20 federal government intelligence project managers residing in the metropolitan Washington, DC area who managed government IT contractors.

Emergent themes from the interviews may help leaders, managers, and organizations realize the potential impact of interpersonal communications on organizations' desired effectiveness and efficiency. Chapter 4 includes the validation, analysis, and presentation of the data. A detailed discussion of the study is presented in the final chapter.

CHAPTER 4: RESULTS

The purpose of this qualitative, phenomenological research study was to explore the perception of 20 government intelligence information technology (IT) project managers in the metropolitan Washington, DC, area. Regarding the data collection technique, Bernard (2000) explained, unstructured interviews are based on a clear strategic plan however, minimum controls will guide the respondents. Bernard emphasized the benefit of unstructured interviewing:

> When you want to know about the lived experience of fellow human beings—what it's like to survive hand-to-hand combat, how you get through each day when you have a child dying of leukemia, how it feels to make it across the border into Texas from Mexico only to be deported 24 hours later—you just can't beat unstructured interviewing. (p. 193)

The use of unstructured interviews enriched the study. The unstructured interviews allowed the participants latitude and flexibility when responding to the interview questions.

The study involved examining the government intelligence IT project managers' lack of interpersonal communication skills during leadership interactions with their supporting government IT contractors. This chapter includes a presentation of the results of the study in the following sections: (a) research questions, (b) data analysis, (c) demographics, (d) textural description, and (e) chapter summary.

Research Questions

The primary research question of the study was the following: How do the interpersonal communication skills between U.S. government intelligence IT project

managers and their government IT contractors affect the performance effectiveness and efficiency of organizational outcomes? Research participants answered follow-up questions based on their response to the primary research question. The basis of both the open-ended research question and the follow-up questions was the research participants' lived experiences.

Data Analysis

The study involved the phenomenological method of inquiry by identifying the research participants' personal lived perception based on their experiences (Moustakas, 1994). The modified van Kaam method, incorporating an empirical phenomenology process of analyzing the interviews, aided in a richer understanding of the data. Moustakas suggested, "The empirical phenomenological approach involves a return to experience in order to obtain comprehensive descriptions that provide the basis for a reflective structural analysis that portrays the essences of the experience" (p. 13).

The software application NVivo 2.0 aided in the data analysis. Analysis of the data involved the following steps to identify core themes and to develop a composite description of the phenomenon:

1. Listing and Preliminary Grouping

   List every expression relevant to the experience. (Horizonalization)

2. Reduction and Elimination: To determine the Invariant Constituents: Test each expression for two requirements:

   a. Does it contain a moment of the experience that is a necessary and sufficient constituent for understanding it?

b. Is it possible to abstract and label it? If so, it is a horizon of the experience. Expressions not meeting the above requirements are eliminated. Overlapping, repetitive, and vague expressions are also eliminated or presented in more exact descriptive terms. The horizons that remain are the invariant constituents of the experience.

3. Clustering and Thematizing the Invariant Constituents: Cluster the invariant constituents of the experience that are related into a thematic label. The clustered and labeled constituents are the core themes of the experience.

4. Final Identification of the Invariant Constituents and Themes by Application: Validation

   Check the invariant constituents and their accompanying theme against the complete record of the research participant. (1) Are they expressed explicitly in the complete transcription? (2) Are they compatible if not explicitly expressed? (3) If they are not explicit or compatible, they are not relevant to the co-researcher's experience and should be deleted.

5. Using the relevant, validated invariant constituents and themes, construct for each co-researcher an *Individual Textural Description* of the experience. Include verbatim examples from the transcribed interview.

6. Construct for each co-researcher an *Individual Structural Description* of the experience based on the Individual Textural Description and Imaginative Variation.

7. Construct for each research participant a *Textural Structural Description* of the meanings and essences of the experience, incorporating the invariant constituents and themes. (Moustakas, 1994, pp. 120-121)

The open-ended research interview question (see Appendix B) allowed each participant to reflect on his or her personal experiences resulting in transcribed textural examples of individual lived experiences as a government intelligence IT project manager leveraging interpersonal communication skills with supporting IT contractors to achieve a desired outcome.

The process of selecting the correct research participant and the transcription of the research interviews served as the foundational basis for the analysis of the phenomenon. The modified van Kaam method of analysis (Moustakas, 1994) and the NVivo 2.0 qualitative software were instrumental in identifying consistent themes from the transcriptions of the research participants' interviews. Manual review of all research participants' interview transcripts served as a validation of the invariant constituents. Research participants' textural-structural descriptions resulted from individual transcripts. A constituent of textural-structural descriptions of all research participants' transcripts enabled the interpretation of the lived experiences. Moustakas (1994) directed, "From the Individual Textural-Structural Descriptions, develop a Composite Description of the meanings and essences of the experience, representing the group as a whole" (p. 212).

The central research question and additional questions based on the research participants' responses formed the basis of the construction of outcomes. The data from the research participants' interviews appear in two formats: (a) written summaries and (b)

tables of responses and summarized data. Text within brackets indicates changes to responses, such as deletion of names and organizations to ensure confidentiality.

Demographics

The research participants were aware that the basis of their selection to participate in the research study was their service in the U.S. federal government intelligence community (IC) as IT project managers who led IT projects with supporting IT contractors. The research study included 20 participants from the IC. After completing the interview, the participants provided demographic background information. Appendix C contains a list of the demographic questions.

Textural Description

The interview process involved posing a primary open-ended research question and additional questions based on the participants' responses to aid in a deeper understanding of the meaning and essences of the phenomenon or experience described by the participant (Moustakas, 1994, p. 181). The initial open-ended question served as the primary question for the study to explore, from the research participants' perspective, how interpersonal communication skills between U.S. government intelligence IT project managers and their government IT contractors affect the performance effectiveness and efficiency of organizational outcomes. The data from the research interviews illustrated direct reflections of the participants' lived experiences as federal government intelligence IT project managers who lead IT projects with supporting IT contractors. The unstructured interview process, incorporating open-ended questions, allowed for researched, in-depth, and descriptive responses later captured in the textural descriptions.

Moustakas (1994) outlined that the purpose of textural descriptions is to develop the core themes and fulfill the ultimate goal of the research, a composite description of the meaning and essence of the phenomenon under study. Moustakas noted the following:

> Descriptions retain, as close as possible, the original texture of their phenomenal qualities, and material properties. Descriptions keep a phenomenon alive, illuminate its presence, accentuate its underlying meanings, [and] enable the phenomenon to linger, retain its spirit, as near to its actual nature as possible. (p. 59)

This chapter includes only participants' responses that were relevant and invariant to the study. The foundation of the transcription of textural descriptions was the open-ended primary research interview question and follow-up questions relating to the primary question. Verbatim responses to the primary research question appear in Appendix D.

Table 2 presents the general characteristics of the research participants. The profile included demographic information such as their professional positions, their project management certification program status, their education level, gender and the time they served as intelligence project managers.

Table 2

Participants' Profiles

Professional position	Project management certification	Ed level	Yrs experience	Gender
IT professor	Yes	PhD	20+	Male
IT project manager	No	Master	3	Male
IT project manager	No	Bachelor	13	Male
IT project manager	Yes	Master	5	Male
IT project manager	Yes	Bachelor	10	Male
IT project manager	No	Master	7	Male
IT project manager	No	Bachelor	11	Female
IT project manager	No	Associate	10	Male
IT project manager	Yes	Master	20	Male
IT project manager	Yes	Bachelor	15	Male
IT project manager	No	Bachelor	3	Male
IT project manager	No	Bachelor	2	Male
IT project manager	No	Bachelor	2	Male
IT project manager	No	Bachelor	15	Male
CIO	No	Master	5	Female
IT project manager	Yes	PhD candidate	8	Female
IT project manager	No	Bachelor	13	Male
IT project manager	No	Bachelor	5	Female
IT project manager	No	Master	20+	Male
IT project manager	Yes	PhD candidate	10	Female

Five core themes emerged from the research participants' responses (verbatim responses located in Appendix D): (a) leadership, (b) the need for interpersonal communication, (c) relationships, (d) significance of IT contractors, and (e) impact of improved interpersonal communication skills. The core themes described by the research participants reflected the idea that IC organizations can improve efficiency and effectiveness when managing IT projects.

Theme 1: Leadership

Leadership emerged as a core theme in the analysis of the data collected from the research participants. Of the 20 research participants, 100% explicitly discussed leadership as having a direct impact on their projects' performance effectiveness and organizational outcomes. Research participants described their IT leaders' inability to deploy interpersonal communication skills effectively as a major reason for their IT projects' less than optimal performance. Research participants also explained that many in IT leadership positions did not leverage characteristics such as empowerment, inspiration, and integrity.

Of the 20 research participants, 18 (90%) implied that leadership in their organization, as it related to their IT projects, lacked leadership competencies to assist or support the management of IT projects. The 18 research participants described how leadership affected their projects and organizational effectiveness and efficiency. The respondents provided a rich description of how leadership in their organizations lacked project and organizational vision; failed to empower and inspire personnel; and lacked the ability to leverage interpersonal communication skills during leadership interactions with stakeholders, project managers, and customers. Of the 20 research participants, only

2 (10%) claimed that IT leadership provided the support needed for IT managers to succeed.

Theme 2: The Need for Interpersonal Communication

The research participants described the need for interpersonal communication as critical to IT project managers and IT leaders achieving their organizations' desired outcomes. The 20 research participants presented interpersonal communication as the ability to interpret and communicate information via verbal, written, and nonverbal communication mediums to stakeholders (internal and external), customers, project management teams, and leadership. All research participants provided rich descriptions of how they leveraged interpersonal communication during leadership interactions with their IT contractors and or leadership to help improve IT project performance effectiveness and organizational outcomes.

The research participants described the need for interpersonal communication by emphasizing the importance of being able to listen to requirements of stakeholders, analyze the requirements, write the requirements, and develop a potential solution or desired outcome. The research participants explained the importance of face-to-face interactions allowing for the interpretation of body language and facial expressions. The respondents further discussed the need for interpersonal communication via virtual means when managing IT project teams from afar.

Theme 3: Relationships

Relationships emerged as a core theme amongst the research participants. Each of the research participants (100%) discussed relationships as a key component of the

management of IT projects and organizational outcomes. The respondents richly described their individual perceptions and experiences regarding relationships.

All of the research participants (100%) noted that relationships affected the IT projects they managed. Of the respondents, 18 (90%) suggested that they had positive relationships with their IT contractors. Two of the research participants (10%) described relationship challenges with their IT contractors as a direct result of ineffective communication.

Of the research participants, 14 (70%) reported positive relationships with IT leadership; however, six (30%) discussed negative relationships with IT leadership. The latter respondents suggested that IT leadership did not employ interpersonal communication skills, which resulted in ineffective communication, and lacked project management and leadership competencies, which further affected relationships between employees and stakeholders. Of the 20 interviewees, 5 (25%) described the cultural climate within their organization as reflecting bias against IT contractors, which created an atmosphere that affected IT projects' performance effectiveness and efficiency and organizational outcomes.

Theme 4: Significance of IT Contractors

All of the research participants (100%) described the significance of IT contractors. The respondents discussed the effect IT contractors had on their IT projects and described IT contractors as the backbone of their IT projects and subject matter experts in IT. The research participants described IT contractors as the technical consultants of senior leadership during critical technical challenges and emphasized the

global presence of IT contractors in critical mission areas, such as Iraq, Kuwait, and Saudi Arabia.

Theme 5: Impact of Improved Interpersonal Communication Skills

Of the 20 research participants, 20 (100%) described improved interpersonal communication skills as a key competency prior to assuming the role of IT project manager. The interviewees expressed that improved interpersonal communication skills fulfilled the following functions:

1. improved the ability to maneuver through the political climate within organizations;

2. assisted with written and verbal communication when managing project teams;

3. helped to internalize and transfer requirements to customers, leadership, and stakeholders; and

4. improved communication clarity and minimized ambiguity when communicating with leadership, stakeholders, customers, and the project team.

Summary

The purpose of the phenomenological case study was to explore the lived experiences and perceptions of a purposive sample of 20 government intelligence IT project managers in the metropolitan Washington, DC, area. The participants serve or served as government intelligence IT project managers who leveraged interpersonal communication skills proficiency during leadership interactions with supporting IT contractors. The goal of the study was to identify emergent themes relating to government intelligence IT project managers' interactions with their IT contractors that may have affected their organizations' desired IT project investment outcomes.

The research study included a modified van Kaam method by Moustakas (1994), with audio-taped and transcribed unstructured interviews. The data collection process involved participants answering a primary open-ended research question followed by open-ended questions to explore the research participants' answers to the primary research question. The process of data analysis for the qualitative study included identifying emerging themes from the research participants' answers about the central phenomenon (Creswell, 2005). Moustakas' (1994) modified van Kaam method, providing a systematic approach to the data analysis of the unstructured interviews, promoted a deeper understanding "of the meaning and essence of the phenomenon or experience" (p. 81) and allowed for the identification of emerging themes.

The NVivo qualitative analysis software application aided the data analysis and identification of meaningful characteristics, descriptions, and themes (Leedy & Ormrod, 2001; Moustakas, 1994). The NVivo software application assisted with coding and association of terms and themes within the research participants' responses. Analyzing the data (themes and words) allowed for a greater understanding of the research problem under study. The literature search did not reveal any studies on government intelligence IT project managers' interpersonal communication skills proficiency during leadership interactions with supporting IT contractors. Data from this study may contribute to the body of knowledge on leadership, management, and project management competencies during interaction with IT contractors.

Conclusion

Chapter 4 provided an overview of the research question, data collection, data analysis, and the research participants' profiles. Qualitative data analysis and the

modified van Kaam method by Moustakas (1994) allowed for textural descriptions of selected data to understand interpersonal communication competencies of government intelligence IT project managers during interaction with supporting IT contractors. Five major themes (leadership, the need for interpersonal communication, relationships, significance of IT contractors, and impact of improved interpersonal communication skills) were found in the data. Chapter 5 includes a discussion of the conclusions, an interpretation of the analysis, recommendations based on the data, and recommendations for future research.

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of the phenomenological case study was to explore the lived experiences and perceptions of a purposive sample of 20 government intelligence information technology (IT) project managers. The research study participants serve or served as government intelligence IT project managers who leveraged interpersonal communication skills proficiency during leadership interactions with their supporting IT contractors as part of their project teams. Interviews with the research participants commenced with the following primary open-ended research question: How do the interpersonal communication skills between U.S. government intelligence IT project managers and their government IT contractors affect the performance effectiveness and efficiency of organizational outcomes? Participants answered additional follow-up questions based on their response to the primary research question.

The study results may provide organizational leaders with information on the leadership interaction among leadership, project managers, IT contractors, and stakeholders. The data may help organizational leaders realize the need for interpersonal communication prior to project managers assuming the role of project manager. Leadership, managers, and IT project managers could use the information to improve organizational effectiveness, efficiency, and desired outcomes. The results of this study may encourage government IT project managers and leadership to communicate more effectively with IT contractors.

The primary purpose of Chapter 5 is to reflect the findings of the research study and discuss the major themes that emerged. Chapter 5 includes an overview of chapters 1 through 4 and an interpretation and analysis of the data. Recommendations from the

research study could help leaders, project managers, and government contractors in general. The research may add to the IT project management body of knowledge and may serve as a springboard for future studies in the area of leadership interactions with supporting IT contractors.

Overview of Chapters

Chapter 1 illustrated the problem that government intelligence IT project managers may lack interpersonal communication skills during leadership interactions with government IT contractors. The chapter included an introduction to the research topic and a discussion of the purpose of the study, limitations, assumptions, delimitations, and definitions of words or phrases most often used in the study. The first chapter reflected a presentation of the research question and an explanation of two theoretical frameworks that guided the research study.

Chapter 2 included a review of literature relevant to leadership and government intelligence IT project managers' interpersonal communication skill proficiency during leadership interactions with supporting IT contractors. The chapter reflected a definition of leadership; a historical perspective of IT; and literature regarding the U.S. federal government, the purpose and services of the U.S. federal government, and the purpose of intelligence. Chapter 2 included a discussion of the U.S. federal government resources, government and contractor human resources, IT leadership, IT project management, communication, effective communication, and interpersonal communication. The literature review illustrated a gap in the literature in that no studies existed involving an exploration of government intelligence IT project managers' interpersonal

communication skill proficiency during leadership interactions with supporting IT contractors.

Chapter 3 included an exploration of the purpose of the qualitative research study using a modified van Kaam method by Moustakas (1994). The chapter involved an in-depth discussion of the research methodology and reflected details of the participant population and data collection procedures. Chapter 3 included discussions on the research study confidentiality, sampling frame, informed consent, geographical location, and validity and reliability of the data.

Chapter 4 illustrated the five major themes that emerged from the analyzed data. The five major themes included (a) leadership, (b) the need for interpersonal communication, (c) relationships, (d) significance of IT contractors, and (e) the impact of improved interpersonal communication skills. The study involved interviewing 20 U.S. federal government intelligence IT project managers or previous government intelligence IT project managers who leveraged interpersonal communications during leadership interactions with IT contractors. The analyzed data from the interviews formed the baseline for the research phenomenon under study. The verbatim responses represented the lived experiences and perceptions of the research participants.

Chapter 5 includes an introduction to the study findings and a focus on the primary research question: How do the interpersonal communication skills between U.S. government intelligence IT project managers and their government IT contractors affect the performance effectiveness and efficiency of organizational outcomes? The chapter indicates the assumptions and implications of the study and the significance of the study to leadership. Chapter 5 concludes with recommendations for future research.

Conclusions

Core themes emerged that illustrated the research participants' lived experiences and perceptions through Moustakas' (1994) modified van Kaam method of data analysis. The research participants elaborated on the primary research question and follow-up questions to a point where data became redundant or added marginal value to the research study. When data became redundant or added marginal value, research participants were asked to summarize what they had presented.

General Analysis

Globally, IT leaders will leverage a significant amount of organizational resources against IT (Yamada et al., 2004). Despite making significant IT investments, many IT leaders fail to realize organizational expected results from their IT projects. A reason for the lack of effectiveness and efficiency is IT leaders' and IT project managers' deficiency in interpersonal skills.

The federal government acknowledged the need for interpersonal communication skills. The USOPM (2001b) explained that interpersonal communication skills are critical to supervisory success. Interpersonal communication consists of both verbal and nonverbal messages.

A need exists to communicate internally and externally to agencies. To coordinate and promote transparency successfully, interpersonal communication skills are necessary. Drucker (1973) noted that verbal and nonverbal communications are key components that allow productive work to thrive within organizations.

The intelligence community (IC) is a decentralized community with agencies throughout most of the U.S. and in many countries abroad. Effective communication is

critical to promote cohesiveness among the disbursed intelligence agencies. The agencies collectively provide vital information via verbal and nonverbal communication to the nation's leaders so that they can make informed decisions.

The lack of interpersonal communication skills contributes to less than optimal results for organizations effectiveness and efficiency. Research indicated many managers are concerned about staff communication skills (USGAO, 1990, p. 2). The PMI (2004) illustrated that the management of interpersonal skills is essential for organizations to achieve their desired outcomes.

The PMI (2004) indicated that the success of IT project managers and IT leaders involves more than simply IT. Remenyi and Brown (2002) contended that IT challenges are usually due to human factors rather than IT factors, which supports the findings of this study that relationships are essential if an IT leader, IT project manager, or agency is to achieve a desired outcome. Gatling (2005) emphasized that interpersonal communication is one of eight key competencies for leaders and managers.

The purpose of the phenomenological case study was to explore the lived experiences and perceptions of a purposive sample of 20 government intelligence IT project managers. The research study participants serve or had served as government intelligence IT project managers who leveraged interpersonal communication skills proficiency during leadership interactions with their supporting IT contractors. Each research participant had led an IT project.

The data from the research study illustrated that leadership is essential in the management of IT projects and that leadership has a direct impact on the management of IT projects and organizational outcomes. The data indicated that IT leadership lacks the

transformational leadership competencies needed to support the management of IT projects. The transformational leadership competencies that are critical to the management of IT projects and organizational outcomes are vision, communication, empowerment, integrity, and inspiration. The lack of transformational leadership competencies affects projects and organizational effectiveness and efficiency.

The data from the research study showed that interpersonal communication skills are critical to achieving IT project management success during leadership interaction with IT contractors. The results indicated that IT leadership lacks the interpersonal communication skills to assist IT project managers when managing IT projects. The data illustrated the inability of many leaders to listen, capture, and interpret stakeholders' requirements, which minimizes the effectiveness and efficiency of IT project management.

The results of the study suggested that relationships are essential to the management of IT projects. The data showed that some challenges with relationships are a direct result of a lack of interpersonal communication skills. Research study participants indicated that cultural climates exist within the IC that negatively affect the relationship among IT leaders, IT project managers, and IT contractors. The relationship between the government IT project manager and the IT contractor is critical because the contractor, according to the respondents, is the backbone of the management of IT projects within the IC.

The research study illustrates the impact of improved interpersonal communication skills prior to assuming the role of a government IT project manager. The data indicate that improved interpersonal communication encourages clarity and

minimizes ambiguity when government intelligence IT project managers are leveraging leadership interactions with IT contractors, leadership, stakeholders, and customers. Improved interpersonal communication skills can significantly develop the government intelligence IT project manager's leadership competencies, management, and project management skills, which will improve the outcomes of IT projects and the organization.

Prior to this study, no research studies existed that involved exploring government intelligence IT project managers' interpersonal communication skills during interactions with government IT contractors. The findings from this study are significant because leaders, project managers, and contractors who interact with stakeholders, employees, and customers across all sectors of society leverage interpersonal communication skills. Effective communication (verbal, written, or nonverbal) is necessary to achieve an effective and efficient project or organizational outcome.

<div align="center">Significance of the Study to Leadership</div>

The research study was significant because the results indicated that IT leadership competencies are critical in managing IT projects. Of the 20 research participants, 18 (90%) implied that leadership in their organizations, as it related to IT projects, lacked competencies to assist or support the management of IT projects. The 18 research participants described how leadership affected their IT projects and organizational effectiveness and efficiency. This theme is significant to leadership because IT leadership is responsible for the management of IT resources in an organization.

Bass (1990) noted that leadership is essential to accomplish organizational goals and needs. The data in the research study are significant to leadership because they not only relate to the IC, but also the entire Unites States federal government and reflect

global implications. The federal government reported over 600 high-risk IT projects, and each IT project reflected a value of $1 million or greater (USOMB, 2007a). The Department of Homeland Security does not report their high-risk IT projects. According to Yamada et al. (2004), IT leaders will invest over $3 trillion globally in IT projects annually starting in 2008.

Of the research participants, 20 (100%) emphasized that interpersonal communications are essential to achieve a desired outcome. According to the USOPM (2001b), interpersonal communication skills are critical to supervisor success. Drucker (1973) suggested that verbal and nonverbal communications are key components that allow productive work to thrive within organizations.

The research study has implications for leadership because the data illustrated that relationships are essential to IT project managers and organizations realizing their desired IT project investment outcomes. Of the 20 research participants, 100% suggested that relationships positively or negatively affected their IT projects. The interviewees described the relationship between IT leadership and IT project managers as negative 30% of the time. The data showed that the relationships between IT project managers and their IT contractors were positive 90% of the time.

The research study is also significant to leadership because 20 (100%) of the participants suggested that government IT contractors are a critical component in the management of IT projects within the IC. Several of the research participants described their IT contractors as the backbone of their organization and their project teams. The study may also be significant because all the participants (100%) emphasized that developing interpersonal communication skills prior to assuming the role of an IT leader

or project manager can make a difference when leadership, project managers, project management teams, stakeholders, and customers collaborate to achieve a common goal.

Recommendations

Little research is evident relative to government intelligence IT project managers' interpersonal communication skills during leadership interactions with IT contractors. Leadership emerged as a core theme in the analysis of the data collected from the research participants. The federal government should ensure that all IT leaders and IT project managers receive formal training in the areas of transformational and transactional leadership. Deming (as cited in Safferstone, 2007) reported that the purpose of leadership is to "help people do a better job with less effort and consequently improve quality, increase output, and enhance pride of workmanship" (para. 33).

The research participants described that IT leaders struggle with interpersonal communication during leadership interactions with IT project managers, stakeholders, customers, and IT contractors. The lack of interpersonal communication skills directly affects IT projects and an organization's desired outcomes. The federal government should ensure that all IT leaders and IT project managers within the IC receive formal training in interpersonal communication prior to assuming IT leadership or IT project management responsibilities. The USOPM (2001b) indicated that interpersonal communication skills are critical to supervisory success.

Data from the study illustrate that IT leadership lacked IT project management skills. The federal government should ensure that all IT leaders and managers involved in investment and management of IT receive formal training in the discipline of IT project management prior to assuming the positions. The training might provide IT leaders with

more insight into the area of IT project management and result in better interpersonal communication between IT project managers and IT leaders.

All of the research participants (100%) noted that relationships affected the IT projects they managed. Of the 20 interviewees, 5 (25%) described the cultural climate within their organizations as reflecting bias against IT contractors, which created an atmosphere that affected IT projects' performance effectiveness and efficiency and organizational outcomes. Leadership should address the cultural challenges within the IC that promote bias against IT contractors.

<div align="center">Recommendations for Future Research</div>

Researchers conducting future studies could explore or measure the preparedness of IT leaders and IT project managers in the area of interpersonal communication skills prior to assuming their roles as IT leaders and IT project managers in the IC. The researchers could study, within the IC, the effect of interpersonal communication skills. In the IC, researchers could explore or measure the impact of an IT leader's ability to apply transformational leadership competencies during leadership interactions with IT project managers. Such studies might provide leaders with data on the impact and effectiveness of learned interpersonal communication skills applied to IT projects and might provide executives within the IC insight into why many of their IT projects fail to meet performance, cost, and scheduling goals.

A final recommendation is to conduct studies on the cultural climate within the IC regarding bias against IT contractors. Such a study might help organizations within the IC improve interpersonal communication skills and IT project management effectiveness, efficiency, and desired outcomes. The findings of such studies may result in guidance on

how to improve relationships and work environments within other federal government organizations.

<center>Limitations</center>

Several limiting factors and observations emerged during the research study. Limited access to financial information within the IC, information sensitivity, and culture potentially influenced the interpretation of the research data. The annual budget for the IC is classified information, so a breakdown of the IC budget was not available. The absence or unavailability of data related to resources allocated for IT spending minimized the ability to link IT spending directly to the IC. Announcement of the IC budget has occurred only twice in history (Daggett, 2004).

The second limiting factor was data sensitivity. Many of the IT projects within the IC are classified. As such, limits were placed on the amount of information that the researcher could discuss without potentially compromising information.

The third limiting factor to this research study was that many of the research participants had security clearances. Security clearances granted to individuals indicate that an organization may award a certain level of access to information that individuals should not share with others. The security clearances may have limited the amount of information the research participants could share. The sensitivity of information and security clearances may have influenced the culture of the IC suggesting that security clearance must exist before discussing sensitive information.

Initially, the research participants were skeptical when responding to the primary research question. However, during the course of the research interview, respondents became more trusting, relaxed, and responsive to follow-up interview questions; this was

evident in their verbal and nonverbal communication behaviors. The verbal and nonverbal behaviors displayed also served as a gage regarding the potential sensitivity of a follow-up question. A final limiting factor was the researcher's potential biases. The researcher is a former employee of the IC and was cautious not to ask questions that may have placed the research participants in a compromising position.

Summary

The qualitative, phenomenological study explored the phenomenon of government intelligence IT project managers' interpersonal communication skills during leadership interactions with IT contractors. According to the USOPM (2001b), interpersonal communication skills are critical to supervisory success. The USOPM's views were in line with Drucker (1973), who noted that verbal and nonverbal communications are key components that allow productive work to thrive within organizations. Trahant (2006) observed, "Communication is really the glue that holds any organization and its people together. For this reason, it is a key driver of people's performance" (p. 18).

The results of this study illustrated that interpersonal communication skills are an overarching critical component for agencies within the IC to realize effectiveness and efficiency in achieving desired outcomes. The findings indicated that IT leaders, IT project managers, and supporting IT contractors must leverage effective interpersonal communication skills to achieve IT project outcomes. The results showed that many of the IC IT leaders may not possess transformational leadership competencies, again illustrating the lack of interpersonal communication skills.

Five major themes emerged from the research study: (a) leadership, (b) the need for interpersonal communication, (c) relationships, (d) significance of IT contractors, and (e) impact of improved interpersonal communication skills. The data indicated that the themes affected the performance effectiveness and efficiency of IT projects and organizational outcomes. The data also indicated that leadership and interpersonal communication are essential when managing IT projects.

Recommendations included that the federal government should ensure that all IT leaders and IT project managers receive formal training in the areas of transformational and transactional leadership. The federal government should ensure that all IT leaders and IT project managers within the IC receive formal training in the skills of interpersonal communication prior to assuming IT leadership or IT project management responsibilities. Leadership should address the cultural challenges within the IC that promote bias against IT contractors.

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Appendix A: Informed Consent

Dear Participants,

I am a student at the University of Phoenix pursuing a Doctorate of Management in Organizational Leadership. I am conducting a research study entitled "Government Intelligence Information Technology Project Managers' Interpersonal Communication Competence During Contractor Interactions: A Phenomenological Study" The purpose of the qualitative research is to show how government intelligence IT project managers' interpersonal communication interaction with their contractors may affect their organizations' performance effectiveness outcome.

Your participation will involve a face-to-face, digitally recorded, unstructured interview consisting of open-ended questions about your experienced perceptions as an IT project manager who has managed IT contractors. The digital audio recorder will ensure accuracy when transcribing your responses to interview questions. The data collected will not involve information about the IT project because many projects in the intelligence community may be classified. Your participation in the study is strictly voluntary. If you choose to withdraw from the study, you can do so at anytime. The results of the study may be published; however, no information about you will be used. Your information will be maintained in strict confidence prior to being destroyed.

The possible benefit of your participation in the research study is the identification of similarities and differences in how government intelligence IT project managers might leverage interpersonal communication with their IT contractors to help organizations to realize their outcomes.

The research study poses no foreseeable risk to you, the participant.

By signing this form, you acknowledge that you are 18 years old or older. You acknowledge that you understand the nature of the study and the means by which your identity will be kept confidential.

No other agreements, written or verbal, exist related to the study beyond those expressed on this written consent and confidentiality form.

Signature of participant: _____ Date_____

Signature of researcher: _____Date_____

Appendix B: Transcripts of Interviews

Interview Protocol

Topic: A Phenomenological Case Study of Government Intelligence IT Project

Managers' Lack of Effective Interpersonal Communication Skill Proficiency during

Leadership Interactions with their Supporting IT Contractors.

Time of Interview:

Date of Interview:

Place of Interview:

Interviewee:

Description of Research: The purpose of the qualitative, phenomenological case study is

to explore experiences and perceptions of 20 government intelligence IT project

managers and their interpersonal communication skill proficiency during leadership

interactions with their supporting IT contractors. The data will be collected through open-

ended questions during unstructured, face-to-face interviews using a digital audio

recorder. The digital recorder will ensure that an accurate depiction of experienced

perceptions is captured and can be translated with precision. The interview will take

approximately 20 to 60 minutes to complete.

Open-Ended Questions:

Primary Research Question: How do the interpersonal communication skills between

U.S. government intelligence IT project managers and their government IT contractors

affect the performance effectiveness and efficiency of organizational outcomes?

Additional follow-up questions are based on participants' response to the primary research question. The purpose of the follow up questions are to elicit rich meaningful data via examples of lived experiences as they relate to the primary research question, which were later captured in the textural descriptions of the research participants' responses:

Appendix C: Demographical Questions

General Demographic Questions:

1. What is your current professional position?

2. Are you formally trained as a project management professional?

3. What is your education level?

4. How many years did you serve as a government intelligence IT project manager?

5. What is your gender?

Appendix D: Verbatim Responses to Primary Research Question

The following verbatim responses are textural descriptions derived from the research participants' feedback to the primary research question: How do the interpersonal communication skills between U.S. government intelligence IT project managers and their government IT contractors affect the performance effectiveness and efficiency of organizational outcomes?

00127032008: This is a really good question, [name deleted]. My personal experiences have been very positive. Mostly because I devoted myself to learning project management competencies and pursued the project management professional certification; however, more to your questions. This is an area that lacks attention from my organization's leadership. To be very candid, the relationship between project managers and contractors in my organization is not good. We treat contractors as if they are from another planet. I believe there are two reasons for this; the first is many of the IT project managers don't know how to describe requirements in writing or verbally. We just don't know how to effectively communicate with our contractors. The contractors seem to become disenchanted with my organization, and the better performers find other positions. Secondly, many of my work colleagues that are project managers believe they are superior to contractors (unfortunately, that is not the case) because they write the contractors' performance worksheets. It is sad to say, but many of my government work colleagues are the ones that are managing or leading IT projects that lack the interpersonal skills you are addressing. Many project managers in my organization do not know how to develop requirements, write statement of works, or performance work statements because they have not received formal training in this area. As a result, the

organization suffers, and we waste a lot of money, [name deleted]. I know you will keep my name and organization confidential, so I will add that, overall, senior leadership is responsible for the challenges project managers face within my organization. Leadership do not always support projects and often don't know how to use interpersonal communication skills themselves. Many of them never managed projects, so they do not have a clue about the challenges we face as project managers. Oh, by the way, it is my opinion that some sort of interpersonal communication course should be developed for all federal government employees. I hope that I answered your question, [name deleted]. My organization really struggles to meet our desired outcome to include deliverables from IT projects, and, as I mentioned earlier, most of it is because of the lack of leadership, accountability, and failure to effectively communicate with their IT project managers.

00228032008: If I understand correctly, you are referring to reading, speaking, listening, and written communication skills. If that is the case, those skills mean everything to the bottom line of any organization. On many of the projects I have led, leadership has had trouble defining requirements as outlined by the stakeholders. As a result, the requirements are poorly defined when they come to me as the project manager. I often find myself going back to the customer to fully understand the initial requirements. I must then go back to senior leadership to explain this is what the stakeholders meant. Once I am sure that I understand the requirements, I will meet with the IT contractors to explain what the stakeholders and leadership meant by their undeveloped requirements. Interpersonal communication skills mean everything to the project manager achieving the organization's desired outcome. If I, as the project manager, cannot listen and provide guidance to the IT contractor via a statement of work,

written communication, or verbally, I have failed not only my project team but the organization.

00328032008: Each project I have led, a communication plan is established. As a project management professional, I realize the importance of communication between stakeholders, leadership, and the individuals on the ground doing the work. It is my opinion that if I can't relay the work requirements to my IT contractors, the project will fail. I can't emphasize how important it is to have written, verbal, and nonverbal skills. They have saved me on a many of projects. And, yes, a lack of interpersonal skills will cause an organization to perform poorly. The type of organization is insignificant. Bottom line is, the organization will fail to meet performance expectations, have cost overruns, and will not meet the scheduling efforts if there is a lack of interpersonal communication and someone at the top communicating a direction that the organization is going. Knowing where we might be going as an organization helps me to know if my projects will be successful and have the support needed, especially if it is a long-term project.

00429032008: I have had several projects fail because of the lack of interpersonal communication. So, yes, those skills totally affect the projects and, ultimately, effectiveness and efficiency of an organization by not allowing the project manager to effectively manage the scope, cost, performance, and scheduling of a project.

00530032008: Well, I must say, this is an interesting question, one that many leaders might not want to know the real answer to. Most projects that I have led or been involved with have suffered as a direct result of ineffective interpersonal communication between leadership, program managers, project managers, and IT contractors. An

example is one of my major customers contentiously asked government leadership to define what was needed to build low bandwidth radios for night operations. The contracting officer for the project was not able to write what he had been saying to the IT contract personnel in the form of a statement of work. At the end of the day, the contractors developed what they thought the government wanted. The government program manager overlooking the projects suggested the radio system developed did not meet the government standards that were never identified or agreed to by the government representative, the IT project manager, or contracting officers technical representative. The IT contractor was held responsible, not the government project manager or contracting officers representative.

00608042008: Most of my projects are successful; however, there is no doubt that a project manager without interpersonal communication skills will fail to meet the triple constraints, as we say in the project management profession (performance, cost, and scheduling). The project manager without the skill set of interpersonal communication more than likely will fail to meet his objective. [Name deleted], I would also like to add that interpersonal communication skills at the project management level is not the only place interpersonal communication really needs addressing. There should be a study about the impact of leaders, managers, supervisors not being able to communicate to their employees or the organization. That might be a good place to start placing some of the blame. I know for sure that what is communicated to me from the top does not correlate to what the stakeholder really want in their deliverables.

00708042008: First of all, a project manager that lacks interpersonal communication skills should not be a project manager. Unfortunately, too often, we find

this to be the case in [organization deleted]. This impacts the organizations and, almost for certain, the outcome of the project. Interpersonal communication directly reflects the outcome of a project because of the relationship that must be established between the contractor or developer of IT projects. My direct experience has been no effective communication between the project manager and the IT contractor, written and or verbal, is a recipe for project failure, ultimately impacting the organization.

00813042008: I don't know of a way that a project or organization can succeed without good, at minimum, interpersonal communications between the government IT project manager and their IT contractors. I just returned from Iraq and Afghanistan, and I am here to tell you that there are many problems with communication between the contractors, civilian and military leaders, and U.S. government civilians project managers from all disciplines. It's not just communication problems; there are problems with funding, completing projects on time, logistical problems; the list can go on and on. Since I am about to retire from government service, I will be quite candid with you, [name deleted]. We, being the government, are not good at describing our wants and needs to most contractors, to include IT contractors. The contractors will deliver and meet their objectives most of the time as described in their statement of work if they know exactly what we want and need. I sometimes have problems identifying requirements to the contractor, especially in written form. What I do is sit down with the contractor and ask them to help me write what I am trying to say from a technical perspective. I have had good success but sometimes feel guilt, which results from really not knowing my job. Typically, I do well managing my projects because I believe that I am a people person. In the war, people can get hurt if someone don't capture requirements properly and

communicate them to the individuals that are charged with developing or even buying products. The government really should improve in the area of interpersonal communication.

00914042008: I can see the validity of this question. Excellent study question. As a former IT project manager in the intelligence community, I can say that interpersonal communication is lacking in the ranks of the government project manager and not just the IT project manager. I cannot begin to count the number of IT projects that have failed to meet organizational expectations as a direct result of poorly written statement of works, performance work statements, or the ability to verbally communicate what might be desired. This might be somewhat blunt, but some project managers and people who make the decisions appear not to listen to the very contractors or subject matter experts they hire to perform the work. Over the past few years, the government does seem to be making an effort to right the wrong for its IT and other project managers by advocating interpersonal communication is important.

01018042008: I am not sure you are aware of the significance of your question. [Name deleted], without saying it, you have said it. Interpersonal communication is one of the most important links next to leadership for [organization deleted] success. My experiences as a project manager over the years have been if you cannot communicate, you cannot regulate. Might sound funny, but the reality for me is if I am not able to effectively write or verbally communicate with government or contractors on my projects, the project or projects will fail.

01120042008: This research topic and question resonate well with me. It's simple: Transformation leaders must be able to communicate their vision to the rest of the

organization. The rest of the organization must be able to understand the vision and further push the vision down and across the organization. This includes the project managers and their contractors. If I, as an IT project manager, do not understand the vision, how can I clearly explain what the organization or my project needs to accomplish the mission? Also, I want to add that I look at people's facial expressions as well as body language to see if they are interpreting what I am trying to communicate to them. This is especially important for me as I conduct face-to-face meetings with contractors that might be working on my IT projects. As I mentioned initially, it is my belief that leadership must be able to effectively employ interpersonal communications within an organization if that organization is to succeed in its mission. Sadly, my organization suffers from the lack of leaders that can effectively communicate the vision and requirements that might be needed for the organization to accomplish its mission. If you don't believe me, check out some of the Government Accountability Office reports or Inspector General Reports on [organization deleted].

01221042008: Sure! Organizations' performance effectiveness and efficiency is affected by the lack of interpersonal communication between government project managers and their contractors. I believe most organizations in the intelligence community and federal government as a whole outsource to contractors. It would be silly to think that if we don't effectively communicate that organizations will produce to the level leadership might expect to the organization to operate. I have had projects to fail because of the lack of interpersonal communication. Recently, I engaged in a project with an organization within the intelligence community, and leadership could not understand why I requested that all of the stakeholders be brought to the table to discuss outcomes

and requirements. It was communicated to me by senior leadership that we can make internal decisions and dictate to the internal and external stakeholder what we will do. Only after my forcefully suggesting that I would strongly like to be removed as the IT project manager if all stakeholders are not brought to the table did they finally listen. As a project management professional, it is my responsibility to understand the requirements for a project. I must be able to articulate those requirements to all personnel engaged in my project, to include IT contractors and other government personnel. If I am unable to describe what is required to the IT contractor, or he is not able to understand the goal or deliverables, then we will fail as a team. My interpersonal communications might not be the best, but I ensure you that all parties understand, both verbally and in writing, the desired outcome of the project for which we are engaged. This research question has caused me to really reflect back on projects that I did not achieve the level of success that I might have had if my interpersonal communications skills were a bit more refined. Good research question, [name deleted].

01322042008: I have been on both sides of this question as an IT contractor and as a government IT project manager. In the federal government, outsourcing IT work to IT contractors is for many organizations a routine process. As I understand it, some reasons for IT outsourcing are there is a lack of technical competencies, and leadership is not able to effectively communicate their IT vision to the rest of the organization. The majority of projects that I led as a government IT project manager were successful. I establish good relationships with people on the projects. I also set expectations and communicate in a written format and then verbally confirmed what was written with the leadership, stakeholders, and the project team. However, there have been instances where

communications failed, and as a result, there were slippages in schedule, and the level of performance suffered, not to mention the cost overruns. On my failed projects, I failed to effectively communicate with my supporting staff, which impacted my project and other projects within the organization. With that said, the lack of interpersonal communications can impact a project outcome as well as the overall agency effectiveness and efficiency.

01423042008: [Name deleted]! Yes, interpersonal communication skills impact outcomes within an organization. I communicate with IT contractors every day. The contractors' biggest complaints are we do not feel as though we are part of the team, and government personnel do not know how to write or communicate what they want. So, yes, interpersonal communication impacts the organization. IT contractors are paid a lot of money according to my standards, and they are not used properly in many cases. For me, this is a waste of resources and taxpayers' money. I also suggest that this is a leadership problem because they should set the tone within the organization, and many of them don't seem to care about the relationship between people. Leadership seem to only look at the bottom line, nothing else. What I mean is how a project got completed does not matter, only that it was done.

01523042008: As the CIO for [organization deleted], I am aware that relationships are important if an organization is to succeed in its short- and long-term goals. As such, interpersonal communication is extremely important. They are important to leadership, managers, supervisors, employees, stakeholders, and contractors. The lack of interpersonal communication will impact the bottom line of an organization, in both qualitative and quantitative measures. My office work diligently to ensure relationships

are built and transparency is realized by all. A mechanism to realize transparency is interpersonal communication.

01626042008: My overall experience as a project manager has been good. Part of my success has been my ability to effectively establish relationships through interpersonal communication. I have managed a major project for many years. The project seems to keep growing and growing. With the growth come additional IT contract personnel. One of the areas that I have realized that is extremely important to my project is the interpersonal communication between me, staff, and IT contractor support. During initial meetings, I establish the ground rules to ensure that we have a complete understanding of how this project will be supported. I use written and verbal communication skills for both verbal and written confirmation to ensure the team is operating on the same page. The impact to my project has been positive; I am able to meet milestones, stay within the scope of the project, and meet all performance outcomes.

01728042008: The short answer is money. When project managers can't effectively use interpersonal communication skills to leverage against their contractors, it costs the organization money and time; it's just that simple. I see or hear about this daily. The federal government is getting better at understanding the required skills as project managers, but until our project managers, or shall I say, my colleagues, really start to understand writing is important, then we will continue to suffer as an enterprise.

01829042008: [Name deleted], can I answer this question using an example? [Researcher: Yes]. At the [organization name deleted], we have experienced senior level IT contractors advising the organization on how to better manage financial and mixed IT systems. The contractors were brought on board because [organization deleted] did not

have the competencies to pass a financial audit. The project manager was brought on board because she is very skilled with financial and mixed IT systems; however, she is not a people person; nor does she have project management experience. From a technical perspective, she is able to discuss technical requirements; however, she really lacks the ability to put them in a coherent manner for others to understand. She also lacks skills in business processes and change management. Leadership now realizes that they made a mistake however refuse to remove [name deleted] as the project lead. The project has become frustrating for the IT contractors because the organization is now behind schedule, over budget, and performance is really bad, as is the morale. The contractors are seeking other positions because they do not want their names associated with what could potentially become a major project failure. [Name deleted], it is frustrating for me also; I also work on this project.

01930052008: A better way to phrase this question is how does interpersonal communication not impact an organization? Interpersonal communication skills impact an organization from the top, bottom, and sides. Without interpersonal communication skills proficiency, project managers and IT contractors will not be able to effectively carry out the overall mission as described by the organization. Leadership must be involved and able to express requirements as well. The very people who ask project managers to do a job often cannot describe what they want themselves. So, for me, that is where it all starts. Bringing the project manager and IT contractor together and ensuring effective communication are in place is great, but the people they work for must know how to communicate in writing and verbally as well.

02006052008: As a certified project management professional, it is easy for me to simply answer this question by suggesting the organization's bottom line might be impacted. Interpersonal communication between government IT project managers and their supporting contractors could potentially impact an organization's budget as a direct result of poor performance and not being completed within the scheduled time frame, which could potentially cost the organization more money and resources. The [organization deleted] has made significant strides to ensure the project managers we hire are certified. This process has helped to mitigate the risk of poor performance, cost, and scheduling. As a result, the organization is able to better manage projects. Interpersonal communication between the IT government project manager and IT contractor has played a major role in helping with mitigating the identified risks.

Appendix E: Verbatim Responses to Identified Themes

Five major core themes emerged from the research study data, resulting in the following summarized composite description of the phenomena: (a) leadership, (b) the need for interpersonal communication,(c) relationships, (d) significance of IT contractors, and(e) impact of improved interpersonal communication skills

Theme 1: Leadership

00127032008: I have over 20 years experience in the intelligence community managing various projects for various government organizations over various time periods and for various purposes. I would like to add that I am … after 30 years of exposure to government activities, I am, I was, I have been, and currently am unconvinced that leadership in the government as a whole has the competencies to effectively manage IT projects. Now, that's a general statement, so let me qualify what I mean by that statement. There are pockets of excellence within the government—and here I'm talking about the United States government leadership—in managing IT intelligence projects. However, an institutionalized competence in my opinion—and I've been around a lot of projects—does not exist within the government per se; although, again, there might be elements of project teams that in fact do perform. But I am not convinced that the government as a whole institutionally demonstrates consistent effective leadership competence in managing its intelligence IT projects.

00228032008: As an IT project manager, it has been somewhat frustrating at how leadership is the first to want to take on an IT project, but when the rubber meets the road, they are nowhere to be found. Leadership often do not provide a since of direction

and unfortunately seem to refuse to empower project managers to make decisions without their approval. On projects that I have led, I sometime wonder if leadership really know what is going on. I tell you, sometime I walk away from meetings with the feeling of "what did we just talk about, are we discussing the same project, or did I miss out on the requirements identified by the stakeholders?" Here is an example: I attended a requirements gathering meeting with senior leadership and stakeholders to define requirements for my current IT project; I will not mention the name of the project. However, after the meeting, I was briefed by leadership that the system the stakeholder want is [system deleted] developed by [organization deleted]. The challenge is the stakeholder did not suggest a particular IT solution, simply discussed requirements, incomplete requirements at best. Leadership in my organization did more talking than listening and missed the mark when it came to capturing the stakeholder's requirements. Nonetheless, despite my objections to the solution proposed by my leadership, I was directed to implement. The solution proposed by leadership did not satisfy the requirements of the stakeholder and negatively impacted other stakeholders within the agency. The attitude in my example is consistent regardless of assignment. I have been assigned to intelligence commands in areas such as Korea, Germany, Japan, Alaska, Saudi Arabia, and Iraq.

00328032008: There are times when I have had problems completing my IT projects because of, to be quite honest, bureaucracy at the top. There is no vision and often time very little communication to the organization, not to mention the project teams. An example is a project I led required collaboration between [organization deleted] and [organization deleted]. To move forward with a critical piece of the project

simply required a policy change. Leadership could not decide who should implement the change, causing a 30-day delay in the IT project. Sometime it's just that simple, especially in the intelligence community. I think leadership involvement from cradle to grave of an IT project is critical to the success of many IT projects, and while I am a believer in leadership support, sometime they may want to just present the vision, empower, and inspire project managers and wait until we ask for assistance.

00429032008: [Name deleted], it has been my experience that leadership does not understand the dynamics of project management or in some cases leadership, yet they have the organizations overall vision, oversight and potential influence to a project outcome. One of the most difficult aspects of my job as a project manager is working with leadership when they do not commit to projects I am engaged. I really find it difficult communicating with leadership about most aspects of project management. I recall working on a project that cost millions of dollars. I desperately needed transitions funding for the [IT system deleted]. The project required my project team and me to develop interfaces for two intelligence data collection systems. I solicited additional resource support for this additional requirement leadership had requested; I practically pitched every sales pitch I knew to get the resources from the very leaders who assigned this new milestone, but my request fell on deaf ears. I sometimes anticipate leadership responses even before they give their perspective, but this one totally caught me off guard. Nonetheless, leadership support is important and needed in this community.

00530032008: However, my experiences have been very subpar when leadership is involved with my projects. Unfortunately, I have to rely on leadership for funding, requirements, and sometimes a vision. My experience as a project manager within the

intelligence community goes back about 10 years. Primarily with [agency deleted] and [agency deleted]. During that time, I have been involved with joint worldwide communication efforts that impact many military and government organizations, to include Special Operations commands. While the projects themselves were challenging, especially with all the cultural and cross agencies boundaries, leadership sometimes made my projects even more difficult. This might sound outlandish, but all leaders that are involved with IT projects should get some sort of IT project certification from an accredited institution.

00608042008: I served as the [position title deleted]at numerous intelligence installations, and I can tell you that no one was more critical about the success of IT projects and IT projects funding than leadership I supported. Much of my organization's budget was spent on IT projects, upgrades, pilot programs, and keeping up with new technology. As a result, when an IT project was introduced into the IT governance process, I ensured the line of business owner and senior leaders stayed on top of the projects until completion. My experiences continue to suggest that leadership is the lifeblood of any organization.

00708042008: I provide leadership to my IT projects. Let me be a bit more clearer: I provide transformation leadership. I provide a vision to my project team, communicate that vision, and empower my project team to accomplish milestones and tasks. I don't get caught up in the drama sometimes presented at the top; I execute as a leader and ask questions later. This process has worked for me over and over again. Of course [name deleted] this is just my opinion and I would not repeat this outside of this interview, but I my agency lack leadership at the top.

00813042008: The part of an IT project that is really gratifying for me is when the project team, the customer, and leadership are satisfied with the deliverable. Typically, my IT project teams are well led by myself and team members. Leadership is instrumental, but I really try to keep them at a distance but informed. Boy, now that I think about it, my major headaches are from the problems caused by upper management. I get the impression at times that leaders and senior managers in my organization is don't understand the whole leadership management concept. Management should lead the organization and assist employees to achieve at the highest level but my experience most of the time is just the opposite.

00917062008: There are times when I reflect back on my experiences as an IT project manager, and the one area that sticks out the most is leadership or the lack of it at times. I have worked for some dynamic leaders and some that, well, let's just say I wonder how they got into their position. For me, every project that I led or managed that was supported by leadership was a success. I have always said that leadership that support or make decisions regarding IT projects should receive some sort of training as to the impact they might have on IT projects and the organization.

01018042008: It has always been important for me to have my project team to trust that I am leading them in the right direction. I have always requested feedback from my project team and been able to inspire and motivate them to accomplish assigned tasks. Communicating a clear set of requirements and deliverables have been critical to my leading my project teams. I somewhat shelter my project teams from IT leadership. Mostly, because it allows me to filter thru the problems leadership sometime cause as a result of not so good communications.

01221042008: A tremendous asset I have had during my IT project management has been the support of leadership. My organization is decentralized and tends to function as though every entity is its own kingdom; however, leadership ensures that an IT governance process is followed when pursuing an IT project within the organization. A good example is when one of our major agencies tried to develop a human resource system without fully engaging all stakeholders to define the requirements. Leadership enforced the governance process noting that the system did not follow the system development process nor was the system in alignment with the organizations strategic plan. While there are challenges with leadership within my agency, leadership is making a difference to organizational outcomes at least that is my personal observation.

01423042008: Inspiration, integrity, accountability, empowerment are all characteristic traits that I bring to my IT projects. Man, [name deleted], you are really starting to push buttons; I try my best to align with the organization's vision as projects are assigned, but when there is a lack of vision, there sometimes is a lack of focus, not just for projects but for the organization. I want my project team to not just work on the immediate project but know the current state, future state, and how we will transition to the future state of the project and the organization.

01626042008: It has been my perception that many of my colleagues in leadership positions are more concerned with their careers instead of making good decisions regarding IT projects. They do not appear to care about the IT projects until something goes wrong, and then it's someone else's fault. I really try to impress upon them that we gotta care from cradle to grave, but unfortunately, they don't seem to get it.

Interesting enough, they are the ones with the lowest success rate of successful IT project completions in [agency deleted].

01803052008: It becomes frustrating when leadership cannot make a decision that may impact my IT project. Many leaders in my agency don't know their role in supporting IT projects or projects in general. Leadership has failed to support me on several IT projects, and I have paid the price of failure because of it, in my opinion, by not getting promoted or failing on some projects. If I can't rely on leadership to perform their role in not just the agency but projects that I am assigned, then, quite frankly, I will continue to struggle in some areas of my projects as will the organization.

01728042008: We are talking IT projects in the intelligence community. It has been my experience that senior leadership in the intelligence community do not understand IT. Senior leadership come from the intelligence community, and most of them do not have an IT background. That is but one challenge we face as IT project managers.

Theme 2: The Need for Interpersonal Communication

00127032008: A primary contributor to the projects realizing the expected outcome was my understanding that interpersonal communication is absolutely essential to the project team producing the desired outcome. Now what does that mean? That means that I, as the project manager, was accountable for communicating across a number of dimensions. I was accountable to communicate; I'm the government, and as the project manager, I was accountable to communicate to the contractor what the functional expectations are. I was accountable to communicate to my government project

team members what the contractor was expected to deliver and the manner in which the contractor was expected to deliver.

00228032008: Communication is paramount to my IT projects. My common practice is to sit and listen and repeat back what I think I have heard, especially regarding project requirements and customer concerns. I believe it was Steven R. Covey who said, "Let us agree to keep on talking until we understand each other." On my IT projects, I suggest to my project team that they are to have more ears than mouth, and, therefore, I and they can listen more than speak. Written communication is equally as important to me and my project team because of the dynamics of accountability. Written communication carries more weight because I have a record and can refer back to conversations for clarity.

00328032008: I was not cognizant of what or how I should have been communicating to leadership, stakeholders, or a project team when I was initially assigned to IT project management. I was placed in the position basically because of my perceived ability to manage people and processes. I was first introduced to interpersonal communications by an IT contractor assigned to me on my first IT project. It made a big difference to me because I lacked the written and verbal skills needed for the position. My focus was mostly IT (hardware and software), which I needed little interactions from people, and to be honest with you, I was a much happier person. The inability to effectively communicate on all levels and through different medians creates a gap not only with projects but within the agency. I am quite good at managing IT projects now, but it was definitely a learning experience. I like to say I learned how to drown before I

learned to swim mostly because I lacked the interpersonal communication skills needed to succeed in this environment.

00530032008: The difference in a project succeeding or failing might be how we communicate or the clarity in which we communicate. It has been my experience, and I am a project management professional, that a project manager must have interpersonal communication skills. Most of the IT projects that I've led or been working with require very good communication skills. I get a lot of IT projects for deployed forces. I have a project team that may be split up with people overseas and in Continental United States (CONUS) areas. Because of the distance between team members and projects, I have what I call a virtual project team. Written communication is important; in fact, I am required to provide written correspondence by each of the intelligence agencies I am aligned with. Written communication is my primary tool, mostly through e-mail and through briefings that I prepare. I must be able to clearly relay my intent in each one of my e-mails that I send out. I mean, I can't have a situation where the intent of what I'm trying to get the project team to do is in question. So I must be able to clearly state the overall theme of the e-mail and the intended outcome in each, every time I communicate with the team. I also communicate verbally with my project team. I have a weekly status meeting sometimes through video teleconferencing. During my weekly teleconference, I am in a receive mode. I am really finding out from the project team what they are experiencing, what difficulties they're having with completing the task that I've assigned them for that week. Not so much I'm communicating thoughts at that time; I'm just basically getting feedback from the team. For me, a final piece of communication is the ability to develop a project team. Normally when a project kicks off, we have metrics

support. What I mean is subject matter experts are pulled from all parts of the agency to support IT projects. A challenge for me is dealing with the individual personalities and understanding that the team will go through that forming, storming, and norming process.

00608042008: If I can't effectively communicate with my project team, knowing the nuts and bolts of project management become insignificant. I constantly communicate with my project team by any means necessary to keep them informed. I describe my vision for the project in formal and informal writing, weekly meetings, and in a daily status report, which I require each of my project team leads to present to me. I was provided no communication training and as a result really suffered through several IT projects that I either led or was a part of. I have communicated to my team the importance of communication. It is important to be patient and to teach members of the project team how to leverage all forms of communication so that they can make informed decisions, implement change, negotiate, and constructively say no to the leader.

00813042008: I am an in-your-face type of project manager; I enjoy face-to-face discussions because I can see the reaction of individuals I am dealing with. When engaged in face-to-face discussions, I seem to be able to bring out a lot of issues that I might overlook when just writing memorandums or e-mail. However, don't misunderstand what I am saying here: I do believe in face-to-face discussions, but my bread and butter is written communication.

00917062008: OK, well, since I am a PMP, which is a project management professional, I take the topic of effective communication very serious. Part of the PMP strategy is to have an effective communication plan, which is the structured formal plan that says how we are going to communicate with a client and also how we are going to

communicate internally and externally as far as meetings, status reports, etc. Now having said that, that is a formal way to exchange information, but for me and my personal experiences, the most effective way of communicating is developing relationships through other forms of communications. What I mean is reading people is a significant asset (knowing people tendencies). I achieve this by interacting with leadership, customers, and anyone associated with my projects. I am trying to think of a better way to say this, OK! I am really talking about my ability to listen to people, being receptive to ideas, etc., as far as trying to work through issues, problems, risk, or any of those things associated with a project. It is my experience that the better interpersonal relationship I and my team have, the more effective we are as a project team engaging internal and external stakeholders.

01018042008: Well, I listen to my customers' needs; I listen to what they think they want or might need; I then present them with alternatives. However, I can only do that if I truly have listened and understood what the customer is presenting. Identifying root causes can be complicated when trying to identify a customer's requirements. [Name deleted], in my line of work within the intelligence community, I can't afford to get it wrong very often. The very requirements I capture might provide the intelligence to save a life. Reading, writing, listening are critical skills that I can't afford to take for granted. I did not have formal training in project management, nor did I know how to deal with the red tape or the challenges associated with bickering when I started in project management, and for that, I disliked my work. I also remember my initial experiences without knowing how to effectively communicate, and it has left a negative impact on me, and I will do my best to prepare my team members to be good communicators.

[Name deleted], it is unfortunate that many of my peers or fellow project managers lack interpersonal skills.

01221042008: I like to communicate face-to-face. I want to see the facial expression and body language of the people I am talking to. I am old fashioned and believe that a handshake is a bond; however, I am not going to leave the table without a well-written set of requirements. My experiences with projects that lack the ability to communicate have been disastrous. [Organization deleted] lost a $4M contract because they failed to meet the government requirements. The problem is I led that project, and it was not the contractor's fault. The government leadership failed to properly identify written or verbal requirements. They basically left it up to the contractor to deliver a product. As the project manager, senior leadership did not listen when I suggested the project was not performing as expected. The one saving grace for me was I was able to write clear enough to suggest that my project team and I had performed as leadership had instructed. When the contractor took the government to the court, the law upheld the contractor's position that they delivered based on the poorly written requirements and guidance presented by the government. That type of judgment seems to happen a lot with [agency deleted].

01322042008: Verbal and listening communications go hand-in-hand. A lot of things will be documented, and that is important, but I think in terms of just fostering a better culture within whatever organization you work in, verbal communication is important. I find that we talk to people and the better rapport we have, the better working environment exists. I make it a point to get to know my customers. I will go to them just for face time. What I have found is the customers are more forgiving when I make a

mistake on a project if they know that I really care. So for me, just being cordial has paid great dividends. I have a good example: About two weeks ago, a customer requested a qualitative analysis of end users' perceptions of a newly purchased IT hardware. The analysis conducted was quantitative and not exactly what the customer requested; however, the data provided was excellent. The customer noted that this was "not what we requested but is something we needed." They went on to suggest that knowing your project team, we know this was not intentionally done. I believe this response was because of the rapport that had been established between the customer and my project team.

01523042008: I don't mind admitting failure on several projects because of my inability to realize the importance of formal communication. I work with multiple projects, and there is a no-nonsense approach here for not correctly capturing the customer's requirement correctly. The only way we can succeed at this is to make sure our project team members and leadership can listen, write, and verbally communicate what the stakeholder is requiring. If I had my way, every project manager in the federal government regardless of organization would have annual training in interpersonal relationships; this is huge.

01728042008: I know there were times, especially when I started IT project management and maybe even now, when I did not listen to the customer. I did not understand their needs. I did not understand what they wanted. They told me what they wanted, I wrote down what they wanted, I gave them what they wanted but was not what they needed, and as a project manager, I take that personal. As the lead of a project, I want my customers to be satisfied with the product they are paying for. Listening and

understanding the customer's needs are critical. The whole interpersonal communication process is extremely important. I shudder at the thought of missing the mark. I now double check with the stakeholders. You know, I call them up; not just the day that I got the requirement and not just repeating back what the requirement was, but after confirming in writing and verbally with the technical people, I go back to them and ask again, "Is this what you really need?" I use more open and close probing to bring out the real requirements.

00708042008: I think, in the government, the one skill that many people have the most difficulty with is written communication. Working on the [agency deleted] staff, we are asked to keep our writing very short, sweet, succinct, straight, and to the point. So, and it's like bottom line up front. I have a difficult time hiring employees with the required written communication skills needed at this level of the organization. My staff and I often have 3 to 5 minutes to present or justify IT projects that might be considered for development within the organization. I send all of my staff members to training on how to effectively communicate and negotiate.

Theme 3: Relationships

00429032008: I led numerous IT projects and enjoyed the team-building aspect of leading those projects. Contractors were part of my team and I never let it go unsaid – you are a part of my team. On the other hand, at times, I thought leadership and I were speaking different languages.

00127032008: My experience as a government intelligence IT project manager supported by contractors was generally positive. Let me just backwards engineer my statement or my perspective: My challenge in managing contracts or managing projects,

if you will, was not the contractor. My challenge in managing intelligence IT projects was the government staff. Let me qualify what I mean by that: For example, the government staff was challenged in determining its business requirements or what some folk might qualify as determining their functional requirements. My relationship with government personnel was challenging as I believe that I only met five or six that could effectively manage all aspects of an IT project.

00328032008: To be quite honest, in some of the departments within my organization, IT contractors and contractors in general are treated like second-class citizens. I know that's very blunt, and it's not fair, but they do. Overall, I have had a great experience and relationship with IT contractors on my project team.

00530032008: I fully integrated IT contractors into my staff and attempted to make them feel part of my project team. For me, the relationships with IT contractors that supported my projects have been a very positive experience. Most of my challenges have been with government leadership or my government peers. I have personally observed relationships go sour between government project managers, supervisors, and even leaders because the IT contractors are paid more money than the individuals they might work for. This is a real concern within [organization deleted]. I have had one instance of this on a project I managed: A team lead was envious of an IT contractor because she was paid more than he. Because of this, my team lead treated the contractor unfair, gave the contractor work that was not part of the overall project, or tried to make the contractor work long hours that were unnecessary. This type of treatment broke down morale and damaged the relationships between my government staff and contractors. To make a long story short, I removed the government worker from my staff. Relationships are too hard

to form and even harder to repair because now a trust issue will exist. [Name deleted], my personal experience has been great. I treat all individuals on my project team with the same respect that I would like to have. I value my IT contractor's feedback and ideas with equal weight. I want to offer a perspective: For me, this is a culture challenge within organizations and within most government organizations, and leadership is the one that must lead the effort to change the culture of treating contractors different or with less respect.

00813042008: Relationships with IT contractors is a key component to my being successful. My experiences have been positive and once I have established rapport with my project team I immediately try to make them feel as though they part of my project team.

00917062008: Interpersonal communications seem to help bridge the gap and establish relationships between leadership, the project manager, and others on my projects. During my tenure at [organization deleted], leadership communicated daily with me as the project lead, and I would communicate to my employees and contractors. I developed more respect and understanding of the vision and mission of the organization. I was then able to make more informed decisions and the attitudes among my team members were positive towards leadership; however, there have been instances where the lack of communication created relationships that had false trusts. I am not sure if this information is valuable, but I do know trust is a major relationship builder on my project teams.

01018042008: The backbone of most of my projects was the relationships that I worked hard to build and maintain. I have definitely learned to appreciate and leverage

the relationships that I have built internal and external to this community. Fortunately or unfortunately, a success factor for many negotiations in my agency depended on who you know not what you know. A personal experience that humbled me and made me realize how important relationships are and position sometimes was unimportant was when I tried, as a senior manager of [organization deleted], to get information from [organization deleted] and was told that I had to go through a tremendous amount of unnecessary paperwork and governance, which would have delayed a major infrastructure upgrade by at least 6 weeks. One of my most junior project team members who were crossmatrixed from [organization deleted] was able to get the information within 48 hours. I asked how was he able to obtain the information; he noted the interpersonal relationship he had formed from daily interactions with [organization deleted].

01120042008: An IT portfolio management project that I managed had high visibility within the agency. We normally had a government representative who would come to our meetings and let us know what kind of activities were coming up so that we could kind of plan for them internal to our portfolio management meeting. I had a couple of contractors from the Capital Planning and Investment Control side of the house that were very astute in the arena of financial and mixed IT systems. One of the contractors had had good reach back capabilities not only through the [organization deleted] but also stayed in contact with the [organization deleted] folks. The relationships established between contractors, the PM team, and stakeholders worked towards a successful project completion.

01221042008: Project teams that I inherited consist of government personnel and contractors. The project team has a good history of working together. I rarely engage them regarding work performance or deliverables. There is good chemistry between the members of the team.

01322042008: There is a culture here that requires relationships to overcome some of the barriers. One such barrier is how some of my colleagues treat their contractor staff. The contractor staff is sometime treated as though they have kryptonite in their pockets. I have been involved or led IT projects where management have suggested that contractors were to be excluded from meetings, not because of the information being discussed but simply because they were contractors. I have addressed the importance of making the contractor feel more a part of the team, but my message seems to fall on closed minds.

01423042008: I have seen a little bit of variation of relationships between government and contractor personnel. I mean, sometimes there is a them and us mentality by government personnel, and at other times, there is a desire to incorporate contractors as part of the intelligence team. Either way, my experiences have been some leaders support the segregation, and others do not. I do not tolerate treating contractors different because it influences relationships in a big way.

01523042008: It has been my experience that being able to effectively manage relationships among peers, contractors, and leadership is a challenge but one that must be managed successfully by leadership and more importantly by individuals like myself who serves as the frontline to IT projects and government resources.

01626042008: Because we are dealing with relationships right now, I will give you a very current example: I came into the middle of a relationship battle between the government IT project manager and his supporting contractors. I basically served as a mediator between the two. What neither of the parties seem to realize is they were affecting the customer and the organization by not delivering quality products. They were also creating tension among other workers in their area of work.

01728042008: Most of my successes have come from my ability to communicate with people. My mentor who is the Chief Information Officer at [organization deleted] suggests that success is based on relationships. It appears that my current organization do not understand the importance of relationships and transparency. I have instilled relationship building within my division amongst employees. What I have found is that relationship building promotes transparency.

01803052008: My project teams typically consist of government employees and contractors. When opportunity presents itself, I use assessment tools to help me to build my project team. The Myers-Briggs assessment tool has helped me to build great teams. I cannot emphasize the importance of relationships on a team. Relationships are not just important to teams but with leadership, customers, and stakeholders. Initially, leadership within my organization was against my consistently using assessment tools mostly because of cost, but the results are undeniable. I am successful at managing my IT projects. Knowing yourself and the personalities around you can make a difference.

00708042008: I try to treat people, whether they work for me, with me, or I am just meeting someone for the first time, with respect. In doing so, I often develop relationships because they believe I care, and I do. These relationships, formal or

informal, often yield positive results for me. The intelligence community is small, and the more relationships established, the easier it is to get through the political climate.

Theme 4: Significance of IT Contractors

00127032008: All of the projects I manage for the federal government within the continental United States were usually supported by IT contractors. It has been my experience that the IT contractors have the subject matter expertise in information technology life cycle management; not that the government does not, but the government, well my team's responsibilities were really to lead and manage the projects, and the contractors were there to support the government's needs.

00328032008: In any event, contractors on projects that I have led and served are your backbone, your bread, and your butter, so to speak. If you have contractors over the people, especially in government with the push to reduce the number of government workers and cut back on the bureaucracy, we depend on contractors.

00530032008: Well, we found that the contractors were indispensable. Most of the contractors I worked with were very professional, and they brought a wealth of knowledge about new and emerging technologies in the IT field. They were in a support role for our organization, and when we brought them in as support staff, they became fully integrated into the organization, and they served as any other staff member.

00608042008: We had Desert Storm; we had the operations in Haiti; we had the operations in Somalia, Iraq, and Kuwait. We were able to accomplish the IT requirement based on our soldiers, based on our civilians. However, in large part, because of the civilian contracts we had in place to do both the maintenance and sustainment operations.

00813042008: Most of these guys are real smart. It has been my experience that the contractors are particular. On my projects, when it comes to actually doing work, they are willing to share information with the project team and guide members of the project team through the peaks and valleys of IT projects. There have been many projects under my guidance where the impact of the contractor is noticeable across the [agency deleted] enterprise. I would not have experienced as much success without IT contractors supporting my projects.

00917062008: I recall being assigned to an intelligence command in Dhahran, Saudi Arabia. IT contractors supported every project I managed. They were considered the subject matter experts not just on my IT projects but also within the region. One of the areas my project team and I were responsible for was satellite communications. My project team was directly responsible for primary communications between [agency deleted] and [agency deleted]. Without that vital link, intelligence gathering would have been difficult from that location.

01018042008: The IT professionals on the contract side were very knowledgeable. They provided good technical insight. Those technical pieces helped me to further understand the bolts of certain projects that I cannot mention. They also helped me to understand the nuts and bolts from a tactical perspective. Contractors that worked on projects that I have led were always instrumental in assisting me define the strategic view of what we as a project team would achieve.

01221042008: As the government representative, I am overall responsible for the success or failure of the IT projects within [agency deleted]. However, to be quite honest, it is the IT contractor with the real corporate and technical background. The [system

deleted] is one of the most utilized IT networks within the [agency deleted]. As the project lead, I do not hesitate to engage the IT contractors for information before making a command decision.

01322042008: I have been a part of senior leadership discussions when immediate IT support was needed by my agency. Senior leadership did not even bother with notifying government personnel; they would immediately contact high-ended IT contract support from organizations such as [agency deleted], [agency deleted]. It was almost like senior leadership did not trust the very people they assigned.

01423042008: [Name deleted], I depend on IT contractors more than I do government civilians or military members within my agency.

Theme 5: Impact of Improved Interpersonal Communication Skills

00127032008: The adage is, "seek first to understand, and then seek to be understood." That is an underappreciated perspective, but I understood that perspective. Seek first to understand what the contractor's understanding was. Seek first to understand what my team members' perspective was. Seek first to understand what my leadership's perspectives were. Then after understanding all of those perspectives and reflecting on those and internalizing those, and then transform that understanding into my own expected outcome, which lead to the second part, then seek to be understood. Let me explain: I deliberately sought to understand the stakeholder's expectations for the project. Once I understood that, then I sought to ensure that the contractor understood my perspective, because I was the liaison between the government and the contractor. If I understood what the government's expectations were, I was then able to communicate that clearly to the contractor such that we increased clarity and reduced ambiguity.

00228032008: Every project I have been on, and I am not going to brag about this, but people really liked me. I attributed this to interpersonal communication skills. As I grew within the project management arena, my communication skills increased. My written, verbal, and the ability to understand people increased. My level of responsibility increased, and the individuals I interacted with became more political. Of the 30 years I spent on active duty in the intelligence community, 29 of those years I served in leadership positions.

00328032008: There have been times when a lack of written communication skills really hurt my agency ability to achieve their desired outcome. I remember leading portions of the [project deleted] project. We as the federal government could not describe our requirements. As a result, we were delivered products by contractors that we were unable to use. The Government Accountability Office noted in a report that my agency lacked leadership involvement, project management competencies, and interpersonal communication skills. Since that very public episode, [agency deleted] increased training in these areas, and we have increased our level of success when managing projects in general.

00429032008: [Agency deleted] convert as many IT contractors to government employees as possible because of their ability to effectively communicate. A rationale according to senior leadership is they bring a level of communication competencies to the organization that currently do not exist. I have seen the impact on projects that I have led or been involved. It is actually refreshing.

00530032008: I managed a project where the leader, in my opinion, wanted to be a bully. I mean, he was trying to dictate: Go forth and do it this way. I reviewed artifacts

he presented on a particular project I managed and tactfully advised him that what he was presenting was unrealistic. After verbally explaining to him the challenges associated with his proposal, I then drafted an alternative to his solution. He concurred with my proposal.

00813042008: One of the highest complements I have received recently was from one of my senior IT contractors. [Name deleted] suggested that he had noticed a great improvement in how I handled myself in meetings, moreover, how concise I had become in drafting statements of work and performance work statements.

01018042008: My project team and I ensure there is collaboration and effective ongoing communication between leadership, stakeholders, and customers. This for me has been essential because it promotes transparency and trust amongst all parties.

01221042008: As communication improved between leadership and project managers so did project outcomes. An example is the [project deleted] project. Once collaboration was achieved among the stakeholders, leadership, and the customers, we achieved transparency and were able to identify requirements that supported a desired outcome for the organization.

01423042008: [Name deleted], a couple weeks ago, the program and project managers of my organization participated in an offsite. A focus area was improving project performance, effectiveness, and outcomes. It was reported by leadership that there had been improvement in the organization's performance as it related to managing IT projects. Based on the feedback presented at the offsite by the project managers, effective communication is a key factor in improving projects' outcomes.

01626042008: Educating everybody is key. If we could have improved on interpersonal communication skills as far as written communication, we would have a better-written statement of work, less conflict as far as what is asked for and what is delivered. Moreover, the verbal communication, if we had a little more training, it would have made a big difference because it is often not what you say but how you say it.

01728042008: I had to learn and use interpersonal communication skills to survive.

02006052008: Dealing with your staff, dealing with just every aspect of the job involves communication. Interpersonal communication can strengthen relationships and increase a person's ability to effectively communicate with others. So often we communicate one way: We talk and never listen. Through effective communication, I have learned to listen and talk, but more importantly, I have learned to manage people and projects to help the organization achieve its desired outcome.