

A MIXED METHOD STUDY: UNDERSTANDING EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE
AT U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY

by
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A Dissertation Presented in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Management

UNIVERSITY OF PHOENIX

September 2009

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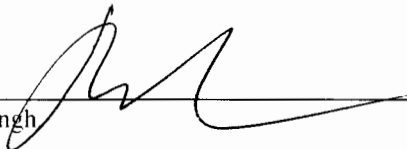
Richard Schuttler, Ph.D., Mentor

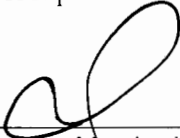
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Accepted and Signed:  September 17, 2009
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ABSTRACT

U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) leaders must communicate effectively. The problem the research study addressed was federal employees ranked DHS 29 out of 30 federal agencies in the Federal Human Capital Survey. Lack of communication, leadership, and employee engagement were listed as reasons for the low rating and high employee turnover. The purpose of this mixed-methods study was to examine the relationship between leadership, communication, and employee performance within United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS), an agency within DHS. This study's findings included a) supervisor leadership and communication significantly predict employee and organizational performance, b) field employees have lower perceptions of leaders than headquarters employees, and c) employees who learned of the study through paper fliers rated leaders lower than employees who received electronic invitations.

DEDICATION

To my mother who gave me roots and my father who gave me wings;
To my sister and brother-in-law who give me continuity and support;
To my nephew who never ends a telephone call without saying, “I love you”;
To my cousin who is always available for me and always ends with “luv ya girl”;
To my friend who ends every conversation with “my arms are around you”;
To my family, friends, and colleagues who were supportive; and
To all my mentors past and present.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Many thanks to Dr. Richard Schuttler, my mentor and chairman of my committee, for his tenacious sincerity in seeing this project through to completion. Dr. Schuttler started me on my doctoral path by setting the tone during the facilitation of my first University of Phoenix residency, he continued to demand *significant and substantial* scholarly excellence while overseeing our cohort as Dean of the School of Advanced Studies, and he put me back on the journey after a 4-year hiatus derailed my original plans. I will be forever grateful to him for his vision and never-ending desire to help others achieve their goals and dreams, even when they walked away from them.

Thanks also to my committee members, Drs. Carol Lieberman and Raj Singh, for their valuable insights into my research and writing. I wish to express my sincere gratitude for their time and dedication to the quality and refinement of my work. Thanks also to Drs. Tom Bellinger, Beverly Carter, and Robert DiVincenzo, my cohort members, for all their support and prodding during this journey. Thank you for not giving up on me.

Many thanks to Deputy Associate Director Debra Rogers for providing me with the host directorate to conduct the research study and for recommending that senior leaders should be the group studied. Also, my gratitude to Frederick Tournay, our Ethics Officer within the Office of Chief Counsel, who worked with me to ensure that all data collection methodology was within the established guidelines set by USCIS. Thanks to both of them for the opportunity and the guidance.

Finally, completing the circle, many thanks to Drs. Schuttler and Rouse for permission to use their copyrighted material provided in this study. I hope I have added *significant and substantial* value to this area of study.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES	xii
LIST OF FIGURES	xxiii
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION	1
Background of the Problem	2
Social Concerns	2
Statement of the Problem	4
Purpose of the Study	5
Significance of the Problem	7
Significance of the Study	7
Significance of the Study to Leadership	7
Nature of the Study	8
Overview of the Research Method	8
Overview of the Design Appropriateness	9
Research Questions	9
Research Question #1 – Senior Leadership & Employee Performance	10
Research Question #2 – Senior Leader Communication & Employee Performance	10
Research Question #3 – Leadership Recommendations	11
Theoretical Framework	11
Definition of Terms	15
Assumptions	17
Scope, Limitations, and Delimitations	18

Summary	18
CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE	20
Title Searches, Articles, Research Documents, and Journals	20
Literature Review.....	22
Overview of Federal Government Leadership	22
Loss of Federal Employees.....	22
Reduction of Middle Managers	24
Department of Homeland Security	26
Supervisor Leadership	28
Supervisor Communication	31
Employee Performance.....	36
Morale.....	37
Engagement	38
Organizational Performance	42
Alternative Viewpoints of Federal Leadership.....	50
Conclusions.....	52
Summary	53
CHAPTER 3: METHOD	54
Research Method and Design Appropriateness	54
Mixed Method	54
Descriptive Design.....	55
Research Questions.....	56
Research Question #1 – Senior Leadership & Employee Performance	56

Research Question #2 – Senior Leader Communication & Employee Performance.....	57
Research Question #3 – Leadership Recommendations.....	57
Population.....	58
Sampling Frame.....	58
Informed Consent.....	58
Confidentiality.....	59
Geographic Location.....	59
Data Collection.....	59
Online Survey.....	60
Research Map.....	60
Instrumentation.....	61
Validity and Reliability.....	61
Internal Validity.....	61
External Validity.....	62
Reliability.....	62
Data Analysis.....	64
Frequencies.....	64
Descriptive Analysis.....	65
Correlational Analysis.....	65
Content Analysis.....	65
Summary.....	66
CHAPTER 4: RESULTS.....	68

Data Collection	69
Findings.....	70
Distribution Methods	70
Response Rate.....	72
Frequency, Demographics, and Descriptive Statistics	73
Model Variables.....	79
Reliability Analysis	80
Interrater Reliability.....	81
Correlational Analysis	82
Leadership Recommendations.....	85
Communication.....	85
Employee Performance	87
General Comments	89
Gap Analysis.....	90
Summary	91
CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS.....	94
Data Collection	94
Data Findings	95
Frequency, Demographics and Descriptive Statistics.....	96
Reliability Analysis.....	97
Correlational Analysis	98
Research Question #1	98
Research Question #2	98

Research Question #3	99
Gap Analysis.....	101
Conclusion	102
Assumptions	102
Research Question #1	104
Research Question #2	106
Research Question #3	107
General Comments	109
Implications.....	110
General Leadership.....	110
USCIS Leadership.....	111
Recommendations.....	112
Recommendation #1	112
Recommendation #2	113
Recommendation #3	113
Summary.....	115
REFERENCES	116
APPENDIX A: LETTER OF COLLABORATION.....	127
APPENDIX B: INFORMED CONSENT FORM	129
APPENDIX C: PERMISSION TO USE AN EXISTING SURVEY	131
APPENDIX D: SUPERVISOR LEADERSHIP & COMMUNICATION INVENTORY & DEMOGRAPHIC QUESTIONS.....	133
APPENDIX E: CODEBOOK OF VARIABLES	142

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1 <i>Publication Dates of References Analyzed</i>	20
Table 2 <i>Type of References Analyzed</i>	21
Table 3 <i>Comparison of 2007 and 2008 Department of Homeland Security Employee Survey Sampling Design and Response Rates</i>	52
Table 4 <i>Supervisor Leadership and Communication Inventory (SLCI) Reliability Coefficients</i>	64
Table 5 <i>Summary of Current Data Analysis by Research Question</i>	66
Table 6 <i>Participants' Work Locations</i>	75
Table 7 <i>Participants' Rankings by Geographic Locations</i>	77
Table 8 <i>Participants Located in Field Offices and Headquarters Offices</i>	79
Table 9 <i>Descriptive Statistics for Supervisor Leadership, Supervisor Communication, and Employee Performance</i>	80
Table 10 <i>Reliability of Supervisor Leadership and Communication Inventory Items</i>	81
Table 11 <i>Intercoder Reliability of Open-Ended Responses</i>	82
Table 12 <i>Multiple Regression Analysis of the Influence of Supervisor Leadership and Communication on Employee Performance</i>	85
Table 13 <i>Comparison Headquarter and Non-headquarter Perceptions of Supervisor Leadership Communication, Employee Performance, and Organizational Outcomes</i>	91

LIST OF FIGURES

<i>Figure 1.</i> Model of leadership and communication effects on employee performance.	9
<i>Figure 2.</i> Schuttler’s two-dimensional grid of organizational communication.	13
<i>Figure 3.</i> Reorganization of Immigration and Naturalization Services (INS).....	27
<i>Figure 4.</i> Comparison of engaged and non-engaged employees in the DHS who reported their supervisors had good management skills.	40
<i>Figure 5.</i> Percentage of employee engagement in the Department of Homeland Security.	41
<i>Figure 6.</i> Two-dimensional organizational performance grid of employees working in an intensive care unit.	45
<i>Figure 7.</i> Supervisor Leadership and Communication Inventory gap analysis of employees working in an intensive care unit.	46
<i>Figure 8.</i> T tests showing differences between participants’ responses within two URLs.	72
<i>Figure 9.</i> Comparison of completed surveys and incomplete surveys.	73
<i>Figure 10.</i> Comparison of participants’ work locations.	74
<i>Figure 11.</i> Comparison of participants’ federal service rankings.....	76
<i>Figure 12.</i> Comparison of participants by supervisory vs. non-supervisory positions.	78
<i>Figure 13.</i> Categories of participants’ positions.....	79
<i>Figure 14.</i> Scatter plot of supervisor leadership and employee performance.....	83
<i>Figure 15.</i> Scatter plot of supervisor communication and employee performance.	84

<i>Figure 16.</i> Open-ended suggestions for improving employee performance.....	86
<i>Figure 17.</i> Other suggestions for improving employee performance.....	87
<i>Figure 18.</i> Open-ended suggestions for improving senior leader communication. .	88
<i>Figure 19.</i> Other suggestions for improving senior leader communication.	88
<i>Figure 20.</i> General open-ended comments.....	89
<i>Figure 21.</i> Gap analysis comparing headquarter and non-headquarter participants' perceptions.....	90
<i>Figure 22.</i> Gap analysis comparing headquarter and non-headquarter participants' perceptions.....	102
<i>Figure 23.</i> Correlation between supervisor leadership, communication, and employee/organizational performance.....	110

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Leaders of large organizations confront significant challenges when communicating with employees. In the Federal Government where supervisors and employees operate within a geographically dispersed bureaucracy, communication is complex and often ineffective. In studies of *The Best Places to Work in the Federal Government*, the Partnership for Public Service (2007) reported federal employees were less satisfied and less engaged than employees in similar organizations in the private sector. Facing unprecedented financial and national security issues, discouraged federal employees quit in record numbers, a phenomenon known as *retirement tsunami* (Rosenberg, 2009b).

Federal agencies protect the common welfare of the citizens and visitors to the United States. To fulfill their responsibilities, federal employees must understand the critical nature of their performance in governmental operations, particularly in national security agencies. The U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) employees are responsible for protecting against and responding to terrorist attacks and hazards to the nation (U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services [USCIS], 2007c).

Evidenced by the events of September 11, 2001, poor communication between governmental supervisors and employees can have tragic consequences (National Commission, 2004b). The purpose of the mixed-methods study was to investigate the relationship between supervisor communication and employee performance within DHS and recommend strategies to address communication problems. Chapter 1 begins with background information and statement of the problem. Included in the chapter are details

about the purpose, significance, and nature of the study and a discussion of the conceptual framework for the research.

Background of the Problem

On November 25, 2002, after extensive hearings about the tragic events of September 11, 2001, Congress passed Public Law 107-296, known as the U. S. Department of Homeland Security Act. The new law included the formation of a new cabinet-level department consisting of 22 federal agencies (“An Act,” 2002). Members of the 9/11 Commission discovered poor communication structures between various federal intelligence and benefits agencies (National Commission, 2004a, 2004b). The alignment of the agencies within one cabinet-level department was designed to improve communication among agencies in order to prevent tragedies similar to 9/11 from occurring again in the United States (National Commission, 2004a, 2004b).

Social Concerns

Created in 1947, the security system of the nation did not remain current with modern threats to national security (Ben-Har & Shiplett, 2009). The Project on National Security Reform included reports on more than 100 national security case studies. Each failure listed in the studies pointed to two common elements: (a) no communication and (b) lack of teamwork between governmental agencies (Ben-Har & Shiplett, 2009). The George W. Bush administration created DHS to lead U.S. security efforts while preserving the nation’s freedoms.

Given the national security role of DHS, the effectiveness of organizational communication within the department is of social concern to current and future generations. Upon the department creation, effective leadership and communication

within the department were crucial concerns since DHS executives were responsible for coordinating 22 separate agencies (i.e., components) into a cohesive department and for sharpening operational effectiveness within each component to ensure security within the nation's borders ("One Team," 2008). The 2009 Homeland Security Agenda from The White House [TWH] included the objectives of increasing the capacity to share intelligence information across all levels of government and greater communication assistance with localities and states ("The Agenda," 2009).

To be successful in protecting the nation, DHS staff must recruit, train, and retain qualified professionals for its workforce (USCIS, 2007a, 2007b). A large component within DHS is the USCIS with 10,704 employees within 230 locations around the world (USCIS, personal communication, February 9, 2009). Staff in one directorate within USCIS manages 72% of the USCIS workforce, or 7,683 employees located throughout 201 offices (USCIS, personal communication, February 9, 2009). USCIS employees annually manage over 6 million applications and petitions and produce over 4 million secure immigration documents (USCIS, 2007a, 2007b). Senior leaders must communicate clearly so field officers make efficient, credible, and correct decisions.

The study of organizational communication within a major federal agency has theoretical value. Various high technology personal communication tools such as Blackberries, instant messaging, texting, electronic mail messages, Internet, video streaming, videoconferencing, telephone conferences, meetings, and face-to-face discussions enable managers and employees to communicate 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, and 365 days a year (Schlosser, 2007). The primary communication problem for

employees does not consist of lacking means of communication but of receiving messages of poor quality.

Effective communications between workers and managers are paramount to organizational success. Communications must be clear in order for decisions to be effective (Harkins, 2001). P. Isley (personal communication, March 17, 2008), a private consultant who studied another USCIS directorate in 2008, determined lack of clear communication and definitive leadership were the largest concerns for employees. The report listed a variety of communication and leadership issues such as (a) competing priorities; (b) lack of clarity of mission, vision, and strategic goals; (c) lack of feedback on reports and memos; and (d) a poorly structured communication system (Isley, personal communication, March 17, 2008).

Statement of the Problem

The general problem is employees of the Federal Government have ranked DHS 29 out of 30 of the large federal agencies (Hampton, 2007; Partnership for Public Service, 2007). Employees feel demoralized and undervalued (Brodsky & Newell, 2009), and they quit the government in high numbers in what was called *retirement tsunami* (Rosenberg, 2009b). U. S. House Homeland Security Committee Chairman Thompson admitted morale among DHS employees had been low since the creation of the department in 2003 (Hampton, 2007).

Previous researchers found an ineffective communication structure within governmental organizations, specifically within immigration agencies (P. Isley, personal communications, March 17, 2008). The agency, USCIS, rated in the low 15% (i.e., 189 out of 222 federal agency subcomponents) in a study by the Partnership for Public

Service (2007). Employees have complained that supervisors waste time with rambling e-mails, are ineffective in facilitating meetings, and give vague instructions (Friel, 2009). Employees in another DHS component listed low morale and workplace concerns as contributing factors to the 17% voluntary attrition rate (Rosenberg, 2008).

The mixed-methods descriptive study was an investigation of the relationship between leadership and employee performance, and leadership communication and employee performance. Employee performance includes employee engagement, employee morale, and job satisfaction (O'Connor, 2006). When leaders fail to communicate effectively, employee performance and morale decline (Bohn & Grafton, 2002).

The data collection instrument in the current study was an online survey composed of open-ended and close-ended questions used to collect the perceptions of interacting individuals. The focus of data analysis was various perspectives about the organizational leaders' communication skills and performance. The general population consisted of employees, supervisors, and senior leaders working within the largest USCIS directorate.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the mixed-methods study was to examine the relationship between leadership and employee performance, and leadership communication and employee performance within a large USCIS directorate. A quantitative method was appropriate and efficient to sample a large population of geographically dispersed participants (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005). Other researchers successfully used quantitative Likert-type items to

measure leadership communication and employee performance (Rouse, 2009a, 2009b; Rouse & Kaplan, 2008).

A qualitative component in the study was also appropriate for the exploration (Creswell, 2005) of field employees' concerns about senior leaders' communication skills. In the mixed-methods study, the quantitative component consisted of testing the relationship between leadership and employee performance, and leadership communication and employee performance. The qualitative component consisted of exploring recommendations to enhance the communication skills and leadership of senior leaders within USCIS.

The descriptive design included the measurement of a potential association between the agency's senior leadership, senior leader communication, and employee performance. Descriptive designs provide detailed, accurate pictures of particular characteristics within a study and provide focus (Cone & Foster, 2006). Descriptive correlational designs are appropriate to analyze employee and supervisor perceptions with descriptions and systematic testing of relationships between the variables of interest (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005). Kaplan (2008) used a descriptive correlational design to compare and evaluate the perceptions of senior leaders in healthcare organizations.

The current study included identifying the correlation between the predictor variables of perceived supervisor leadership and communication of senior leadership and the criterion variable of employee performance in the field. The specific population included employees, supervisors, managers, and executives who worked within one USCIS directorate. The senior leaders who participated in the current study primarily

worked in the Washington, DC, while field employees worked in over 200 offices throughout the United States.

Significance of the Problem

Significance of the Study

Effective supervisor communication and employee performance within USCIS is significant to the security of the United States and the welfare of all citizens. The 9/11 Commission report documented a lack of communication processes among federal agencies and delayed dissemination of critical information to the field in the summer of 2001 (National Commission, 2004a, 2004b). On September 11, 2001, when terrorists successfully hijacked four jet airliners within the United States, local officers operated without valuable information. The attacks within the borders of the United States killed 2,752 people (National Commission, 2004a, 2004b) and changed the way the U.S. handled national security concerns (USCIS, 2007a, 2007b). Research on leader-employee communication processes within DHS might be helpful for the Federal Government to identify strategies for reducing risks of future domestic terrorism attacks.

Significance of the Study to Leadership

Communication breakdowns are not unique to the Federal Government (Madlock, 2008a, 2008b). Leaders from all sectors must effectively exchange strategic information with employees. Results of a survey of Fortune 200 companies revealed ineffective communication is expensive, resulting in the need for employees to receive formal training (Hindi, Miller, & Catt, 2004). The results further indicated leaders who did not offer training in communication skills to their employees found paperwork and costs increased. E-mails were listed as the most misunderstood form of communication, with

more miscommunications involving internal rather than external stakeholders.

Communication is a basic element in organizational leadership and is particularly critical in the Federal Government. Effective communication skills are necessary for growth of any organization (Harkins, 2001; Hindi et al., 2004; USCIS, 2007c).

Nature of the Study

Overview of the Research Method

The study incorporated a mixed-methods descriptive approach with a cross-sectional online survey to identify predictor and criterion variables relationships (Creswell, 2005; Leedy & Ormrod, 2005). The mixed-methods descriptive approach included quantitative and qualitative components (Vogt, 2005). According to Vogt, the boundary between quantitative and qualitative is easily blurred.

A quantitative survey was appropriate to provide answers about how leadership and communication from headquarters in Washington, DC (predictor variables) influenced employee performance (criterion variables) in the field nationwide (Creswell, 2005). The study included a series of quantitative Likert-type measures of leadership and communication and open-ended questions to describe and explore senior leader and employee assumptions, values, beliefs, and perceptions of their agency, leadership, and communication (Creswell, 2005). Researchers Bohn and Grafton (2002), Hargie, Tourish, and Wilson (2002), Madlock (2008a, 2008b), and Pandey and Garnett (2006) successfully used quantitative methods to determine communication and leadership relationships to employee performance. Other researchers (P. Isley, personal communication, March 17, 2008; Rouse, 2008a, 2008b, 2009a) used the mixed-methods

approach with open-ended exploratory questions to investigate communication and leadership concerns.

Overview of the Design Appropriateness

The purpose of the descriptive design and closed questions was to quantitatively evaluate the relationships between the predictor and criterion variables. The open-ended questions were used to examine recommendations for improvement at USCIS. An online survey was appropriate because of the capability to reach a large population in geographically dispersed locations. The online survey offered the advantages of easy management, anonymity, and remoteness (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005).

Research Questions

Figure 1 is a graphic representation of the research questions developed for the study. The first two questions were used to examine the relationship between senior leaders' leadership and communication skills and employee performance. The third question was used to explore leadership recommendations.

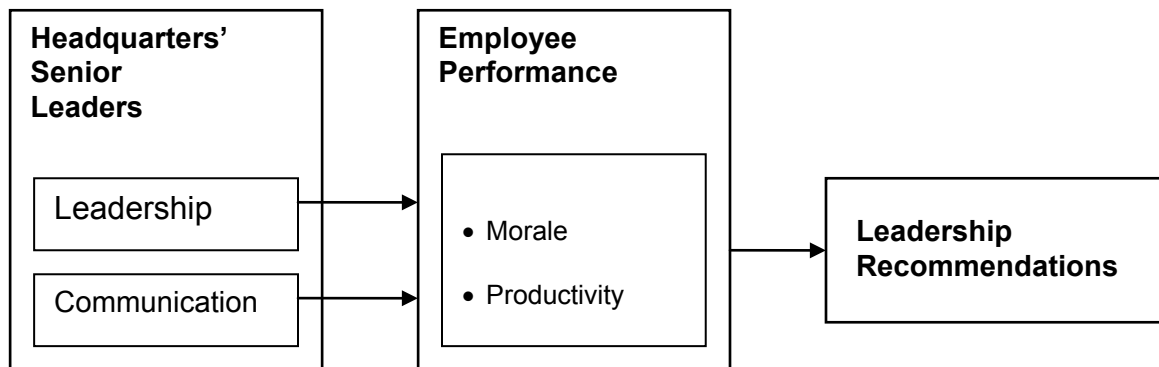


Figure 1. Model of leadership and communication effects on employee performance.

Research Question #1 – Senior Leadership & Employee Performance

In an article entitled, *Open Memo to the President-Elect*, Brodsky and Newell (2009) reminded the new commander in chief he would be the chief executive for 2.7 million federal employees who would carry out the vision, making strong communication and solid leadership practices necessary to ensure better performance from employees. The quantitative study's first research question asked, What relationship, if any, exists between senior leaders' leadership and employees' performance?

The following is the hypothesis corresponding to the first research question:

H₁₀ – There is no significant correlation between supervisor leadership and employees' performance within one USCIS directorate.

H_{1A} – There is a significant correlation between supervisor leadership and employees' performance within one USCIS directorate.

Research Question #2 – Senior Leader Communication & Employee Performance

Organizational researchers reported a positive relationship between communication and leadership performance (Bohn & Grafton, 2002; Lussier & Achua, 2001). Madlock (2008a, 2008b) found evidence linking communication satisfaction to enhanced job satisfaction. According to Hargie et al. (2002), a strong relationship exists between lack of job satisfaction and increased employee absenteeism, employee turnover, and decreased employee commitment and productivity. The second research question asked, What relationship, if any, exists between senior leaders' communication and employees' performance within one USCIS directorate?

The following is the hypothesis corresponding to the second research question:

H2₀ – There is no significant correlation between supervisor communication and employees' performance within on USCIS directorate.

H2_A – There is a significant correlation between supervisor communication and employees' performance within one USCIS directorate.

Research Question #3 – Leadership Recommendations

Results of a study of one USCIS division indicated there was a lack of measurable performance criteria for tasks, feedback, and reports to headquarters (P. Isley, personal communication, March 17, 2008). If senior USCIS leaders had included field employees during the design process of their data collection system, concerns about the system's value to the field could have been addressed during the creation stage. Since such feedback was not solicited, the results did not meet the end users' needs, hindering employees' performance with lost time and frustration about the system (P. Isley, personal communication, March 17, 2008). The purpose of the study was to examine recommendations for one USCIS directorate's senior leaders to improve their leadership and communication in hopes of improving employee performance in field offices. The third research question in the current study asked, How, if at all, can leaders improve employee performance within USCIS?

Theoretical Framework

The United States Merit Systems Protection Board (USMSPB) is an independent, bipartisan board created to protect federal workers and ensure effective management. Since the 1990s, USMSPB has been conducting studies on human capital management issues such as federal employee engagement. In September 2008, USMSPB Chairman

McPhie sent results of a 2005 study to the President of the United States and the U.S. Congress, outlining concerns about federal workers' full engagement in their work (USMSPB, 2008).

Results from the USMSPB (2008) study linked employee engagement to agency outcomes and confirmed highly rated employees left their positions before retirement when not engaged in their work. Federal agencies potentially face a severe shortage in their future workforce because of the potential retirement numbers of 60% of general service (GS) federal workers and 90% of senior executive service (SES) by 2016 (Rosenberg, 2009b; USMSPB, 2008).

Employee engagement consists of a heightened connection between workers, their organizations, and their work. Employee engagement includes values such as pride in work, personal meaning to the work, and a value to the organizations (USMSPB, 2008). Six measurable themes identified in the 2005 study were (a) pride in one's work, (b) satisfaction with leadership, (c) opportunity to perform well at work, (d) satisfaction with the recognition received, (e) prospect for future personal and professional growth, and (f) a positive work environment with some focus on teamwork (USMSPB, 2008).

Researchers in the USMSPB study linked employee engagement to job satisfaction.

Other researchers correlated worker satisfaction with supervisor leadership and communication (Bohn & Grafton, 2002; Brodsky & Newell, 2009; Partnership for Public Service, 2007). The results of the USMSPB study support the need for the current study exploration of relationships between supervisor leadership and leader communication and the effects on employee performance.

In an effort to explain the relationship between supervisor communication and employee performance, Schuttler (2009) created a model of *the laws of communication*. Using a two-dimensional grid, the theoretical framework suggested supervisor leadership and communication predicted employee behavior (see Figure 2). With a traffic light metaphor, Schuttler categorized organizations into red, yellow, and green zones. The model's framework allows managers to identify critical concerns (red), as well as elements needing to be watched (yellow), and other elements working well (green).



Figure 2. Schuttler's two-dimensional grid of organizational communication.

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Schuttler's model was consistent with other research in the field reporting a significant relationship between leadership communication and employee performance.

Bohn and Grafton (2002) found business leaders who failed to communicate effectively negatively influenced employee performance and morale. Rouse (2009) similarly reported declines in healthcare workers' morale and productivity when supervisors did not regularly communicate with employees. Leader communication, in particular, manifested as a key variable influencing organizational performance. Hindi et al. (2004) reported results of a *Fortune's* annual study of the 100 best places to work listing effective communication as one of the measurable elements.

By listening to and encouraging employee input, supervisors empower employees to succeed individually and accomplish goals organizationally (Hindi et al., 2004). Effective communication skills positively influence employee performance and job satisfaction and are essential for the survival and growth of organizations. Companies spend millions of dollars on communication training (Hindi et al., 2004). Organizations without communication training for their leaders increase miscommunication and paperwork, raising standard operating costs (Rosenberg, 2009b).

While other researchers globally examined organizational communication (Bohn & Grafton, 2002; Hargie et al., 2002; Harkins, 2001; Hindi et al., 2004; Madlock, 2008a, 2008b; Pandey & Garnett, 2006), Schuttler (2008) identified specific, measurable supervisor communication behaviors used in development and training and incorporated the behaviors in the model. Schuttler indicated red zone leaders tended to be myopic, frequently micromanaging employees. Yellow leaders tended to *fight fires* rather than function proactively while green leaders *walked the talk* with role modeling and mentoring.

Following the assessment of the efficacy of leader communication (i.e., red, yellow, or green), organizational leaders used Schuttler's (2008) two-dimensional grid to predict employee performance. The current study included Schuttler's two-dimensional model to examine the relationship between supervisor leadership communication and employee performance. With knowledge about the relationships between variables relevant to communication skills and employee performance, USCIS executives are in a stronger position to make changes positively influencing employee morale, turnover, and productivity.

Definition of Terms

The study was an investigation of organizational communication within a federal agency. The context and terminology of the analysis differ significantly from the terminology used in a typical business environment. Governmental definitions are included to clarify the key terms in the research questions and hypotheses. Terminology within the Federal Government changes often. In January 2009, DHS created extended definitions for DHS agencies (P. Schneider, personal communication, January 23, 2009). The specific definitions in the next section will eliminate the common confusion with federal terminology.

Communication. Communication includes the message as well as its delivery as it relates to (a) credibility, (b) consistency, (c) courtesy, and (d) impact (Maxwell, 2007).

Employee morale. Employee morale is the state of mind or mental condition of an employee. Good employee morale is defined as satisfaction or happiness with the organization. Morale is a component of employee satisfaction (O'Connor, 2006).

Employee performance. Employee performance pertains to elements and

standards, critical and noncritical, as well as to work performed by employees within assignments, projects, and tasks. Employee performance is distinct from productivity (U.S. Office of Personnel Management [USOPM], 2001).

Employee turnover. Employee turnover applies to situations in which employees leave the Federal Government either by attrition, quitting, or dismissal. Between 2009 and 2014, more than 44% (550,000) of all federal employees are projected to leave the government through retirement. *The war for talent* means the supply of replacements has greatly diminished (Partnership for Public Service, 2007).

Executive leadership. Executive leadership includes the director of USCIS, the deputy director of USCIS, and the chief of staff of USCIS. Chiefs, deputy chiefs, and chiefs of staff of directorates and divisions are considered senior leaders (P. Schneider, personal communication, January 23, 2009).

Headquarters. Headquarters are components with specific operational centralized program responsibility for directly achieving one or more of DHS mission activities (P. Schneider, personal communication, January 23, 2009) located in Washington, DC (Partnership for Public Service, 2007).

Job satisfaction. The phrase job satisfaction refers to employees' belief their talents and skills are used effectively. According to the Partnership for Public Service (2007), job satisfaction is the degree of satisfaction employees obtain from their work and the degree to which employees understand the relevance of their jobs to the overall organizational mission.

Leadership. Characteristics of leadership are motivation, commitment, encouragement, integrity, fair management, professional development, creativity, and employee empowerment (Partnership for Public Service, 2007).

Productivity. The U. S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM) Handbook includes a definition of productivity as including outputs, outcomes, accomplishments, services, and activities performed by employees in compliance with a performance plan (U.S. Office of Personnel Management [USOPM], 2001).

Assumptions

The following operational assumptions were identified for the current study:

1. A representative sample from the population of 7,683 employees would be willing to participate in the study.
2. The invitation sent to potential participants indicating the research received the consent of the deputy associate director would encourage participation. The assumption was the official endorsement of the study by a top ranking senior leader would convey the importance of the results to employees.
3. Individuals who participated would provide honest and accurate responses. Self-reported data can contain inaccurate perceptions based on faulty memories or a hesitancy to provide answers presenting the organization negatively (Cone & Foster, 2006).
4. The quantitative component of the study design would allow for the sampling of a large number of individuals. Unlike qualitative methods, which often include small samples, large samples reduce the risk of self-reported bias from any single respondent (Creswell, 2005).

5. The use of an anonymous online survey might have increased the participants' perception of the confidentiality and anonymity of their participation, in turn increasing the accuracy and honesty of the self-reported answers (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005).

6. Since the study was specifically designed for the USCIS directorate, greater participation might have ensued because the employees might believe their voices would more likely be heard in an intimate environment than in the larger government wide surveys of the past (Partnership for Public Service, 2007).

7. The Supervisor Leadership Communication Inventory (SLCI) would be a valid and reliable instrument in the area of supervisor leadership communication and employee performance. Two panels of subject matter experts validated the SLCI measures and showed high reliability for the instrument in previous studies (Rouse, 2009a).

Scope, Limitations, and Delimitations

The scope of the analysis included senior leaders within one USCIS directorate located at headquarters in Washington, DC, as well as the directorate's field employees located in 201 offices. Delimitations to the study included 5 weeks for online data collection. Another delimitation involved the exclusive use of the SLCI and sampling of leaders and employees within one USCIS directorate, with an emphasis on senior leaders within the Washington, DC headquarters office.

Summary

A secure nation requires correct, efficient, real-time communication systems (DHS, 2009b; "The Agenda," 2009). Governmental leaders and employees must work together to ensure critical information is distributed in a timely fashion to all necessary

field workers (DHS, 2009b). Executing such directives presents a significant leadership challenge.

Preliminary research indicated communication systems in some federal directorates were unsuccessful, ineffective, unclear, and irregular (Friel, 2009; Rosenberg, 2009b). The mixed-methods descriptive study included a survey with quantitative Likert-like items based on an established leadership communication instrument and qualitative open-ended questions to examine the relationship between supervisors' leadership communication and employee performance within one federal operational component of DHS, the USCIS. Chapter 2 includes a review of the existing literature on the relationships between supervisors' leadership communication and employee performance.

CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Title Searches, Articles, Research Documents, and Journals

The purpose of chapter 2 is to present a review and analysis of the leadership and communication literature within the context of the performance of federal employees and governmental agencies. Previous researchers documented a significant correlation between supervisor leadership communication and employee performance (Pandey & Garnett, 2006). The focus of the review is the investigation of leaders' communication skills and employees' performance within Federal Government agencies, specifically the USCIS agency within DHS. Chapter 2 begins with a summary of the chapter's documentation strategy followed by a historical overview. Subsequent sections include an analysis of the literature for the variables of supervisor leadership and communication as well as employee and organizational performance.

The analysis included 92 secondary sources of information. As shown in Table 1, the vast majority of references (87%) were published between 2004 and 2009. A critical review of the types of references used indicated 10% were governmental reports, 22% were studies on leadership, 23% addressed communication studies, 18% were studies of employee performance, and 19% focused on organizational performance.

Table 1

Publication Dates of References Analyzed

Date of Reference	<i>F</i>	<i>P</i>
1999 – 2004	12	13%
2005 – 2009	80	87%
Total	92	100%

Table 2

Type of References Analyzed

Type of Reference	<i>F</i>	<i>P</i>
Founding theorists	12	12%
Empirical research	66	35%
Peer reviewed articles	22	11%
Books	27	13%
Journals	49	26%
Other	12	3%
Total	188	100%

Note: Only 7% of sources were not in one of the preferred scholarly categories; 93% of sources were founding theorists, empirical research, peer-reviewed articles, books, or journals. The total number of references exceeds 92 because some sources were included in more than one category. For instance, a book with foundational literature and empirical research was included in both categories.

Table 2 includes the quality and range of references analyzed in the current study. Approximately 93% of sources were peer-reviewed articles, books, and journals about foundational theories and empirical research. Only 7% of the sources accessed were not in one of the preferred scholarly categories but published primarily by governmental agencies, such as the DHS, or retrieved from Federal Government Web sites such as TWH, United States House of Representatives, DHS, and USOPM. The Web sites provided information about significant historical developments related to the creation of

the DHS as well as specifics about previous presidential reforms to reduce the federal workforce.

Literature Review

Overview of Federal Government Leadership

U.S. presidents are the Federal Government's most prominent leaders. Presidents command the U.S. military and function as chief executive officers (CEO) for federal employees. Brodsky and Newell (2009) noted President Obama leads more than 2.7 million federal employees. The salary budget for 2.7 million civilian employees has reached \$164 billion (Method, 2007). In order to implement the nation's vision and goals, presidents must effectively lead federal employees, managers, and senior leaders (Brodsky & Newell, 2009).

With the economic crisis, a key 2009 issue in President Obama's agenda, the most crucial leadership challenge is determining ways to curtail governmental costs (TWH, n.d.). Past U.S. presidents chose to reduce the federal workforce when looking for ways to balance federal budgets and reduce perceived bureaucratic waste. Federal workers were easy public targets, and middle managers within the federal workforce were the easiest targets (Grindley, 2009; Method, 2007).

Loss of Federal Employees

Compared to the private sector, federal employees receive substantively higher pay. In 2005, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) reported federal workers' average pay was 50% higher than the pay of similar private sector workers. When BLS staff surveyed more than 3,000 counties across the U.S., they reported salaries of federal

employees were 2.0 to 5.6 times higher than the salaries of employees working in private organizations (Method, 2007).

In job position comparisons, federal employees' pay was higher than private sector pay an average of 75% of the time. Although federal employees made significantly more than private sector workers, federal managers made significantly less than their private sector counterparts. Federal managers' salaries were capped in alignment with the president's \$400,000 salary (Method, 2007).

Despite receiving higher pay than individuals in private industry, federal employees have quit and retired from U.S. government positions in record numbers (Rosenberg, 2009b). Unlike their private sector counterparts, federal workers have little privacy. Federal workers are subject to regular surveillance of their e-mail and telephone calls, extensive background checks, investigations into personal debt ratios, tax payments, and personal associations outside business hours.

Federal employees can be terminated for unpaid taxes, high debt, and arrest. Depending on security level clearance, federal employees must obtain permission to travel abroad and can be subjected to debriefings upon their return with requests for information on every foreign national met during the travel. Depending on the federal employees' job positions, trips can be cancelled if, in the opinion of the employees' supervisors, the employees' travel can negatively impact the department (USCIS, personal communication, September 12, 2007).

Federal workers are often blamed for various procedural issues (i.e., miscommunication, waste, fraud) and situational problems, such as the post-Katrina debacle, salmonella poisoned peanut butter, and lead-tainted toys. Grindley (2009) noted

such performance mistakes are frequently and publicly amplified, often incorrectly, while successes in government are rarely acknowledged. Federal employees report lack of employee engagement, feelings of demoralization, and lack of values as reasons for their departure from public service (Brodsky & Newell, 2009; Partnership for Public Service, 2007).

Researchers of government (Partnership for Public Service, 2007), DHS (2009a, 2008) and specific agencies (Rosenberg, 2009a) reported a *retirement tsunami* of federal employees expected between 2009 and 2014 (Rosenberg, 2009d). The USCIS, one of several DHS components, turned over 24 out of 27 (89%) senior leadership positions in 3 out of the 6 years since its creation. New senior leaders told the department's U. S. Office of Inspector General (OIG) historical knowledge about their programs was limited since many senior leaders were new to their positions and meetings were usually not documented (DHS, 2009b).

A similar pattern exists within another DHS component, the U.S. Transportation Security Administration (TSA) reporting a 17% turnover rate in 2008 (Rosenberg, 2008). Staff at the USMSPB (2008) released findings showing up to 60% of general service employees were expected to retire by 2016, with 90% of senior executives expected to leave in the same period. Compounding the problem, the USMSPB indicated highly rated employees choose to leave before their scheduled retirement if dissatisfied or not engaged in their work.

Reduction of Middle Managers

In the private sector, middle managers and senior leaders are responsible for keeping employees engaged and on task. Federal managers have the same

responsibilities. Grindley (2009) noted senior leaders in the Federal Government must create a cultural shift focused on recovering the sense of pride and ownership employees in governmental positions used to have. Describing significant employee turnover as symptomatic of long-term underinvestment in federal employees and calling for a reinvigoration of the federal workforce, Grindley suggested an investment of \$10 billion in the federal workforce could yield between a \$300 billion to \$600 billion return.

Senior executives have failed to develop leadership skills in federal middle managers. The focus has been on recommendations to reduce the size of the government. Historically, reductions resulted in the elimination of middle management positions without a clear analysis of how such reductions would affect the agency's performance (Breul & Kamensky, 2008). President Clinton's National Performance Review initiative increased the ratio of workers to managers from 7-1 to 15-1, eliminating 377,000 federal jobs (Ballenstedt, 2009).

Similar reforms, including the Federal Acquisition Streamlining Act of 1994, the Federal Acquisition Reform Act of 1995, and the Clinger-Cohen Act in 1996, substantially reduced the number of federal leadership positions (Breul & Kamensky, 2008). Under the George W. Bush administration, the Department of Homeland Security Act of 2002 moved 22 agencies under one department, abolishing thousands of managerial positions (Breul & Kamensky, 2008). In the middle of the financial crisis of 2009, President Obama planned to remove 14% of federal middle managers, affecting the leadership of 252,000 federal workers (Selyukh, 2009).

The Federal Government is no longer an attractive work setting for middle managers (OPM, n.d.). Once leaders obtained senior executive service (SES) status, their

salaries were capped in alignment with the salary of the president of the United States. Leaders with SES status could be relocated with little notice to any office, nationally or internationally and be held accountable for the work of their subordinates. Many middle managers never reached senior leadership positions, and several federal employees lost their motivation for the job and anticipated leaving before their official retirement dates. The risk of a federal workforce shortage is significant, and leaders of federal agencies must identify strategies to recruit, engage, and retain employees and managers (USMSPB, 2008).

Department of Homeland Security

The mission of DHS is to secure the nation while honoring the freedoms of American citizens. Coordinating the effort of 22 different components, DHS leaders and employees must effectively engage in a variety of high-risk activities (“One Team,” 2008). Each day, DHS employees process more than 1 million travelers and 70,000 cargo containers (Lunney, 2009).

Other DHS goals include protecting the nation from dangerous people and goods, securing the safety of critical infrastructures, strengthening emergency responses, ensuring preparedness, unifying homeland security operations, and integrating DHS policy, planning, and operations. In order to achieve the DHS mission to ensure the national security of the United States, DHS leaders must collaborate with federal, state, and local agencies as well as with private businesses (“One Team,” 2008). The strategic goals of communication and information sharing are crucial to the safety of the nation.

The U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) emerged from the results of the 9/11 Commission. Members of the commission identified multiple deficiencies in

standard operational procedures. Based on communication and leadership deficiencies, the 9/11 Commission recommended the dismantling of the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) and the creation of three new immigration agencies, the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS), U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), and U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP), all under the auspices of the DHS (see Figure 3).

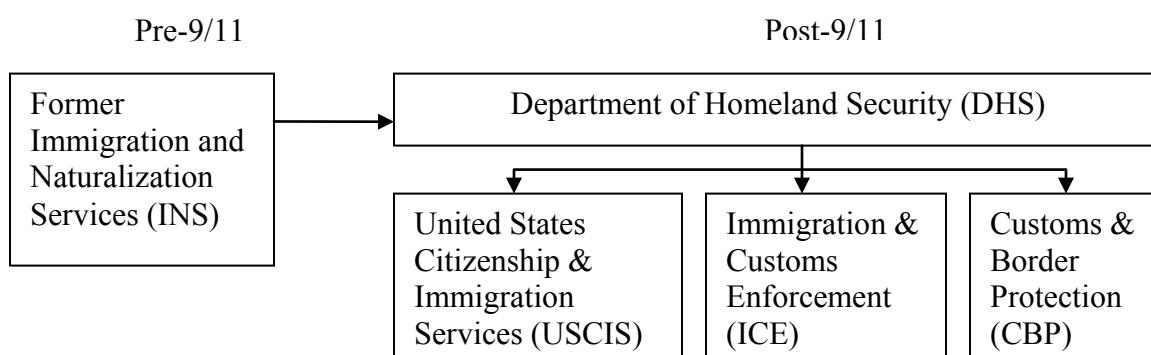


Figure 3. Reorganization of Immigration and Naturalization Services (INS) into three U.S. Department of Homeland Security agencies.

A total of 10,704 employees work in 230 USCIS offices worldwide and are required to provide services pertaining immigration and naturalization to customers in a timely, accurate, consistent, courteous, and professional manner. USCIS consists of five directorates managing the processing of more than 7 million applications each year while providing services to over 18 million customers. On an average day, employees of USCIS process 30,000 applications for immigration benefits, issue 7,000 resident alien cards, adjudicate 200 asylum applications, naturalize 3,000 new citizens, conduct 135,000 national security background checks, capture 11,000 sets of fingerprints, and answer more than 41,000 telephone inquiries (USCIS, 2007a, 2007b). With thousands of employees dispersed across hundreds of offices and making hundreds of daily decisions

directly affecting immigrants' and citizens' lives, the importance of clear leadership and communication cannot be overstated. Employees must trust their supervisors, understand managers' instructions, and provide accurate and timely decisions (USCIS, personal communication, July 18, 2009).

Supervisor leadership and communication are significantly associated with employee and organizational performance. The purpose of the review is to provide a theoretical and practitioner context for the study through identifying and examining alternative views of the variables of leadership communication and employee performance and highlight gaps in previous literature. The following section includes theoretical underpinnings and definitions of constructs.

Supervisor Leadership

Supervisor leadership is the basic act of engaging others to follow (Colbert, Kristoff-Brown, & Bradley, 2008). The process of engaging employees is neither static nor simple. Leaders of organizations and governmental agencies have started abandoning the transactional (i.e., give-and-take) approaches to leadership and adopting transformational approaches (Berkley, 2008). Transformational strategies are reciprocal, rely on trust, empower employees, and encourage ownership of organizational goals (Colbert et al., 2008). The following analysis includes general findings about supervisor leadership in general and in the specific context of the federal workforce.

General findings. In the 1800s, managers considered workers as a basic component of production, a tool facilitating outputs (Herzberg, 2008). The germinal work of key motivational theorists began to change supervisors' perceptions. Skinner (2005), a

behavioral psychologist, demonstrated employees would repeat behaviors with positive consequences and avoid behaviors with negative outcomes.

Herzberg (2008), a business management psychologist, extended Skinner's work with the introduction of job enrichment into the workplace. Herzberg theorized supervisors could influence workers with the two factors of motivation and hygiene. Working conditions, salary, and job security were examples of employees' hygiene perceptions; motivational factors centered on the individual's responsibility, achievement, recognition, advancement, and work performed (Herzberg, 2008). Elements of Herzberg's theory were consistent with the work of Maslow, a human psychologist, who introduced a comprehensive theory of motivation known as the hierarchy of needs. The framework suggested motivation needs were sequential, requiring foundational needs be met before individuals could focus on meeting the next level of needs (Maslow, 2000).

Theorists have refined general leadership approaches to deepen the understanding of the supervisor leadership process. Burns and Bass, known for their work in transformational and visionary leadership, focused on strategies for supervisors to enhance the motivation, morale, and performance of employees (Berkley, 2008). Collaborative, transformational leadership theory emerged as a way to influence employees' perceptions, values, expectations, and aspirations.

Researchers have examined the positive influence of coaching and mentoring on the development of intellectual stimulation, creativity, motivation, and a sense of self-worth (Berkley, 2008). Findings in previous research have confirmed successful supervisor leadership was critical to meeting the mission of an organization or agency. Employees must believe they are important to the organization and must trust their

supervisors. Knowledge sharing, team building, and performance management are practices contributing to the success of organizations.

Specific findings. Results of a study at the U.S. Transportation Security Administration (TSA) indicated leaders were ineffective. Fifty percent of TSA participants in the study believed supervisors and field directors gave them helpful advice about how to improve their job performance, but only 38% believed supervisors and field directors modeled fair, inclusive, and transparent leadership behaviors. The participants believed local leaders felt empowered to manage in their own way despite headquarters' directives and policies (Rosenberg, 2009a). Though the study was specific to one agency within DHS, studies of other DHS agencies and USCIS directorates produced similar conclusions about lack of continuity in leadership (DHS, 2009c; Dougherty, 2008; Friel, 2009; Hampton, 2007; Herbert, 2009; National Commission, 2004b; Partnership for Public Service, 2007; Rosenberg, 2008, 2009a).

The review of supervisor leadership literature indicates staff in the Federal Government regularly studies supervisor and employee performance. Biannual studies and research are conducted to investigate the effectiveness of specific projects, but an analysis revealed a significant theoretical gap in the existing governmental literature. Historically, agency research lacked a conceptual framework to ground the analysis within the leadership literature. Data analysis has consisted of basic frequency information with an executive summary. Few studies included an analysis of results within the context of contemporary theory, hampering governmental leaders in the identification of meaningful, valid, and executable recommendations for improvement.

Supervisor Communication

Up to \$10 million are spent annually on communication training for supervisors (Hindi et al., 2004). Several studies were conducted to investigate supervisor leadership and focus on the unique characteristics of managerial communication and its influence on employee and organizational performance. The following section is a review of general findings about leader communication relationship to supervisor communication within the Federal Government.

General findings. Many senior leaders have suggested middle managers had one of the most challenging jobs, being responsible for the effective transition of information to frontline employees (Major, Davis, & Germano, 2007). For organizational success, middle managers must accurately communicate the organizational mission, vision, and strategy to workers. Given the frequency and detail of information shared, the opportunity for miscommunication is high. Middle managers in particular operate at a disadvantage because they lack the knowledge and experience of senior leaders (Ballenstedt, 2009). Results of an empirical study of 81 vice presidents of Fortune 200 companies showed most miscommunication occurred at the middle management level than at other levels (Hindi et al., 2004).

The content of a message is highly relevant to understanding and completing a particular task, but the focus of considerably more research has been on the quality of the communication process. One common theme in the supervisor communication literature pertains to the concept of trust. Rouse (2009) indicated trust was not the result of a single act by a manager.

Employees develop confidence over time, based on on-going communication with a manager. In an empirical investigation of a large organization in California, Rouse (2009a) found employees were dismissive of managers who gave *lip service* to the employees' complaints but failed to make meaningful changes. The finding was consistent with a report by Bernerth (2007) who maintained a supervisor's communicative attitude was a strong predictor of the quality of manager and employee relationships.

Dunnigan (2008) similarly concluded the development of interpersonal skills was vital when communicating with employees since soft skills helped build camaraderie among the staff, control stressful situations, and show professionalism and tact. Federal employees work together on projects and tasks forces and attend seminars and conferences similar to seminars provided to employees in private organizations. Collaborating on joint projects facilitates the development of trust, and training facilitates transition periods when employees and supervisors move into first line or second line roles in changing work environments (Dunnigan, 2008).

Best practices in communication are typically categorized as task-focused or person-focused. After administering a survey to 914 workers and supervisors, Major et al. (2007) reported employees made negative comments about supervisors who lacked basic interpersonal communication skills. While workers indicated they appreciated the technical competencies of supervisors, they placed higher value on people-focused supervisors' skills in making personal connections and reaching out to the workers.

Many researchers have studied traditional communication between supervisors and workers since the 1950s (Schlosser, 2007). With the advent of wireless technology,

supervisors and employees have redefined the dynamics of their interactions. Before wireless technology, managers stopped by employees' offices or cubicles to monitor the completion of tasks. Contemporary leaders use e-mail and wireless devices to communicate with employees. Schlosser pointed out electronic technology produced an extra layer of remoteness but did not change supervisors' belief in the importance of communication as the key to maintaining high-quality relationships with employees.

The attentiveness and visibility of leaders influence employees' perception of a supervisor's communication skills. Kerfoot (2007) indicated leader engagement, as well as disengagement, was contagious. If leaders were not careful, they could inadvertently communicate poor attitudes and behaviors to their employees.

In an analysis of poor leadership, Williams (2005) suggested, "If the leader is disengaged or absent, followers find themselves in a state of disorder and confusion with little hope of a vision for a way out of the mayhem" (pp. 6-7). Vivar (2006) warned managers not to leave employees feeling lost or abandoned. Several researchers showed workers strongly preferred visible communicators who were present and available (Rosengren, Athlin, & Segesten, 2007; Rouse, 2009a).

The specific behaviors of mentoring and coaching are strongly associated with perceptions of effective supervisor communication. Kane-Urrabazo (2006) indicated mentoring of new staff members demonstrated active participation by supervisors. When workers have someone who explains processes to them, they feel less isolated and more engaged.

Researchers studied the influence of supervisor communication on employees and on organizational outcomes. Johnson, Reed, Lawrence, and Onken (2007) found a

positive relationship between leader communication, employee commitment, and financial performance. Madlock (2008b) found interpersonal interactions between employees and supervisors influenced employees' outcomes. Interactions influence employees' job satisfaction and employee commitment. Positive communication relationships correlate with high job satisfaction, and minimal interpersonal communication reduced job satisfaction (Major et al., 2007).

As more individuals from Generation Y (i.e., individuals born in the 1980s and 1990s) enter the workforce, supervisor communication skills become increasingly important. Dunnigan (2008) reported Generation Y employees expected regular and frequent communication with their managers. Dunnigan suggested managers must adapt to the needs of the workforce by becoming proficient at presenting the *big picture*, assisting employees with visualizing their place in the organization, setting high standards of professionalism, treating everyone with respect, and becoming a team member as well as a supervisor or manager.

Specific findings. In February 2009, President Obama signed an executive order instructing leaders in federal agencies to communicate more frequently and create effective channels for feedback, specifically relating to electronic media. While the directive made intuitive sense, Herbert (2009) noted information sharing in federal agencies was not a simple task. Cumbersome governmental processes often complicate communication. The Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 required approval by the U.S. Office of Management and Budget (OMB) for any survey of more than 10 people to be conducted. The requirement resulted in months-long reviews for even the most basic customer satisfaction polls (Herbert, 2009).

Evidenced by the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001, communication delays in federal agencies can have tragic results. The DHS was created specifically because the 9/11 Commission determined lack of adequate communication and information structures contributed to the deaths of 2,976 people on September 11, 2001 (National Commission, 2004a, 2004b). The 9/11 Commission reported a lapse in standard operating procedures, absence of communication for 1 hour and 28 minutes, and confusion about basic information, such as seat assignments, contributed to the effectiveness of the attacks. After considerable investigation and analysis, members of the commission determined necessary communication structures were missing or not enforced (National Commission, 2004a, 2004b; 9-11 Research, 2008).

The events of 9/11 resulted in the creation of the U.S. Transportation Security Administration (TSA), an agency within the DHS employing more than 40,000 federal workers in charge of protecting the safety of travelers within the United States (TSA, 2007). The most visible of all DHS components, TSA provides security to protect travelers at seaports and airports. The agency's employees are responsible for preventing suspicious people or objects from gaining access to aircrafts (TSA, 2007).

The results of a 2008 DHS Office of Inspector General (OIG) study in which more than 300 airport security screeners were interviewed indicated TSA leaders did not effectively communicate with employees. The analysis suggested a significant factor in the agency's 17% voluntary attrition rate was low employee morale (DHS, 2009c; Rosenberg, 2009a). More than half of the people interviewed said the agency's communication efforts were inadequate. Workers complained about inconsistent

interpretation and implementation of TSA policies as well as poor communications and information sharing (DHS, 2009c; Partnership for Public Service, 2007).

The USCIS has similar supervisor communication issues. The agency's employees have reported headquarters communication was the most frequent source of frustration for frontline workers. Field employees claim varied directives, delivered through multiple communications channels, create continual adjustments to workflow, requiring re-education of field employees.

Reliance on e-mail and memos frequently resulted in miscommunication and misaligned responses. Employees of USCIS have indicated their e-mail and telephone calls frequently go unanswered by leaders. Numerous USCIS field officers have complained about the absence of regular meetings, headquarters feedback, interagency collaboration, and *face time* with agency leaders. Workers have stated communication problems resulted in effort duplication, institutional knowledge loss, and inadequate resource use (P. Isley, personal communication, March 17, 2008).

Both private and public sector research indicated employees perceived supervisor leadership as a vital dynamic of the work environment. Despite wide acceptance of its importance, leaders, particularly middle managers, often used supervisor leadership unsuccessfully. A significant opportunity to improve supervisor communication exists in private organizations and governmental agencies (Colbert et al., 2008).

Employee Performance

The term employee performance refers to behavior pertaining to work objectives and standards. Some researchers operationally defined employee performance as productivity and morale (Rouse, 2009a). Other researchers suggested performance by

employees did not include productivity. According to the USOPM (2001), employee performance includes outputs, outcomes, accomplishments, services, and activities performed by employees in compliance with a performance plan.

Morale

Employee morale, built on the concept of esprit-de-corps, is a germinal administrative program dating to ancient times. Morale is defined in two parts as “a state of mind, a mood, a mental condition” and theoretically defined as “a positive affective orientation toward membership” (O’Connor, 2006, ¶ 2), more commonly known as group cohesion. Low employee morale is not a motivational problem but relates to lack of job certainty and mission support failure. When managers believe low morale causes poor employee performance, managers can improve employee performance using intrinsic and extrinsic rewards (O’Connor, 2006).

According to Friel (2009), bonuses and other awards serve several purposes including recognizing strong performance, motivating others, and retaining workers. Leaders of federal agencies often justify bonuses to employees by pointing out bonuses helped offset federal salaries that are lower than managerial salaries in private businesses. In practice, many employees do not receive bonuses. Managers and employees who believe praise is used as a substitute for increased pay become disenchanting.

According to Hampton (2007), morale at DHS remains low. With one of the lowest morale ratings of all federal agencies, DHS consistently has difficulty attracting and retaining good senior leaders. Over \$300 billion taxpayer dollars have been spent within the department since 2002 (Pearl, 2009), yet employee morale at DHS continues to be the lowest in the Federal Government since the department’s creation in 2002.

To improve employee morale, 60% of the TSA workforce participated in two training programs focused on increasing employee confidence and communications with their supervisors (Rosenberg, 2008). Results of a 2008 survey of 16,116 TSA employees indicated ineffective supervisor leadership and communication contributed to demoralization in employees. Low morale is so prevalent among employees within DHS that the department was ranked 29 out of 30 large federal agencies (Hampton, 2007; Partnership for Public Service, 2007).

In order to learn more about the best practices of high performing supervisors, Major et al. (2007) studied 914 employees. Relationships with subordinates were one of the critical elements listed for positive employee morale. To create and maintain higher employee morale, supervisors must involve employees whenever possible, using a collaborative approach to decision making. Creating an environment where employees can respectfully disagree with supervisors, engage in non-work social activities, and have fun on the job when appropriate was listed as morale builders for employees.

In 2008, Colbert et al. studied 94 top management teams. Employee morale increased when supervisors exhibited positive influence, motivation, inspiration, intellectual opportunities, and concern for the professionals' needs of employees. To provide such morale builders, Colbert et al. indicated supervisors must clearly understand the organizational vision, mission, strategies, and goals.

Engagement

Employee engagement is a term used to define a connection between workers, their organizations, and their work. The construct reflects a heightened connection between employees and their work, supervisors, and organization. Engaged employees

take pride in completing their tasks, find personal meaning in their work, and believe leaders and colleagues within the organization value them (USMSPB, 2008).

Staff at the U.S. Merit Systems Protection Board (USMSPB), an independent, bipartisan board created for the protection and effective management of federal workers, has been conducting studies on human capital management and federal employee engagement since the 1990s. In September 2008, the USMSPB forecasted federal employee retirement numbers of 60% of general service federal workers and 90% for senior executive service by fiscal year 2016 (USMSPB, 2008). Compounding the problem of significant knowledge loss from the impending retirement, the study findings indicated highly rated employees left their positions before their retirement date when not engaged in their work. Given the magnitude of the problem, examining how engagement influences positive and negative employee performance outcomes is important.

Positive outcomes. Researchers of employee engagement suggested a correlation existed with job satisfaction, influenced by supervisor leadership and communication, and identified six measurable engagement themes (Bohn & Grafton, 2002; Brodsky & Newell, 2009). Results of the USMSPB (2008) study that included a survey of 36,926 employees across 24 federal agencies indicated engagement was multidimensional. Dimensions of engagement include (a) pride in one's work, (b) satisfaction with leadership, (c) opportunity to perform well, (d) recognition, (e) prospects for future personal and professional growth, and (f) a positive work environment.

As shown in Figure 4, employees with low levels of engagement are significantly less likely to have favorable opinions of their managers' abilities (Lunney, 2009). Only 20% of DHS employees reported being fully engaged (see Figure 4). Approximately a

third of the federal employees in the study did not feel engaged in their jobs at all. The findings resulted in recommendations for federal leaders to focus their energy, attention, and resources on management practices designed to increase employee engagement.

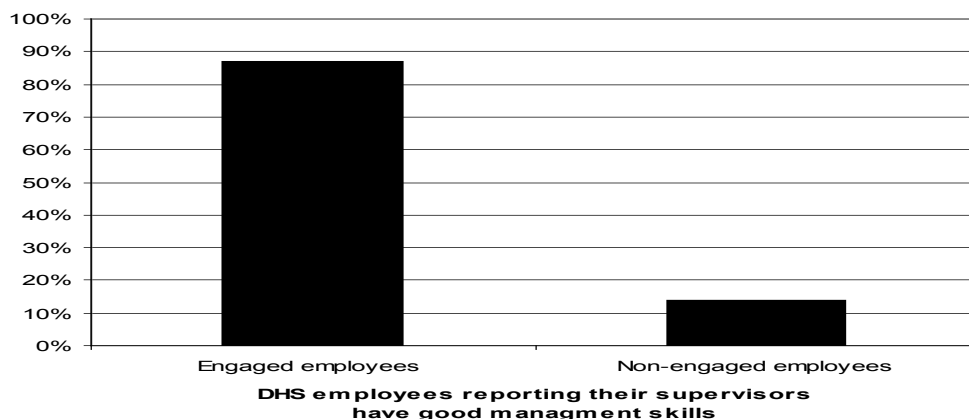


Figure 4. Comparison of engaged and non-engaged employees in the DHS who reported their supervisors had good management skills.

Note: Based on “DHS Annual Employee Survey Results: Engaging the Workforce” by the Department of Homeland Security (2009a).

Figure 5 broke down the levels into three components: felt engaged (20%); felt somewhat engaged (47%); and did not feel engaged (33%). Senior executives reported the highest levels of engagement, followed by supervisors and non-supervisory employees. Engaged employees were less likely to leave the agency. High performance evaluations were not associated with agency loyalty when employees were not engaged. When studying engagement, the survey questions inquired about employees’ job satisfaction, utilization of skills and abilities, availability of resources, provision of challenging assignments, and opportunities to improve. Employees were asked about whether supervisors treated employees with respect, valued workers’ opinions, and fostered an environment of cooperation and teamwork (USMSPB, 2008).

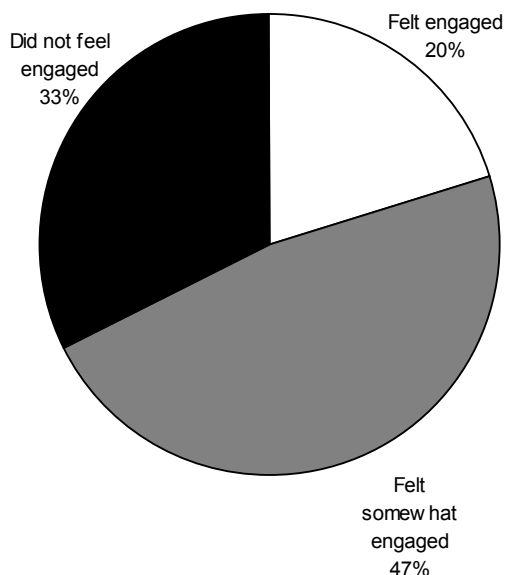


Figure 5. Percentage of employee engagement in the Department of Homeland Security.

Note: Based on “DHS Annual Employee Survey Results: Engaging the Workforce” by the Department of Homeland Security (2009a).

The USMSPB study included examining disengaged workers who were ineligible for retirement in 12 months. Four times as many individuals who felt disengaged indicated the likelihood they would leave the agency. More than 59% of the non-engaged employees who reported being very likely to leave had received outstanding performance evaluations (USMSPB, 2008).

Negative outcomes. Disengaged employees who remain with an organization became disruptive and negatively influenced highly engaged employees. Each federal employee receives 13 days of sick leave annually. An analysis by USMSPB (2008) indicated a significant correlation between disengaged employees and use of sick leave. The higher the employee engagement in an agency, the less sick days were used. The lower the employee engagement in an agency, the more sick days were used. The five DHS agencies with the highest engagement scores averaged 9 sick days per employee in

2005. Conversely, employees in the five agencies with the lowest engagement averaged of 12 sick days per employee in the same period.

Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) complaints were also associated with employee engagement scores. In agencies with the four highest employment engagement ratings, only 0.47% of the work force filed EEO complaints. DHS agencies with the four lowest employee engagement scores had more than double the EEO complaints (USMSPB, 2008).

According to the U.S. Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), employee engagement correlates with OSHA reported lost time due to work-related illness or injury. In the USMSPB study, the four agencies with the highest employee engagement scores had only 0.73% with employees who lost time due to work-related incidents. The agencies with the lowest employee engagement scores had 2.15% taking accident related time off (USMSPB, 2008).

Organizational Performance

Private sector findings. Most private sector organizations use key financial indicators as benchmarks for performance. Return on investment, market share, stock price, and price-to-earnings ratios are a few metrics business leaders use when evaluating success (Allen, 2008). Such outcome-based criteria are widely accepted indicators of organizational performance since measurements are simple and considered objective. Hewlett-Packard, Fed-Ex, and CNN are companies that entered the market during difficult economic times. The effective application of financial metrics helped other organizations become leaders in their fields (Starkloff, 2009).

The use of financial benchmarks has limitations. Financial benchmarks allow comparisons with other organizations in the same industry, but financial indicators do not provide specific insight about the organization's leadership and communication processes (Dunnigan, 2008). Financial measures effectively point to organizational vulnerability with regard to shrinking market share, falling stock prices, and a low rate of return. In such situations, leaders understand a problem exists, but the factors causing the problem remain unclear. Traditional financial indicators are not aligned effectively with the context of many organizations, such as non-profits and public agencies (Hsieh, 2008).

Some organizational researchers have described a more process-oriented approach to providing leaders with detailed insight about performance. Melero (2009) indicated the effectiveness of an organization's communication influenced how quickly tasks were completed. Melero suggested traditional outcomes should not be the sole indicator of organizational performance. Leaders should also consider their performance process.

Colbert et al. (2008) modeled a performance process after examining 94 top management teams and goal congruence between vice presidents and CEOs. By focusing on the strategic goals of the organization, dyads' goal-focus improved. Subordinates of transformational leaders had higher team goal settings for improved organizational performance. Relationship development, team building, and active communication were positive indicators of organizational performance (Colbert et al., 2008).

Schuttler's (2009) conceptual framework was based on a traffic light metaphor to categorize organizations into red, yellow, or green performance zones. The model included a description of the influence of supervisor communication on employees and organizational performance. Critiquing the traditional communication model of message,

sender, receiver, and feedback, Schuttler suggested a dynamic, relationship-driven approach was more effective.

Schuttler's (2009) analyses indicated that trust, morale, visibility, attentiveness, education, and change, significantly influenced performance. Using Schuttler's model in an empirical analysis of an intensive care unit in a California hospital, researchers determined the unit was functioning in a yellow zone, signaling leaders should exercise caution (Schuttler & Rouse, 2008). Results of another study of four retail rental stores in Kansas indicated yellow zone *fire fighting* strategies not in alignment with organizational goals (Rouse & Schuttler, 2009a).

Rouse and Schuttler (2009a) developed the Supervisor Leadership and Communication Inventory (SLCI) to assess organizational performance based on supervisor leadership communication and employee performance. As shown diagrammed in Figure 2 (see chapter 1), the framework is a two-dimensional grid to illustrate how supervisors' communication and leadership influence organizational behavior (Rouse, 2009a). In the SLCI, each member of the organization rates supervisory leadership and communication and employee performance.

The resulting scatter plot, based on empirical SLCI data, shows the correlation between the two variables and generates a classification for each worker's perceptions into a red (lower left), yellow (center), or green (upper right) performance zone (Schuttler, 2009). A few employees rated the organization as red or green (see Figure 6). The vast majority of workers rated the organization in a mid-range (yellow) performance zone, indicating opportunities for improvement. Figure 6 shows the average performance

score of the organization with a star. Rouse (2008b) suggested Schuttler's traffic light classification system was intuitive and had wide application to a variety of industries.

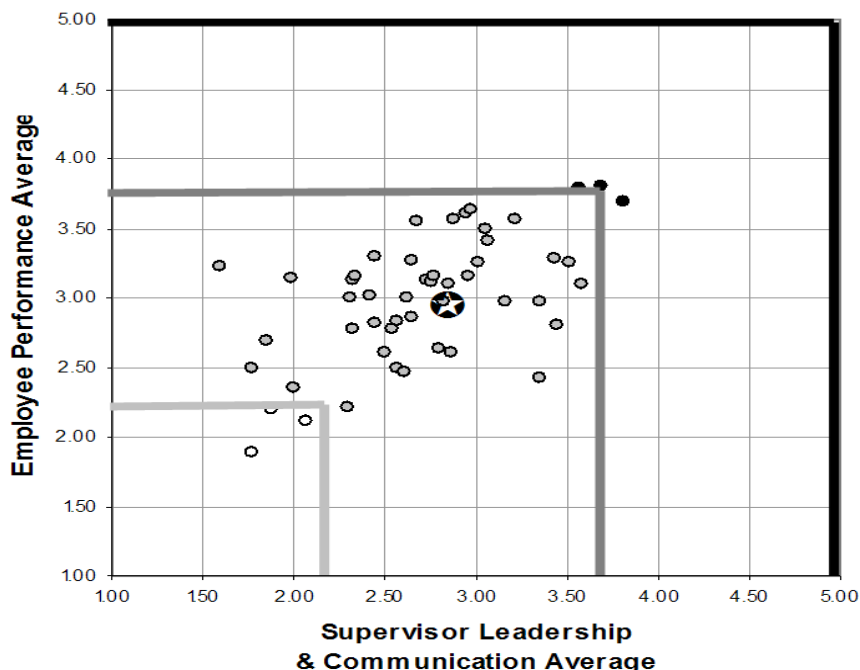


Figure 6. Two-dimensional organizational performance grid of employees working in an intensive care unit.

Note: From “Intensive Care Unit Supervisor Communication Inventory Survey Results” by R. Schuttler and R. A. Rouse (2008). Copyright by Organizational Troubleshooter, LLC. Reprinted with permission of the authors.

The SLCI framework can be used to plot an organizational gap analysis comparing supervisor and employee performance perceptions (Rouse, 2009a). As shown in Figure 7, midlevel managers' perceptions of supervisor's communication differed significantly from the perceptions of frontline employees, senior leaders, and physicians. Other gaps were evident in each group's perception of the organization's performance outcomes, with frontline employees and middle managers reporting views differed substantively from the perceptions of senior leaders and physicians.

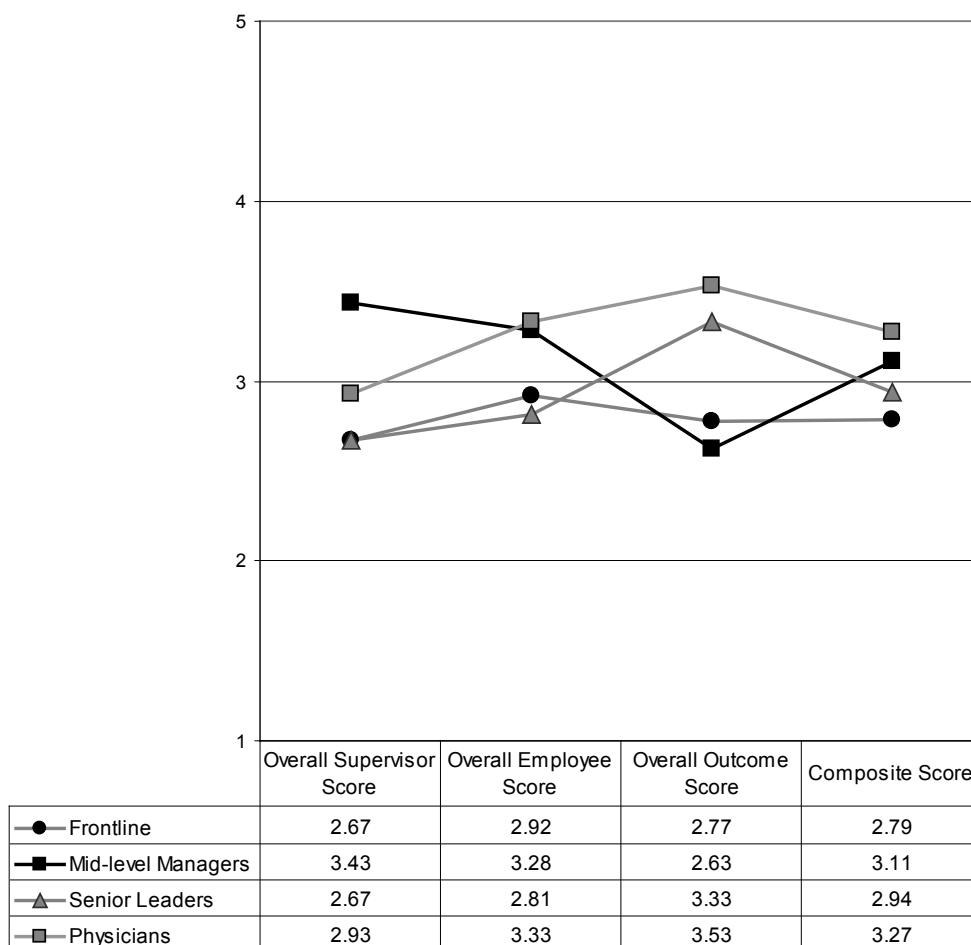


Figure 7. Supervisory leadership and Communication Inventory gap analysis of employees working in an intensive care unit.

Note: From “Intensive Care Unit Supervisor Communication Inventory Survey Results” by R. Schuttler and R. A. Rouse (2008). Copyright by Organizational Troubleshooter, LLC. Reprinted with permission of the authors.

Other researchers supported a process view of organizational performance. Roberts (2009) described the defused nature of supervisor communication in the tourism and lodging industries could create organizational performance issues. Ryder (2009) pointed out similar challenges in the telecommunications industry where rumors of

organizational change slowed productivity and hurt morale. Rouse (2009) suggested a lack of systematic assessment could produce organizational red zones resulting in a systematic downward spiral of performance outcomes.

Public sector findings. While organizational performance has been evaluated in various contexts, few researchers have focused on large, geographically dispersed organizations such as federal agencies. Government research provided some context-specific insight about performance at a single point in time, but the typical approach lacked a central framework of organizational performance. Governmental leaders must make decisions based on a series of disparate performance *snapshots* rarely integrated and grounded in previous leadership literature.

A limitation of cross-sectional research is the examination of organizational performance at one point in time. When results are interpreted, organizations and federal agencies have moved forward, invalidating the results, sometimes significantly (Cone & Foster, 2006). The limited information from cross-sectional studies nevertheless provides leaders with some useful insight about organizational performance.

In 2005 and 2007, USOPM staff administered a survey to collect the perceptions of more than 221,000 civil employees in order to analyze human capital in federal agencies (Partnership for Public Service, 2007). Entitled *Best Places to Work in the Federal Government*, the report pointed to the gap between the best and worst ranked federal agencies. In a 2-year period from 2005 to 2007, the gap between the government agencies ranked first and last increased by 19% (Partnership for Public Service, 2007), indicating some government agencies were consistently underperforming.

In an effort to improve organizational performance, staff at the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) investigated a new personnel system to remove locality pay from employees with less than satisfactory performance reviews (Hagstrom, 2009; Parker, 2009). The Federal Employees Pay Comparability Act of 1990 (FEPCA) created the locality pay system for federal employees. Implemented in 1994, locality pay applied to general service federal employees in the continental United States. Locality pay created supplemental pay for areas having a disparity of more than 5%, based on public sector surveys of organizations thereby narrowing the salary gap between the two sectors (“DOI,” 2009).

Leaders of the USDA considered implementing the locality pay approach used by the U.S. Department of Defense. The strategy included sanctions for employees who received low ratings by removing locality pay from their annual salary. Under the Pentagon's National Security Personnel System, employees who receive a rating of 1 (i.e., unacceptable performance) become ineligible for locality pay. If federal employees do not perceive the organization's compensation system as fair, workers who receive low ratings can become even more demoralized (Hagstrom, 2009).

Some government agencies, such as the U.S. Office of Management and Budget (OMB), started using organizational outcomes to determine budget allocations. An USMSPB study (2008) included correlating employee engagement with agency outcomes using a Program Assessment Rating Tool (PART). High employee engagement within an agency was significantly correlated with the high PART scores. The five agencies scoring the highest on employee engagement rated an average of 65% on the PART while the

five agencies with the lowest employee engagement averaged 37%. Organizations with high PART scores received significantly more funding (USMSPB, 2008).

In an effort to monitor and improve organizational performance, DHS conducted formal employee surveys every 2 years (DHS, 2008, 2009a). In 2007, DHS ranked 29 out of 30 large federal agencies, placing DHS in the lowest 3% of all federal agencies (Partnership for Public Service, 2007). Specifically, USCIS was in the lowest 33% (ranked 147 out of 222 federal agency subcomponents) in overall employee satisfaction and engagement. DHS (2008, 2009a) was the lowest-ranked agency in 8 out of 10 workplace categories.

Leaders at DHS attributed the low ranking to the department being a relatively young agency, stating most organizations need 5 to 7 years to become successful (Peters, 2009). Union leaders for federal employees expressed concern and contended DHS employees' ratings should not be characterized as irrelevant or counterproductive (Ballenstedt, 2009). Isley's study (P. Isley, personal communication, March 17, 2008) confirmed employees feel ignored and unaware of how their work ties into the mission and vision of the agency. Studies at TSA, a DHS component experiencing consistently high employee turnover, revealed low morale as one of the significant reasons for employees leaving the organization (Rosenberg, 2009a).

The problems at DHS are not limited to frontline employees. Tracking from October 2003 to September 2007 indicated DHS was losing senior executives at an alarming rate. In the 4-year start-up period, 72% of DHS career executives left the organization, a rate significantly higher than in any other cabinet-level department

(USMSPB, 2008). Analysis of the data revealed several process-oriented factors contributed to the loss of senior leaders within the DHS.

While some executives were eligible to retire, employee feedback indicated career managers left for other jobs because of problems with the department's performance-based pay system and limited opportunities for advancement (USMSPB, 2008). Only 34% of DHS employees said their leaders generated commitment and motivation from them. When asked if having agencies in 70 separate buildings created communication difficulties within DHS, employees responded physical distance was not the problem. The central issue was a lack of communication among employees and leaders despite their location (Rosenberg, 2009c).

Alternative Viewpoints of Federal Leadership

As shown in Figure 8, the average employee engagement index score in the private sector was approximately 71% in 2007, and DHS and USCIS had significantly lower ratings at 49.8% and 59.5% respectively (Partnership for Public Service, 2007). While the evidence indicated the agencies had organizational performance problems, some researchers pointed to departmental improvement. The DHS 2008 Annual Employee Survey (AES) study (2009a) found that, since 2006, DHS rated among the top five agencies with the largest percentage-point increases for employee satisfaction with decision making (13% increase), believing agency leaders had high standards (9% increase), and asking how well supervisors worked with diverse employees (8% increase). Overall, 62% of DHS employees stated job satisfaction.

Caution should be used when making generalizations based on the federal employee studies reviewed. The reliability measurement instruments and their validity

used in the analyses were not reported. The results could be subject to significant measurement error. The response rate of the two studies could limit the representativeness of the final sample.

For the 2007 DHS 78-item survey, 68% ($N = 141,426$) of DHS' 208,000 employees were asked to participate (Partnership for Public Service, 2007). Approximately 32% ($n = 65,753$) of invited employees completed the surveys, but with a workforce of about 208,000, slightly less than 10% ($N = 19,187$) were chosen to participate in the 2008 DHS survey.

Of the invited employees, only about 5% ($n = 9,550$) responded. No report used to analyze whether study participants were demographically representative of the general characteristics of DHS employees was compiled. A comparison of 2007 and 2009 design and response rates is located in Table 3.

Table 3

*Comparison of 2007 and 2008 Department of Homeland Security Employee Survey**Sampling Design and Response Rates*

U.S. Department of Homeland Security Studies	Population of Employees	Invited to Participate		Sample	
	<i>n</i>	<i>n</i>	% of population	<i>n</i>	% of population
DHS (2008)	208,000	141,426	68%	65,753	31.61%
DHS (2009a)	208,000	19,187	9.59%	9,550	4.78%

Conclusions

A wide body of literature includes studies of organizational performance in relation to employees and supervisors (Colbert et al., 2008). The correlation of supervisor leadership and communication with employee and organizational performance is largely found in studies in private sector industries. Far fewer researchers have examined the organizational performance of large, geographically dispersed organizations such as government agencies.

Studies of federal employees' perceptions were not grounded in the leadership literature (DHS, 2008, 2009a, 2009b, 2009c). Conclusions were a series of descriptive performance *snapshots* with limited usefulness for governmental leaders. Agency managers were able to identify longitudinal trends in employee engagement and satisfaction but lacked insight about the internal processes contributing to organizational problems.

Summary

Supervisor leadership and communication strongly correlate with employee and organizational performance. Schuttler's (2009) two-dimensional performance grid illustrates how organizations can be classified into red, yellow, and green performance zones. Improvement strategies can facilitate the transition to the next performance level.

While much is known about the communication and leadership of private sector industries (Hindi et al., 2004; Madlock, 2008a, 2008b), chapter 2 indicated significantly few researchers have investigated the public sector. The general purpose of the current study was to learn more about the process of governmental leadership and communication. The study involved the use of a validated conceptual framework, the Supervisor Leadership and Communication Inventory (SLCI), to evaluate the performance of employees at USCIS, a large directorate of the DHS. Chapter 3 includes details of the study mixed-methods descriptive design and of the sampling, data collection, and analysis processes.

CHAPTER 3: METHOD

The mixed methodology for the current study was appropriate to examine the relationship between senior leaders' communication and employees' job performance within a large federal directorate of the U.S. government. Headquartered in Washington, DC, the USCIS directorate consists of 7,683 employees located nationwide (USCIS, 2007a, 2007b). Using qualitative and quantitative methods, the study was an investigation of the correlation between the predictor variables of perceived supervisor leadership and communication and the criterion variable of employee performance.

Chapter 1 included a discussion of the importance of leadership communication and an introduction to Schuttler's (2008, 2009) theoretical framework to explain the influence of supervisor leadership on employee behavior. Chapter 2 was a review of literature about the influence of supervisor leadership on employee morale, productivity, job satisfaction, and turnover (Brodsky & Newell, 2009; Hargie et al., 2002; Harkins, 2001; Hindi et al., 2004; Madlock, 2008a, 2008b; Pandey & Garnett, 2006; Rosenberg, 2008). Chapter 3 includes an overview of the research design chosen for the current study and details about the geographic location, population, sample, instrumentation, data collection, and analysis.

Research Method and Design Appropriateness

Mixed Method

The mixed-methods approach was appropriate to fully investigate the study research questions requiring exploration as well as testing. A combination of quantitative and qualitative approaches provided two perspectives of supervisor leadership and communication, increasing readers' understanding of the gathered data (Creswell, 2005;

Leedy & Ormrod, 2005). In the quantitative component of the study, the use of empirically validated measures (Rouse, 2009b) allowed quantitative comparisons of the participants' responses.

The quantitative portion of the study consisted of correlating the predictor and criterion variables of supervisor leadership and communication and employee performance. The qualitative open-ended questions facilitated the exploration of the trends identified in the quantitative data. The exploratory nature of qualitative questions allowed the participants to explain situations rather than simply respond to specific scenarios in the survey (Cone & Foster, 2006; Leedy & Ormrod, 2005). Triangulation between the methods allowed convergence and comparison of trends in the data not available with either a qualitative or a quantitative approach alone (Creswell, 2005; Leedy & Ormrod, 2005).

Descriptive Design

Descriptive designs are used to measure a situation *as is*, and the research process does not change the situation under study (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005; Schwandt, 2007). Creswell (2005) suggested descriptive designs were effective to identify problems within organizations and to discover potential solutions. The current study provided USCIS senior leaders with data describing senior leaders' communication with field officers in 201 offices. The perception data about supervisors could help senior leaders determine deficiencies and implement double-loop learning to correct the deficiencies, creating a stronger workforce (Ben-Har & Shiplett, 2009). The ultimate goal of the descriptive study was to generate double-loop learning that allows not only detection and correction

of errors but also recommendations for modifications in organizational policies, objectives, and standard operations (Argyris, 2008).

The mixed-methods descriptive design included quantitative and qualitative measurements of the relationship between leadership communication and employee behavior and morale. Senior managers need to know not only what field employees perceive about headquarters leadership and communication but also why workers held such perceptions. The use of the mixed-methods descriptive design was consistent with other studies of supervisor leadership and communication. Rouse (2009a) used a mixed-methods descriptive design to investigate the nurse managers' communication within an intensive care unit. Rouse and Kaplan (2008) surveyed Indiana hospital leaders with an online survey containing open and closed questions about supervisor communication and employee performance.

Research Questions

Research Question #1 – Senior Leadership & Employee Performance

Research Question 1 (RQ1) was developed to investigate the correlation between senior leaders' leadership and employees' performance. The scores for each participant were plotted on a two-dimensional grid. The first research question for the current study was a quantitative question that asked, What relationship, if any, exists between senior leaders' leadership and employees' performance?

The following is the statement of hypothesis corresponding to RQ1:

H1₀ – There is no significant correlation between supervisor leadership and employees’ performance within one USCIS directorate.

H1_A – There is a significant correlation between supervisor leadership and employees’ performance within one USCIS directorate.

Research Question #2 – Senior Leader Communication & Employee Performance

The purpose of Research Question 2 (RQ2) was to test the correlation between senior leaders’ communication and employee performance. The scores for each participant were plotted on a two-dimensional grid. The second research question for the current study was a quantitative question that asked, What relationship, if any, existed between senior leaders’ communication and employees’ performance within one USCIS directorate?

The following is the statement of hypothesis corresponding to RQ2:

H2₀ – There was no significant correlation between supervisor communication and employees’ performance within on USCIS directorate.

H2_A – There was a significant correlation between supervisor communication and employees’ performance within one USCIS directorate.

Research Question #3 – Leadership Recommendations

RQ1 and RQ2 were quantitative questions to assess the influence of senior leaders’ behavior and communication on employee performance. RQ3 was a qualitative open-ended question to evaluate how leaders could improve employee performance within USCIS. RQ3 asked, How, if at all, can leaders improve employee performance

within USCIS? The participants could provide general comments in a space at the end of the survey.

Population

The study topic was leadership and communications of senior leaders. The population was 7,683 employees in 201 offices located at one USCIS directorate at headquarters in Washington, DC. Senior leaders included directorate leadership (i.e., associate director, deputy associate director, and chief of staff) and division leadership (i.e., chiefs, deputy chiefs, and chiefs of staff).

Sampling Frame

The unit of analysis consisted of individuals within one USCIS directorate. A probability sampling approach (Creswell, 2005; Leedy & Ormrod, 2005) provided employees and supervisors an opportunity to participate in the online survey. A total of 366 participants were targeted for the study (Creative Research System, 2009), based on the Sample Size Calculator with a confidence level of 95% for a population of 7,683 employees (USCIS, personal communication, July 18, 2009).

Informed Consent

The deputy associate director of USCIS granted consent to collaborate with the study (see Appendix A) (D. Rogers, personal communication, January 6, 2009). The individuals who chose to participate received the informed consent form (see Appendix B). The participants received access to two Uniform Resource Location (URL) links to take the survey electronically.

After a participant selected the *I consent* option, the Web hosting service recorded the participant's Internet Protocol (IP) address that functioned as the participant's

electronic signature consenting to the survey. Only individuals who reviewed and accepted the consent option were granted access to the survey.

Confidentiality

To ensure the confidentiality of all participants, the online survey was constructed on a secure, firewalled Web site. Names or other personally identifiable information were not collected with the exception of the Starbuck's raffle instituted on the second URL site. Officials of USCIS only received aggregated results of the data.

All data collected from the survey were stored on a stand-alone laptop computer with double password protection for the computer as well as the data files. Data will be archived for a minimum of 3 years and shredded using a crosscut shredder with standard USCIS destruction protocols after that time. In order to ensure the participants completed the survey only once, the Web hosting service locked out the user's IP address after completion of the questionnaire.

Geographic Location

The study was conducted to examine leadership and communications of senior leaders located at USCIS headquarters in Washington, DC. Potential participants were located in 201 offices nationwide. The participants included all categories of employees, including non-officers, officers, supervisors, management, and senior leaders.

Data Collection

Data from the study were collected from a sample of employees and supervisors through an online survey constructed with a Likert-type scale. Two URLs were made available to the participants. Online questionnaires are expedient and confidential.

Availability 24 hours a day and 7 days a week helped increase the response rate (Creswell, 2005; Leedy & Ormrod, 2005).

Online Survey

The online questionnaire allowed for (a) the extrapolation of data over a longer period, (b) participation throughout geographically dispersed locations, (c) a large population, and (d) confidential and truthful responses (Cone & Foster, 2006; Creswell, 2005; Leedy & Ormrod, 2005). Researchers choose the online method for data collection when studying an *as is* environment rather than face-to-face interviews, experimental, and causal-comparative techniques (Cone & Foster, 2006; Leedy & Ormrod, 2005). The secure online data collection platform for employee responses was the most efficient technique for gathering data (Cone & Foster, 2006; Leedy & Ormrod, 2005). Earlier researchers used the Supervisor Leadership and Communication inventory (SLCI) collected data online to measure leader communication and employee performance (Rouse, 2009a; Rouse & Kaplan, 2008). Subject matter experts have validated the SLCI diagnostic tool and have tested the instrument's reliability in several studies measuring supervisor leadership and employee performances (Rouse, 2009a, 2009b; Rouse & Kaplan, 2008).

Research Map

The SLCI was made available to all USCIS employees through 2 URLs published on fliers. Once the target sample size was reached, the Web sites were closed and coding of the data began. Coding recorded on a data spreadsheet enabled sorting of responses in multiple categories with a unique, confidential tracking code assigned to each participant.

Instrumentation

The SLCI developed by Rouse and Schuttler (2009a) was used with permission (see Appendix C). The instrument contains 53 items as measures of supervisor leadership and leadership and employee performance (see Appendix D). The instrument was a measure of the key variables along a two-dimensional grid showing how supervisor leadership and leadership predicted employee behavior (see Figures 2 and 4). Schuttler's (2008, 2009) model is consistent with other research in the field reporting a significant relationship between leadership communication and employee performance. Other researchers conducted studies to examine organizational communication (Bohn & Grafton, 2002; Hargie et al., 2002; Harkins, 2001; Hindi et al., 2004; Madlock, 2008a, 2008b; Pandey & Garnett, 2006). Schuttler's model facilitated the identification of measurable supervisor communication behaviors used in development and training.

Along with the standard questions of the SLCI, the survey included three demographic questions. The participants were asked to indicate their location, job ranking, and supervisory responsibilities, if applicable. Three open-ended questions were included to allow the participants to offer comments, suggestions, and recommendations for better leadership communication and better employee performance.

Validity and Reliability

Internal Validity

An instrument measuring what is intended to measure is considered valid (Creswell, 2005). Systematic evaluation of content validity ensures the data collection instrument is adequate for the subject of interest (Creswell, 2005). Instruments are tested

with panels of experts who validate survey instrument content (Baier & Hermann, 2006). A series of subject matter experts (SME) examined the SLCI validity (Rouse, 2009b).

The SME panelists evaluated the following four construct dimensions in the SLCI: (a) supervisor leadership, (b) supervisor communication, (c) employee, and (d) organizational performance. The panelists were business professionals with graduate degrees in business, communication, or leadership with a minimum of 5 years experience in supervising employees. The experts computed content validity ratios (CVRs) for each item in the SLCI. Only items meeting Lawshe's minimal value of .42 for panels of 20 experts (McIntire & Miller, 2007) were retained in the final SLCI instrument.

External Validity

External validity is the determination of how well the results of a study apply to the entire population studied. The sample studied must represent the target population so the results can represent the general population (Creswell, 2005; Leedy & Ormrod, 2005). Since the target population for the current study was all USCIS employees, within one directorate, the SLCI was opened to all employees through two online secure, confidential URLs. Researchers found online data collection through Web sites encouraged increased participation, anonymity, and honesty (Creswell, 2005; Leedy & Ormrod, 2005).

Reliability

The SLCI was tested several times for reliability (Rouse, 2009b). Empirical researchers who used the instrument to measure supervisor leadership and communication across several organizations (Rouse & Kaplan, 2008), between different locations (Rouse & Schuttler, 2009a), and within a single department (Schuttler & Rouse,

2008) consistently reported high reliabilities. Subsets of indicators within the SLCI also demonstrated good reliability.

Rouse's (2009) analysis of red zone measures indicated appropriate internal consistency with a Cronbach's alpha of .89. Green zone indicators were similarly consistent with a Cronbach's alpha of .92 (Rouse, 2009a). According to the SLCI User Manual, the SLCI reliably measured supervisor leadership and communication, employee behavior, and organizational outcomes. As shown in Table 4, the SLCI has high internal consistency with an overall Cronbach's alpha of .98 and with independently strong reliabilities on each dimension of the scale as follows: (a) .97 for supervisor leadership, (b) .96 for supervisor communication, (c) .85 for employee behavior, and (d) .86 for organizational outcomes (Rouse, 2009b).

Table 4

Supervisor Leadership and Communication Inventory (SLCI) Reliability Coefficients

Construct	<i>n</i> of zone indicators	<i>n</i> of construct indicators	Cronbach's alpha
Supervisor leadership			
Red	4		
Yellow	9	15	.97
Green	2		
Supervisor communication			
Red	3		
Yellow	5	18	.96
Green	10		
Employee behavior			
Red	3		
Yellow	7	15	.85
Green	5		
Organizational outcomes		5	.86
Total		53	

Note: Rouse, 2009b

Data Analysis

Frequencies

Frequencies were computed for each question in order to ensure scores were within the range of the SLCI (i.e., from 1 to 5). As detailed in the codebook shown in

Appendix E, individual items in the SLCI were combined into overall supervisor leadership, supervisor leadership, employee performance, and organizational outcome scores. Frequencies were determined for computed variables of the study.

Descriptive Analysis

Mean, standard deviation, range, and skewness statistics were computed to evaluate central tendency for each of the computed variables. Skewness was used to determine whether the computed variables were normally distributed and suitable for inferential statistics. For the data to be considered sufficiently normal, results should be below the benchmark of +/- 2.00.

Correlational Analysis

The computed variables were normally distributed. Combined SLCI scores were used to test Hypotheses 1 and 2 (see Table 5). Since SLCI data were ordinal, Spearman's Rho was more appropriate than Pearson's Product Moment Correlation (Vogt, 2005). Results were considered statistically significant with a probability of .05 or less, indicating at least 95% confidence in conclusions (Creswell, 2005).

Content Analysis

The qualitative portion of the SLCI included open-ended recommendations about how leaders could improve employee performance (see Appendix D). Three trained coders with graduate degrees independently reviewed the open-ended data and categorized responses into main themes. Interrater reliability was assessed with Cronbach's alpha. Researchers have suggested a Cronbach's alpha of .70 is reliable and acceptable, .80 is good, and .90 is excellent (Creswell, 2005; Schwandt, 2007).

Table 5

Summary of Current Data Analysis by Research Question

Research Questions	Variables	Type of Data	Analysis
RQ1 What relationship, if any, exists between senior leaders' leadership and employees' performance?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supervisor leadership • Employee performance 	Ordinal	Correlation (Spearman's rho)
RQ2 What relationship, if any, exists between senior leaders' communication and employees' performance?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supervisor communication • Employee performance 	Ordinal	Correlation (Spearman's rho)
RQ3 How, if at all, can leaders improve employee performance in USCIS?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employee performance recommendations 	Open-ended	Content analysis (Cronbach's alpha)

Summary

The purpose of chapter 3 was to review the mixed-methods descriptive design selected for the current research. Data were collected with a validated cross-sectional survey instrument, the SLCI, a measure of supervisor leadership and communication (Rouse, 2009b; Rouse & Schuttler, 2009a). Quantitative data analysis was used to examine potential relationships between senior leadership communication and employee

performance in the field. Content analysis was performed on the qualitative open-ended data from employees and supervisors. The results of data collection and analysis are presented in chapter 4.

CHAPTER 4: RESULTS

The purpose of the current mixed-methods study was to examine the relationship between leadership, communication, and employee performance within one USCIS directorate. A quantitative method was appropriate to study organizational communication with a sample from a large population of geographically dispersed participants and quantitative Likert-type items to measure leadership communication and employee performance (Rouse, 2009a, 2009b; Rouse & Kaplan, 2008). A qualitative method was also appropriate to explore (Creswell, 2005) field employees' concerns about senior leaders' communication skills. The mixed-methods study included a quantitative test of the relationship between leadership communication and employee performance and a qualitative exploration of recommendations to enhance communication and leadership competencies.

The descriptive design provided clarification within the study with detailed characteristics identified in the study (Cone & Foster, 2006). Descriptive correlational designs are appropriate to analyze employee and supervisor perceptions because the designs generate descriptions as well as systematic tests of relationships between variables (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005). The goal was to test the correlation between the predictor variables of perceived supervisor leadership and communication and the criterion variable of employee performance. The population included national employees, supervisors, and executives who work within one USCIS directorate, headquartered in Washington, DC.

Data Collection

Participating senior leaders of USCIS were located within one directorate comprised of 201 field offices throughout the United States. Demographic data collection included (a) the division and location within USCIS where the survey respondent worked, (b) the rank of either general service (GS) or senior executive service (SES) the survey respondent held, and (c) whether the survey respondent supervised people. The survey was administered to examine supervisor leadership communication, employee performance, and organizational performance. Open coding simplified the examination of the written data to identify correlations between responses. The mixed methodology study was conducted to assess the correlations between supervisor leadership and employee performance and supervisor leadership and employee performance.

The Supervisor Leadership Communication Inventory (SLCI) developed by Rouse and Schuttler (2009a) was used for the study with the authors' permission. The instrument was used to measure the study variables in a two-dimensional grid showing how supervisor leadership and leadership could predict employee behavior. The SLCI contained 53 questions to measure supervisor leadership and leadership and employee performance, 3 demographic questions, and 3 open-ended questions to allow the participants to offer comments, suggestions, and recommendations for better leadership communication and better employee performance. The SLCI was tested for reliability several times (Rouse, 2009b) with consistently high reliabilities reported (Rouse & Kaplan, 2008; Rouse & Schuttler, 2009a; Schuttler & Rouse, 2008).

Following approval of the proposal by the University of Phoenix, data were collected on two Uniform Resource Locations (URL) from May 31, 2009, through July 6,

2009. The USCIS directorate studied and the USCIS Office of Chief Counsel granted approval to distribute survey announcement fliers in employee break rooms and cafeterias and through private social networks such as *Linked In*, *Facebook*, and *My Space*. One URL provided an incentive question asking for the name of the participants' favorite charity and stating that the author would provide one dollar for each completed survey. The participants chose the American Cancer Society as their most listed charity. A check to the American Cancer Society was mailed on July 20, 2009.

Participants who chose the other URL to complete the survey were asked to list their names and mailing addresses if they wished to participate in the Starbucks \$20.00 gift cards raffle. Personal information was listed voluntarily and was not a requirement to complete the survey. The winning survey respondents, each 25th person, received gift cards. All gift cards were mailed to the winners by July 20, 2009.

The data were collected over 35 days through secure, exclusive URLs. The URL sites hosting the survey recorded each participant's IP address and allowed only one response from each IP address. Each survey result was recorded on one spreadsheet with the participant code as the row heading and the question number as the column heading. Participant codes were used to maintain confidentiality. The spreadsheet was the main data depository of all survey data collected.

Findings

Distribution Methods

The URL site listing the charity question had 227 participants (52.2%) while the URL site listing the gift card raffle had 208 participants (47.8%). Except for the questions regarding the charity and the Starbucks gift cards raffle, all information on each URL was

identical. As illustrated in Figure 8, findings show significant differences ($t(380) = 3.66$, $p = .001$) between the average supervisor leadership score for individuals who responded to the survey after receiving the charity invitation ($M = 3.04$, $SD = .72$) as opposed to the responding to the flier ($M = 2.90$, $SD = .80$).

Significant differences ($t(380) = 4.00$, $p = .001$) were found between the average supervisor communication score for individuals who responded to the survey after receiving the charity invitation ($M = 2.99$, $SD = .78$) as opposed to the responding to the flier ($M = 2.82$, $SD = .88$). There were significant differences ($t(380) = 3.56$, $p = .001$) between the average outcome score for individuals who responded to the survey after receiving the charity invitation ($M = 3.16$, $SD = .80$) as opposed to the responding to the flier ($M = 3.00$, $SD = .97$). There were no significant differences ($t(380) = -.55$, $p = .58$) between the average employee performance score for individuals who responded to the survey after receiving the charity invitation ($M = 3.13$, $SD = .56$) as opposed to the responding to the flier ($M = 3.15$, $SD = .62$).

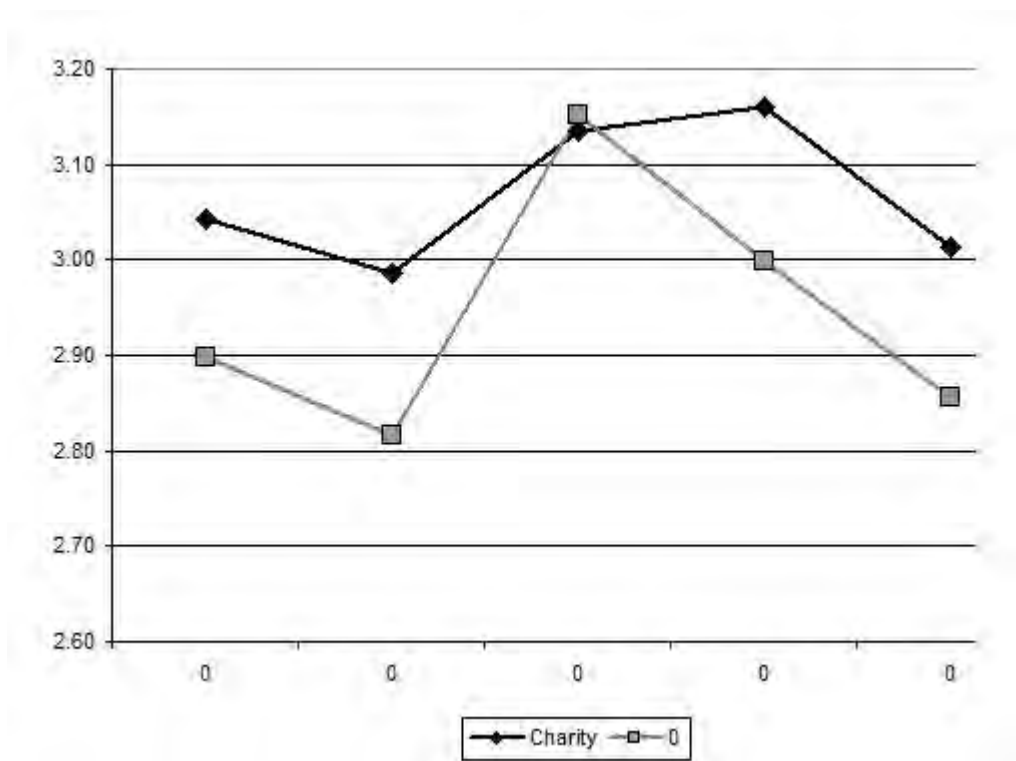


Figure 8. T tests showing differences between participants' responses within two URLs.

Response Rate

Based on the Sample Size Calculator with a confidence level of 95% for a population of 7,683 employees (USCIS, personal communication, July 18, 2009), the study required 366 completed surveys to obtain its targeted population (Creative Research System, 2009). After 35 days of data collection, 435 individuals participated in the study. Eighty-seven percent (87%) ($n = 378$) completed the survey while 13% ($n = 57$) provided partial responses (see Figure 9).

With 378 completed surveys, the study exceeded the target population by 12 respondents. Fifty-seven (57) participants began the survey but ended before completing it. Each of the 57 participants stopped their survey at demographic questions at the beginning. The first question was asking the participants to identify the division where

they worked within the USCIS directorate. Each of the participants who opted out of the survey left before completing the first demographic question.

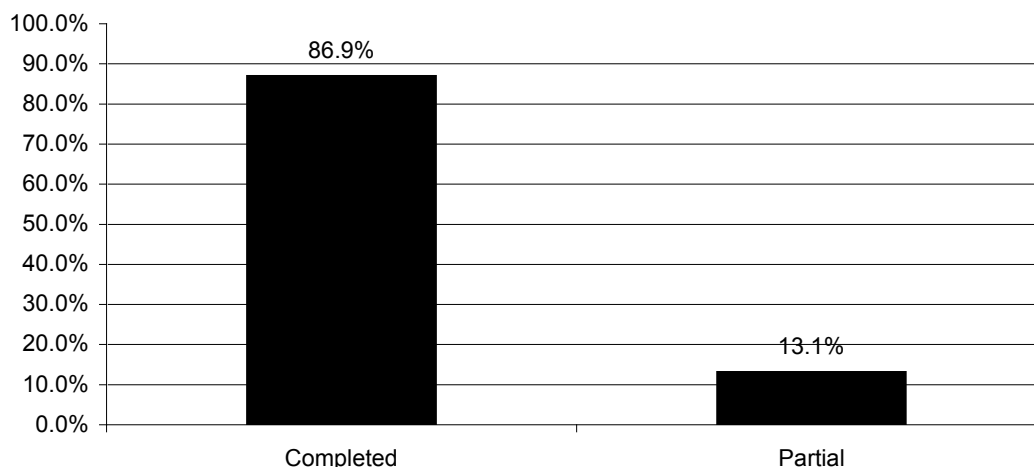


Figure 9. Comparison of completed surveys and incomplete surveys.

Frequency, Demographics, and Descriptive Statistics

Information on the 378 participants who completed the study was categorized. Designations included locations, rank levels, supervisory level, and number of people supervised. Findings indicate that (a) each division within this USCIS directorate had participants who responded to the survey, (b) each regional location had participants who responded to the survey, and (c) each ranking had people who responded to the survey. The open manner in which participation was solicited led to 21 recorded responses from participants who did not work for the specific USCIS directorate studied.

Figure 10 and Table 6 illustrate the locations of the divisions within the USCIS directorate studied and the number of people who participated within those divisions. The table includes categories by headquarters components. Field offices supported by headquarters components are listed under the main division. The Eastern Call Center and Western Call Center are listed under the Information and Customer Service Division.

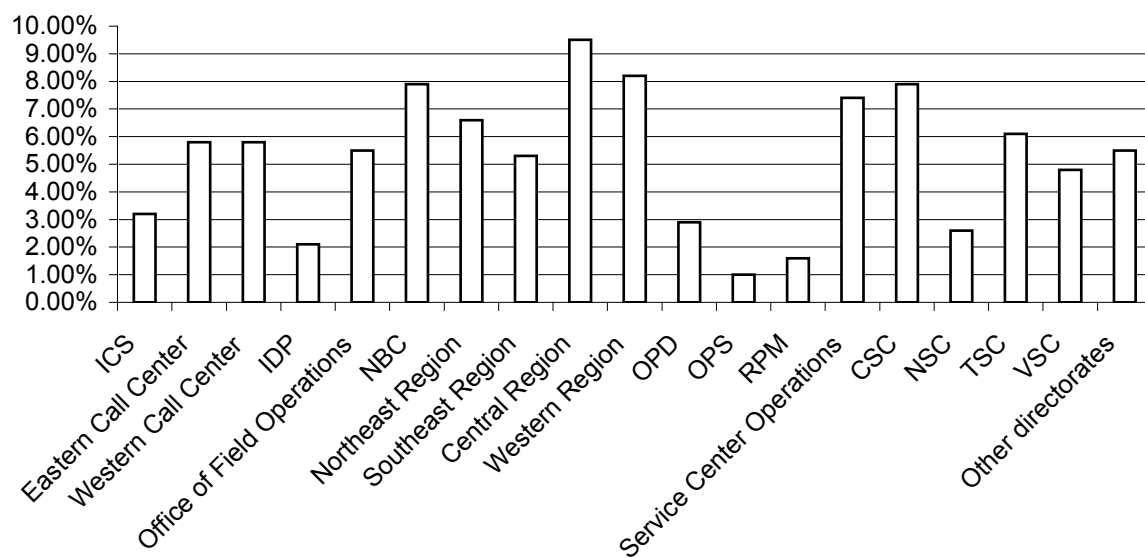


Figure 10. Comparison of participants' work locations.

Table 6

Participants' Work Locations

USCIS Office	<i>f</i>	<i>P</i>
Information and Customer Service	12	3.2%
Eastern Call Center	22	5.8%
Western Call Center	22	5.8%
Integrated Document Production	8	2.1%
Office of Field Operations	21	5.5%
National Benefits Center	30	7.9%
Northeast Region	25	6.6%
Southeast Region	20	5.3%
Central Region	36	9.5%
Western Region	31	8.2%
Office Production Management	11	2.9%
Office Policy and Strategy	4	1.0%
Regulations and Policy Management	6	1.6%
Service Center Operations	28	7.4%
California Service Center	30	7.9%
Nebraska Service Center	10	2.6%
Texas Service Center	23	6.1%
Vermont Service Center	18	4.8%
Other directorates	21	5.5%
Total	378	100%

The National Benefits Center, and the Regions (i.e., Northeast, Southeast, Central, and Western) are listed under the Office of Field Services division. The participant responses from district offices are arranged under the regional offices representing those districts. The California, Nebraska, Texas, and Vermont service centers are listed under the Service Center Operations Division.

Figure 11 and Table 7 are the categories for each participant by rank. General Service (GS) was the standard grade for the majority of USCIS employees. Senior Executive Service (SES) was the standard and highest grade for senior leaders within USCIS.

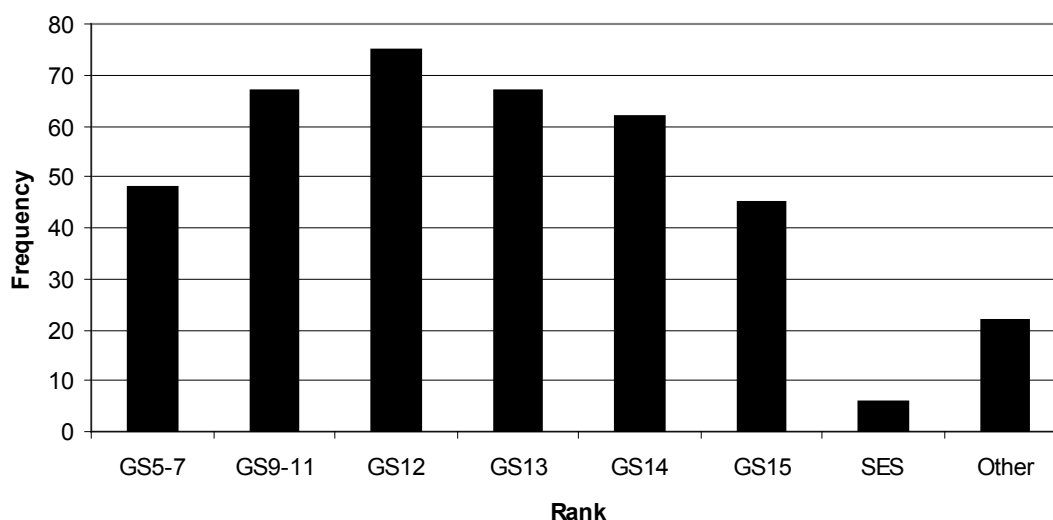


Figure 11. Comparison of participants' federal service rankings.

Table 7

Participants' Rankings by Geographic Locations

Rank	Region				
	Central ^a	Northeastern ^b	Southeastern ^c	Western ^d	Headquarters ^e
GS 5 to 7	11	9	5	19	2
GS 9 to 11	14	20	5	20	4
GS 12	25	9	17	23	6
GS 13	10	14	24	16	8
GS 14	4	7	3	6	60
GS 15	4	8	6	2	11
SES	0	2	3	2	2
Contractor	4	1	0	1	7
TOTAL	72	70	63	89	100

^a Included Nebraska Service Center and the National Benefits Center

^b Vermont Service Center & Eastern Call Center

^c Texas Service Center

^d California Service Center & Western Call Center

^e Information and Customer Service, Integrated Document Production, Office of Field Operations, Office of Production Division, Office of Policy and Strategy, Regulations and Policy Management, and Service Center Operations

The number of participants in supervisory or non-supervisory roles is included in Figure 12. Approximately 40% (39.5%) of survey participants were in supervisory,

management, or leadership roles. Approximately 61% (60.5%) of survey participants were non-supervisors.

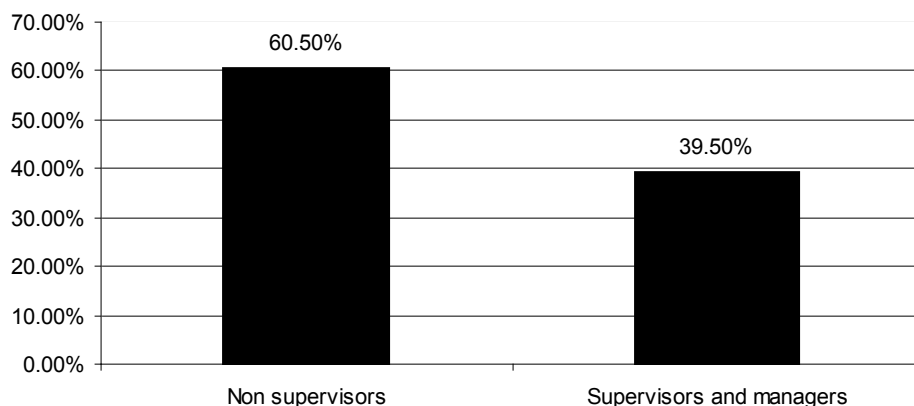


Figure 12. Comparison of participants by supervisory vs. non-supervisory positions.

Further categorization of participants included leadership categories of non-supervisory, first-line supervisors, middle managers, and senior leaders (see Figure 13). The results include 4.2% (16) senior leaders, 11.5% (45) middle managers, and 23.8% (93) first line supervisors. The majority of the participants, 60.5% (236), were in non-supervisory positions. Approximately 24% had 1 to 10 subordinates to supervise, approximately 8% had 11 to 25 subordinates to supervise, and 4.2% of the participants managed more than 51 subordinates.

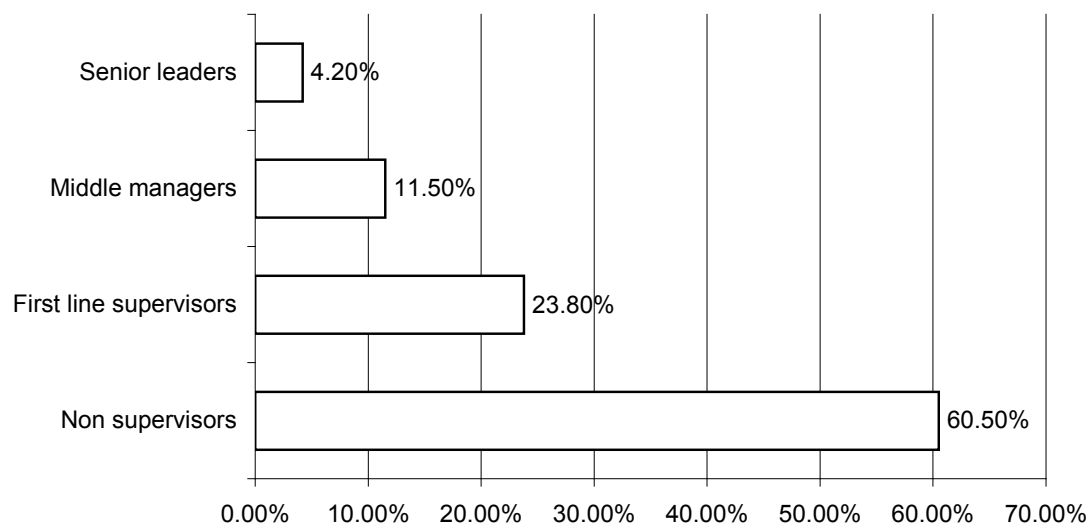


Figure 13. Categories of participants' positions.

As shown in Table 8, 19.8% (86) of the survey participants were from headquarters offices in Washington, DC. The majority of the survey participants, 80.2% (349), were from field offices. Field offices are located throughout the United States.

Table 8

Participants Located in Field Offices and Headquarters Offices

Place of Work	<i>F</i>	<i>P</i>
Field Offices	349	80.2
Headquarters	86	19.8
Total	435	100.0%

Model Variables

The variables were computed using the codebook listed in Appendix E. Negatively phrased items were reflected, and items were subsequently summed to produce composite scores for supervisor leadership, supervisor communication, and employee performance. Table 9 is a list of the descriptive statistics for each of the main

constructs. The skewness of all three constructs was near zero, indicating the variables were suitable for inferential statistical analysis.

Table 9

Descriptive Statistics for Supervisor Leadership, Supervisor Communication, and Employee Performance

Variable	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Skew
Supervisor Leadership	2.97	0.77	0.08
Supervisor Communication	2.90	0.83	0.26
Employee Performance	3.14	0.59	0.26

Reliability Analysis

A reliability analysis was conducted to verify the reliability of the SLCI items. As shown in Table 10, the supervisor leadership and communication constructs had high reliability while the employee performance and organizational outcome measures had acceptable reliability. The SLCI's overall Cronbach's alpha was .82. The findings indicated the measures were sufficiently reliable for conducting the statistical analysis.

Three professionals subjected the data from the three open-ended questions to content analysis by coding. One coder had a Doctorate in Management degree, one coder had a Doctorate in Education degree, and the final coder had a Master's of Arts degree. Using the a priori approach, themes for Research Question 1 (RQ 1) were provided by the Federal Human Capital Survey and Best Places to Work in Federal Government Studies (Partnership for Public Service, 2007).

Table 10

Reliability of Supervisor Leadership and Communication Inventory Items

Construct	<i>n</i> of Items	Cronbach's alpha
Supervisor Leadership	15	.92
Supervisor Communication	18	.90
Employee Performance	15	.73
Organizational Outcomes	5	.74
Total	53	.82

Interrater Reliability

Also using the a priori approach, themes for Research Question 2 (RQ 2) were provided by Laws of Communication: The Intersection Where Leadership Meets Employee Performance (Schuttler, 2009). Research Question 3 themes were developed post hoc based on the themes listed in the responses. As shown in Table 11, the overall Cronbach's alpha for the open-ended themes was .90. The result provided evidence confirming a high agreement from three independent coders regarding the themes presented in the open-ended data.

Table 11

Intercoder Reliability of Open-Ended Responses

Coder	Intercoder Correlation
A	.85
B	.91
C	.95
Overall Cronbach's alpha	.90

Correlational Analysis

Senior leadership. The purpose of Research Question 1 (RQ1) was to investigate the correlation between senior leaders' leadership and employees' performance. The scores for each participant were plotted on a two-dimensional grid. As shown in Figure 14, the scatter plot reveals a strong positive relationship between the two variables. Supervisor leadership was significantly correlated ($r_{(1,379)} = .63, p < .01$) with employee performance. High levels of supervisor leadership were associated with high employee performance, and low supervisor leadership was significantly associated with low employee performance. The data provided strong support for the alternative hypothesis that a significant correlation exists between supervisor leadership and employee performance within USCIS directorate.

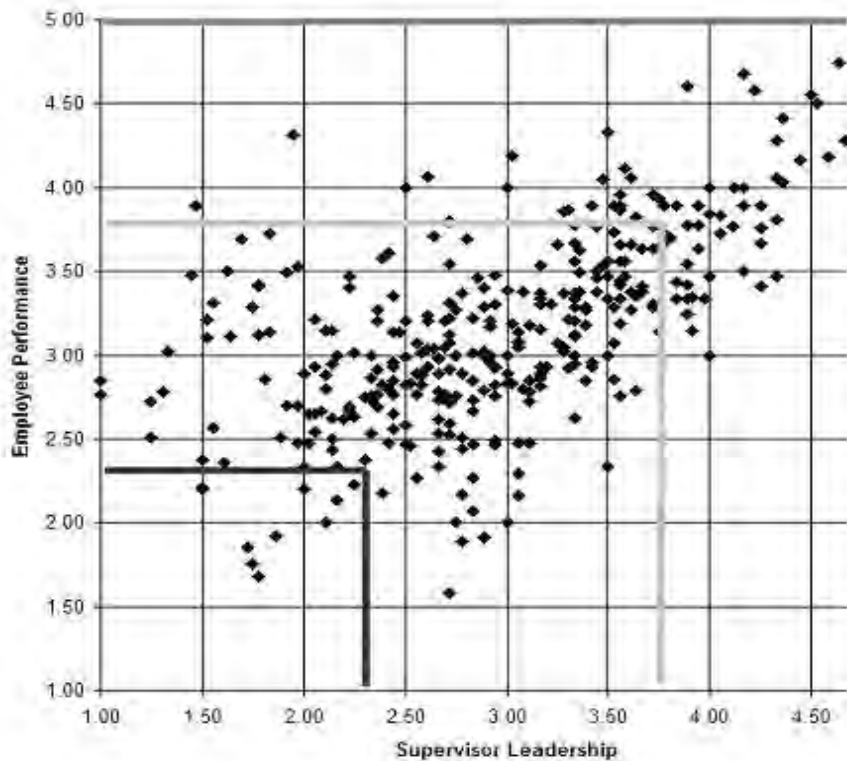


Figure 14. Scatter plot of supervisor leadership and employee performance.

Senior communication. The purpose of Research Question 2 (RQ2) was to test the correlation between senior leaders' communication and employee performance. Similar to RQ1's results, a scatter plot of the two variables showed a strong positive relationship between supervisor communication and employee behavior (see Figure 15). Senior leaders' communication was significantly correlated ($r_{(1, 379)} = .62, p < .01$) with employee performance. High levels of supervisor communication were associated with high employee performance, and low communication was significantly correlated with low employee performance.

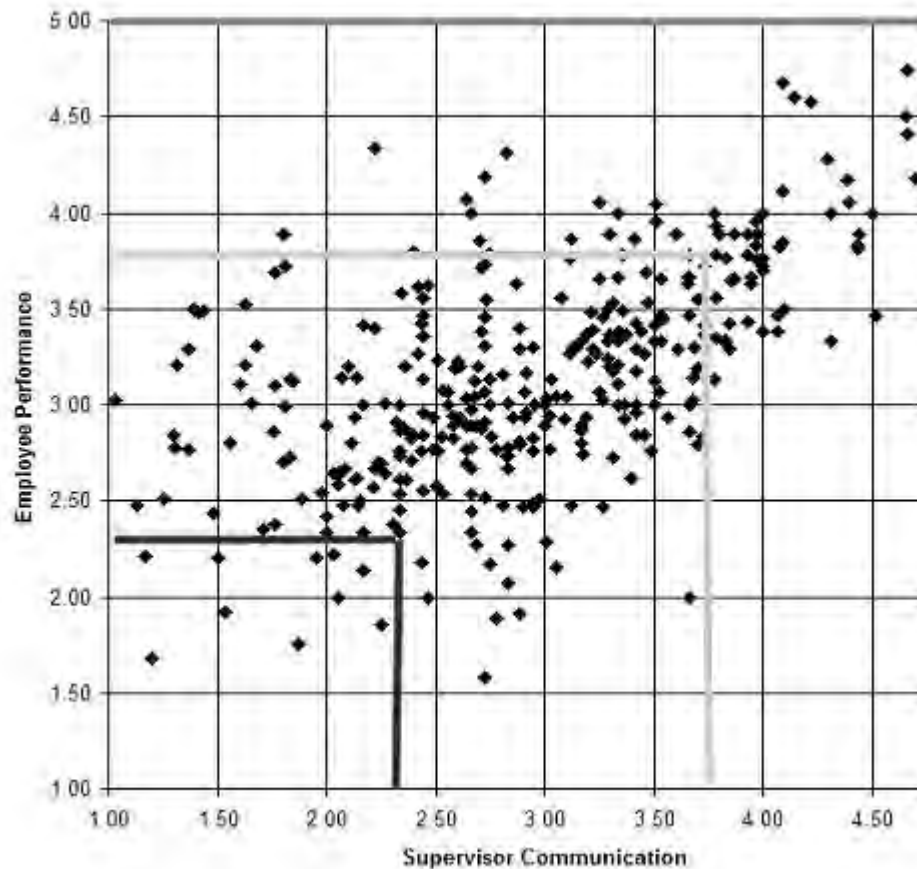


Figure 15. Scatter plot of supervisor communication and employee performance.

Multiple regression. Multiple regression was used to determine the combined influence of senior leadership and communication on employee performance. The two independent variables produced a highly significant adjusted $R^2_{(2,378)} = .41, p = .001$. The results indicate the combined influence of senior leadership and communication was capable of explaining 41% of the variance in employee performance. As shown in Table 12, supervisor communication was a stronger predictor of employee performance ($\beta = 0.45, p = .001$) than supervisor leadership ($\beta = 0.21, p = .02$).

Table 12

Multiple Regression Analysis of the Influence of Supervisor Leadership and Communication on Employee Performance

Construct	Employee Performance				
	Unstandardized		Standardized	<i>t</i>	<i>P</i>
	Coefficients		Coefficients		
	B	SE B	β		
Constant	1.82	0.09		20.87	.00
Supervisor Leadership Average	0.15	0.07	0.21	2.27	.02
Supervisor Communication Average	0.30	0.06	0.45	4.82	.00

Leadership Recommendations

Quantitative questions within the survey were used to assess the influence of senior leaders' behavior and communication on employee performance, and two open-ended questions were used to qualitatively address RQ 1 and 2. An open-ended question to evaluate how leaders could improve communication and employee performance within USCIS addressed RQ 3. The participants could provide general comments in a space at the end of the survey.

Communication

The first open-ended question pertained to how, if at all, leaders could improve communication. Responses to the question were categorized in themes used by the Best Places to Work in Federal Government, a Partnership for Public Service (2007) study that was a review of survey responses to the 2008 Federal Human Capital Survey. Theme

categories included (a) employee skill mission match; (b) strategic management; (c) teamwork; (d) effective leadership, including empowerment, fairness, leaders, and supervisors; (e) performance-based rewards and advancement; (f) support for diversity; (g) family-friendly culture; (h) pay and benefits; (i) work/life balance; and (j) other. Effective leadership accounted for 56% of the participants' responses to this question.

Performance-based rewards and advancement was the second most common theme to this question (15%), followed by teamwork (10%), strategic management (6%), and employee skills/mission match (1%) (see Figure 16). The category of other (12%) was subdivided into (a) provide more training (71%), (b) nothing can be done (12%), (c) leave the agency (12%), and (d) remove the union (5%) (see Figure 17). In the category of other, 12% believed the agency was compliant in the area of leaders' communication while 12% believed leaving the agency was the solution.

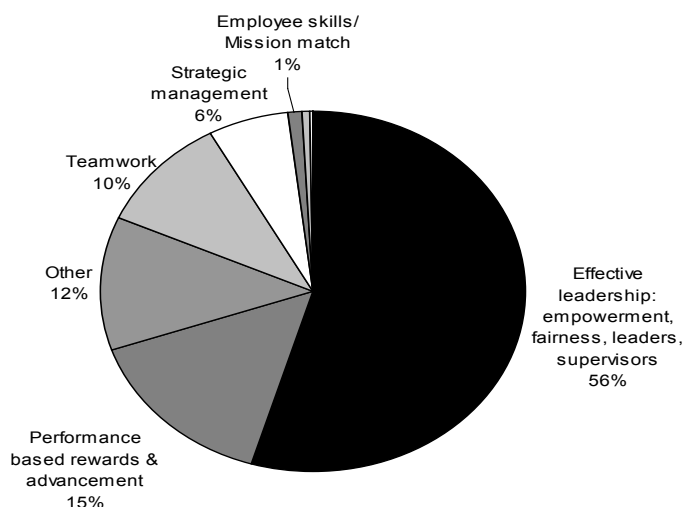


Figure 16. Open-ended suggestions for improving leader communication.

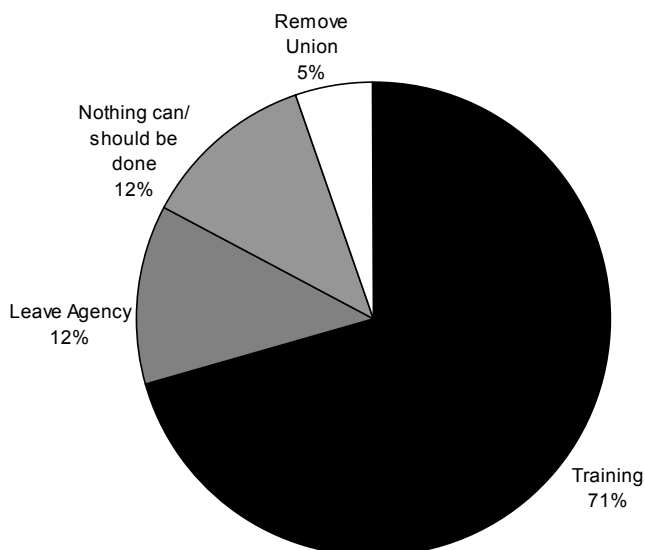


Figure 17. Other suggestions for improving leader communication.

Employee Performance

The second open-ended question pertained to how, if at all, leaders could improve employee performance. Responses to the question were categorized using themes listed in *Laws of Communication: The Intersection Where Leaders Meet Employee Performance* (Schuttler, 2009). Theme categories included (a) trust, (b) visibility, (c) education, (d) change, (e) mentoring/coaching, (f) attentiveness, (g) morale, and (h) other.

Being more visible accounted for 21% of the participants' responses to the second open-ended question, followed closely by attentiveness (19%) and education (17%). Other response percentages for the question included trust (10%), mentoring/coaching (6%), morale (5%), and change (2%) (see Figure 18). The category of other (20%) was divided into subcategories. The participants' responses to the category of other included (a) hiring the correct people, (b) delivering consistent messages to all employees, (c) training, (d) everything is okay, and (e) cannot fix it. Providing consistent messages to all

employees was the participants' response 45% of the time in the category of other, followed by everything is okay (20%), and hire correct people (16%), decrease email (11%), and cannot fix it (8%) (see Figure 19).

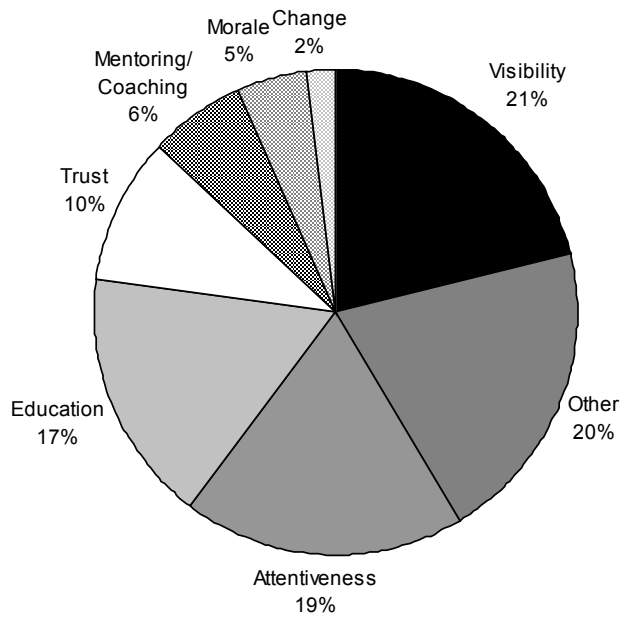


Figure 18. Open-ended suggestions for improving employee performance.

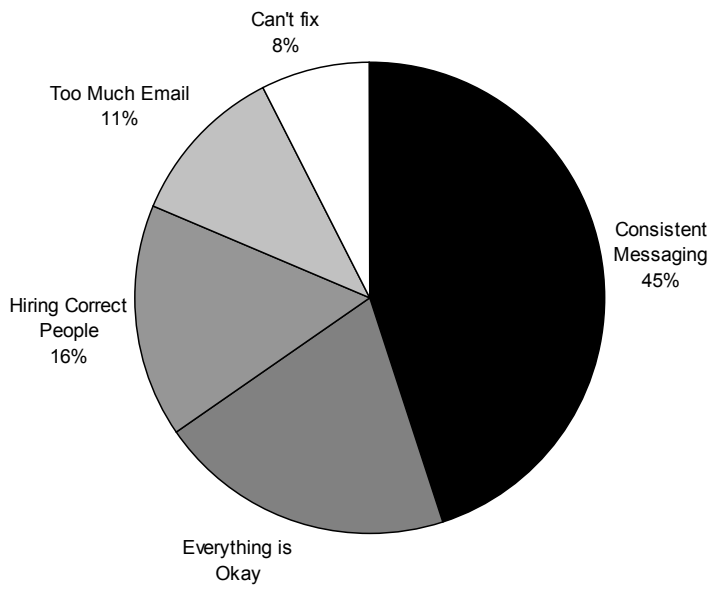


Figure 19. Other suggestions for improving employee performance.

General Comments

A post hoc method of gathering comments was used for the third open-ended question asking for comments and suggestions. Providing better training and education for managers and supervisors was the most frequent response with 24 separate comments. Personal notes to the student conducting the survey was the second most frequent response with 15 comments, and the third most common response was comments about the survey (12). The responses included eight general comments that everything is bad you cannot fix it and seven general comments that everything is okay and should not be fixed.

Seven comments pertained to creating a better hiring practice to obtain quality supervisors and managers, and seven comments were made about the conflict of making production numbers as opposed to providing quality services. Six participants commented that USCIS supervisors send employees too many emails, and three comments stated that listening to employees more would increase morale. Three comments were a request for more emphasis on individual developments plans and increased training for USCIS employees, and one comment was a request for an easier way to navigate the Web site for USCIS employees and customers (see Figure 20).

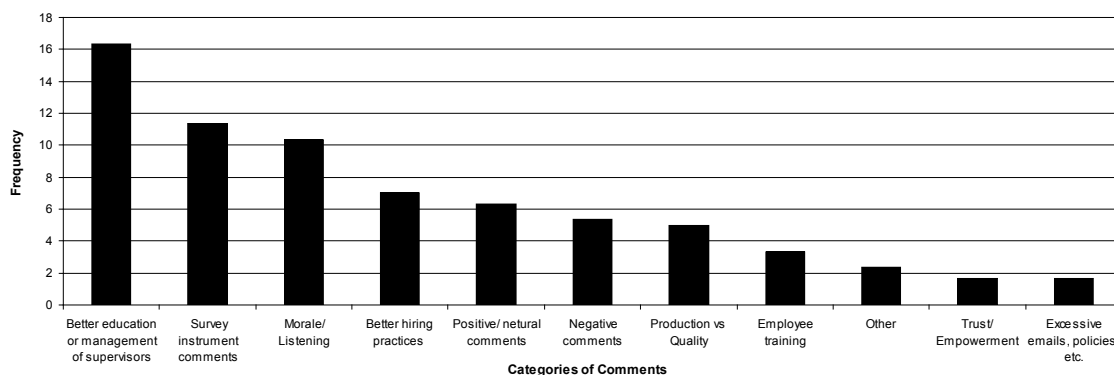


Figure 20. General open-ended comments.

Gap Analysis

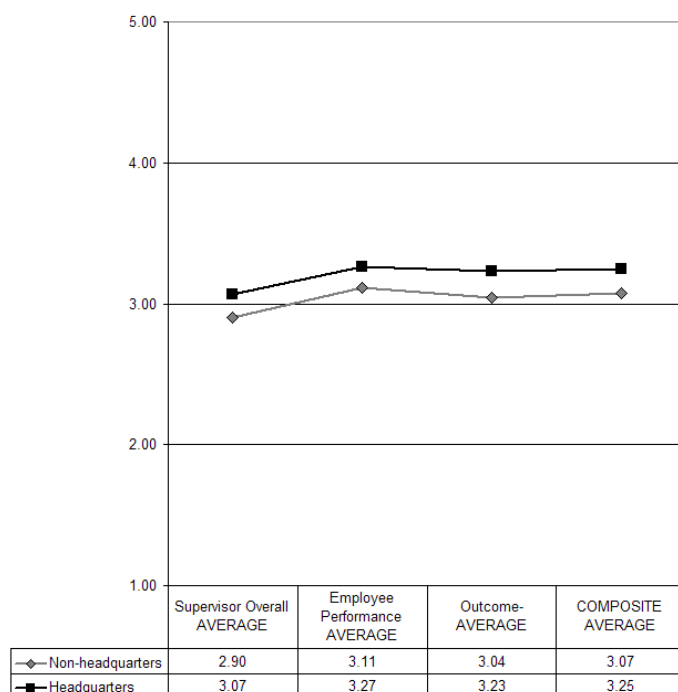


Figure 21. Gap analysis comparing headquarter and non-headquarter participants' perceptions.

Approximately 80% of the participants who responded were field employees, and approximately 20% of the participants who responded were employees working at headquarters. Field employees who participated in the study had consistently lower perceptions than employees who participated in the study from headquarters. As shown in Table 13, the statistical comparison of the means of headquarters and field participants indicates highly significant differences.

Table 13

Comparison Headquarter and Non-headquarter Perceptions of Supervisor Leadership Communication, Employee Performance, and Organizational Outcomes

Variable	Non-headquarters			Headquarters			<i>t</i>
	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>n</i>	
Supervisor Overall	2.90	.75	300	3.07	.86	81	-4.12**
Employee Performance	3.11	.57	300	3.27	.66	81	-5.14**
Organizational Outcomes	3.04	.87	300	3.23	.96	81	-4.27**
Composite Score	3.07	.61	300	3.25	.75	81	-5.32**

Note: ** $p < .01$

Summary

The purpose of the mixed-methods study was to discover relationships between supervisor leadership and communication and employee performance. Research Question 1 asked, What relationship, if any, exists between senior leaders' leadership and employees' performance. The H_{1O} stated there is no significant correlation between supervisor leadership and employee performance within one USCIS directorate. The H_{1A} stated there is a significant correlation between supervisor leadership and employees' performance within one USCIS directorate.

Quantitative responses indicate supervisors' leadership was significantly correlated ($r = .63, p = .001$) with employee performance. Since SLCI data were ordinal, Spearman's Rho was more appropriate than Pearson's Product Moment Correlation (Vogt, 2005). Results were considered statistically significant with a probability of .05 or less, indicating at least 95% confidence in conclusions. High levels of supervisor leadership were associated with high employee performance, and low supervisor leadership was significantly associated with low employee performance.

Research Question 2 asked, What relationship, if any, exists between senior leaders' communication and employees' performance. The H_{1O} stated there is no significant correlation between supervisor communication and employee performance within one USCIS directorate. The H_{1A} stated there is a significant correlation between supervisor communication and employees' performance within one USCIS directorate.

Quantitative responses indicate supervisors' communication was significantly correlated ($r = .62, p = .001$) with employee performance. Again using Spearman's Rho results were considered statistically significant with a probability of .05 or less, indicating at least 95% confidence in conclusions. High levels of supervisor communication were associated with high employee performance, and low supervisor communication was significantly associated with low employee performance.

Quantitative responses indicated field employees had consistently lower perceptions than employees who participated in the study from headquarters. The statistical comparison of the means of headquarters and field showed the differences are highly significant. Participants were approximately 80% from the field and 20% from headquarters, which is similar to current USCIS employee population of 87% field

employees and 13% headquarters employees (USCIS, personal communication, July 18, 2009).

Qualitative responses indicate effective leadership, management visibility, and attentiveness were the top themes to improve employee performance and supervisor leadership. In an open field entitled Comments and Suggestions, providing better training and education for managers and supervisors was the number one suggestion. Other popular suggestions included creating a better hiring practice to obtain quality supervisors and managers, and recognition of the communication confusion between managers who state quality is important but continue to rate and discipline on production. The overall results of the current study align with previous research findings presented in the literary review in chapter 2. The results support the conclusions and recommendations included in chapter 5.

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In 2007, The U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) was rated 29 out of 30 large federal departments in the Best Places to Work survey (Partnership for Public Service, 2007). The component within DHS studied in the current research was the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS), rated in the lowest 15% (189 out of 222) of federal agencies. Participants in such studies consistently listed leadership and communication as two of the primary elements for the low ratings (Partnership for Public Service, 2007).

The current mixed-methods study was an investigation of the relationship between leadership communication by USCIS senior leaders and field employees' performance. The descriptive design allowed for an analysis of the employees' perceptions by systematically testing relationships between the variables and by using open-ended qualitative questions to gather detailed and accurate pictures of particular characteristics (Cone & Foster, 2006). Limitations of the analysis included senior leaders within a single USCIS directorate located in Washington, DC, and field employees located throughout 201 offices nationally. Delimitations to the study were a 35-day timeframe and the use of the Supervisor Leadership Communication Inventory (SLCI) for data collection.

Data Collection

Data collected for the study derived from a sample of employees and leaders through an online survey with 53 Likert-type questions, 3 demographic questions, and 3 open-ended qualitative questions. The study was conducted to assess the correlations between supervisor leadership and employee performance and supervisor communication

and employee performance. The SLCI was the instrument used to measure the study variables in a two-dimensional grid showing how supervisor leadership and leadership could predict employee performance.

Data were collected on two Internet Uniform Resource Locators (URL) from May 31, 2009, through July 6, 2009. Survey announcements and URLs were listed on fliers distributed in employee break rooms and cafeterias and through private social networks such as *Linked In*, *Facebook*, and *My Space*. The URL posted electronically provided an incentive question asking for the name of the participants' favorite charity, stating that the author would provide one dollar for each completed survey.

Participants who chose the URL posted on fliers in break rooms and cafeterias were asked to voluntarily list their names and mailing addresses if they wished to participate in the Starbucks \$20.00 gift cards raffle. The data were collected over 35 days through secure, exclusive URLs. Each result was recorded on a spreadsheet with the participant code as the row heading and the question number as the column heading.

Data Findings

The URL site listing the charity question had 227 participants (52.2%) while the URL site listing the gift card raffle had 208 participants (47.8%). Findings showed significant differences between the average supervisor leadership score ($t(380) = 3.66, p = .00$) and average supervisor communication score ($t(380) = 4.00, p = .00$) for individuals who responded to the survey with the charity question ($M = 3.04, sd = 0.72$) as opposed to those responding to the Starbucks flier ($M = 2.90, sd = 0.80$). There were no significant differences ($t(380) = -0.55, p = .58$) between the average employee performance score for individuals who responded to the survey with the charity question

($M = 3.13$, $sd = 0.56$) as opposed to individuals responding to the Starbucks flier ($M = 3.15$, $sd = 0.62$).

Based on the Sample Size Calculator with a confidence level of 95% for a population of 7,683 employees (USCIS, personal communication, July 18, 2009), the study required 366 completed surveys to obtain the targeted population (Creative Research System, 2009). After 35 days of data collection, 435 individuals participated in the study. Eighty-seven percent (378 participants) completed the survey. Thirteen percent (57 participants) provided partial responses. The study exceeded the target population by 12 respondents.

Frequency, Demographics and Descriptive Statistics

Information on the 378 participants who completed the study was demographically categorized by geographic location, rank level, supervisory level, and number of people supervised. Each division within this USCIS directorate had participants, each regional location had participants, and each ranking had individuals responding to the survey. The survey recorded responses from 5.5% (21 USCIS participants) who did not work for the specific directorate studied.

Field offices supported by headquarters components were listed under the main division. The Eastern Call Center and Western Call Center were listed under the Information and Customer Service Division. The National Benefits Center, and the Regions (Northeast, Southeast, Central, Western) were listed under the Office of Field Services Division. Participant responses from district offices were arranged under the regional offices representing those districts. The California, Nebraska, Texas, and Vermont Service Centers were listed under the Service Center Operations Division.

General Service (GS) was the standard grade for the majority of USCIS employees. Senior executive service (SES) was the grade for senior leaders within USCIS. Approximately 61% of the survey participants were non-supervisors; the remaining participants were supervisors.

A total of 16 senior leaders, 45 middle managers, and 93 first line supervisors participated. Approximately 24% had 1 to 10 subordinates to supervise, 8% had 11 to 25 subordinates to supervise, and 4.2% of the participants managed more than 51 subordinates. Approximately 20% (86) of the survey participants were from headquarters offices in Washington, DC. National field offices participants accounted for approximately 80% (349).

Variables were computed. Negatively phrased items were reflected, and items were summed to produce composite scores for supervisor leadership, supervisor communication, and employee performance. The skewness of all three constructs was near zero, indicating that the variables were suitable for inferential statistical analysis.

Reliability Analysis

An analysis was conducted to verify the reliability of the SLCI items. The supervisor leadership and communication constructs had high reliability while the employee performance and organizational outcome measures had acceptable reliability. The SLCI overall Cronbach's alpha was .82. The findings indicated the measures were sufficiently reliable for conducting the statistical analysis.

Three professionals analyzed by coding the content of the responses to the qualitative open-ended questions. The overall Cronbach's alpha for the open-ended themes was .90. The result provided evidence confirming a high agreement from three

independent coders regarding the themes presented in the open-ended data. The themes included (a) employee skills/mission match; (b) strategic management; (c) teamwork; (d) effective leadership including empowerment, fairness, leaders, and supervisors; (e) performance-based rewards and advancement; (f) support for diversity; (g) family-friendly culture; (h) pay and benefits; (i) work/life balance; and (j) other.

Correlational Analysis

Research Question #1

The purpose of Research Question 1 (RQ1) was to investigate the correlation between senior leaders' leadership and employees' performance. The scores for each participant were plotted on a two-dimensional grid. A strong positive relationship between the two variables was revealed. Supervisor leadership was significantly correlated with employee performance. High levels of supervisor leadership were associated with high employee performance, and low supervisor leadership was significantly associated with low employee performance.

Research Question #2

The purpose of Research Question 2 (RQ2) was to test the correlation between senior leaders' communication and employee performance. The two variables showed a strong positive relationship between supervisor communication and employee behavior. Senior leaders' communication was significantly correlated with employee performance. High levels of supervisor communication were associated with high employee performance, and low communication was significantly correlated with low employee performance.

Multiple regression was used to determine the combined influence of senior leadership and communication on employee performance. The result indicated the combined influence of senior leadership and communication was capable of explaining 41% of the variance in employee performance. Supervisor communication was a stronger predictor of employee performance than supervisor leadership.

Two open-ended questions qualitatively addressed RQ1 and 2. The RQ3 was addressed with open-ended questions to evaluate how leaders could improve employee performance within USCIS. The participants could provide general comments in a space at the end of the survey.

Research Question #3

The first open-ended question pertained to how, if at all, could leaders improve communication? Responses to the question were categorized in themes used by the Best Places to Work in Federal Government, a Partnership for Public Service study (2007) conducted to review survey responses to the 2007 Federal Human Capital Survey. Effective leadership accounted for 56% of the participants' response to the question.

Performance-based rewards and advancement was the second most common theme to this question (15%), followed by teamwork (10%), strategic management (6%), and employee skills/mission match (1%) (see Figure 16). The category of other (12%) was subdivided into (a) provide more training (71%), (b) nothing can be done (12%), (c) leave the agency (12%), and (d) remove the union (5%) (see Figure 17). In the category of other, 12% believed the agency was compliant in the area of leaders' communication while 12% believed leaving the agency was the solution.

The second open-ended question pertained to how, if at all, leaders could improve employee performance. Responses to the question were categorized using themes listed in *Laws of Communication: The Intersection Where Leaders Meet Employee Performance* (Schuttler, 2009). Theme categories included (a) trust, (b) visibility, (c) education, (d) change, (e) mentoring/coaching, (f) attentiveness, (g) morale, and (h) other.

Being more visible accounted for 21% of the participants' responses to the second open-ended question, followed closely by attentiveness (19%) and education (17%). Other response percentages for the question included trust (10%), mentoring/coaching (6%), morale (5%), and change (2%) (see Figure 18). The category of other (20%) was divided into subcategories. Providing consistent messages to all employees was the participants' response 45% of the time in the category of other, followed by everything is okay (20%), and hire correct people (16%), decrease email (11%), and cannot fix it (8%) (see Figure 19).

A post hoc method of gathering comments was used for the third open-ended question asking for comments and suggestions. Providing better training and education for managers and supervisors was the most frequent response with 24 separate comments. Personal notes to the student conducting the survey was the second most frequent response with 15 comments, and the third most common response was comments about the survey (12). The responses included eight general comments that everything is bad you cannot fix it and seven general comments that everything is okay and should not be fixed.

Seven comments pertained to creating a better hiring practice to obtain quality supervisors and managers, and seven comments were made about the conflict of making production numbers as opposed to providing quality services. Six participants commented that USCIS sends its employees too many emails, and three comments stated that listening to employees more would increase morale. Three comments were a request for more emphasis on individual developments plans and increased training for USCIS employees, and one comment was a request for an easier way to navigate the Web site for USCIS employees and customers (see Figure 20).

Gap Analysis

Approximately 80% of the participants who responded were field employees, and approximately 20% of the participants who responded were employees working at headquarters. Field employees who participated in the study had consistently lower perceptions than employees who participated in the study from headquarters. As shown in Table 13, the statistical comparison of the means of headquarters and field participants indicates highly significant differences.

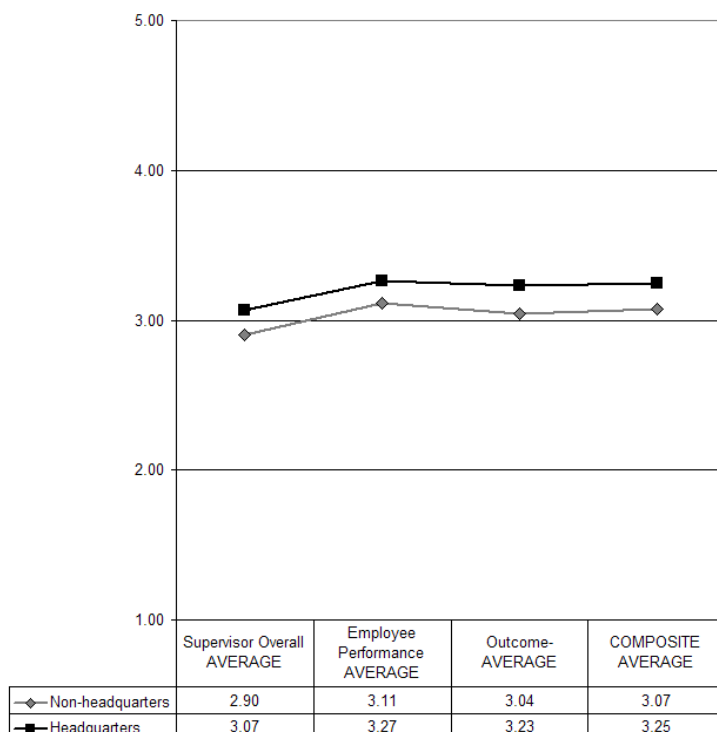


Figure 22. Gap analysis comparing headquarter and non-headquarter participants' perceptions.

Conclusion

Assumptions

Assumptions were made at the beginning of the study. One assumption was that a representative sample from the population of 7,683 employees would agree to participate. Individuals from each of the demographical elements (i.e., geographical, rank, division, region or service center, supervisory status) participated in the study. To meet the targeted population, 366 participants were needed. A total of 435 respondents began the survey, and 378 respondents completed the survey.

Two similar assumptions included the following:

1. The invitation sent to potential participants indicated the research received the consent of the Deputy Associate Director. The assumption was official

endorsement of the study by a top ranking senior leader would emphasize the importance of the results to the employees.

2. Since the study was specifically designed for the USCIS directorate, the assumption was that greater participation might ensue as the employees might believe their voices would more likely be heard in an intimate environment than in the larger government wide surveys of the past (Partnership for Public Service, 2007).

The assumptions were not supported. Despite approval for the study by the deputy associate director and clearance from the Office of Chief Counsel, many USCIS employees verbally reported they would not complete the survey as they were more concerned with their local manager's reaction than reaction from headquarters.

Another group of assumptions included the following:

1. The quantitative component of the study design would allow for the sampling of a large number of individuals. Unlike qualitative methods, which often include small samples, large samples reduce the risk of self-reported bias from any single respondent.
2. The assumption was that the use of an anonymous online survey would increase the participants' perceived confidentiality and anonymity, in turn increasing the accuracy and honesty of the self-reported answers (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005).
3. An assumption was the individuals who participated would provide honest and accurate responses. Self-reported data can contain inaccurate perceptions based on faulty memories or a hesitancy to provide answers presenting the organization negatively (Cone & Foster, 2006).

Though the target population was exceeded in the study, a higher rate of participation was expected because of the importance of the subject matter. Despite the use of an anonymous online survey, 57 (13%) of the potential participants decided not to complete the survey when asked for demographic information identifying their geographic location, division, rank, and supervisory status. Demographic questions were placed at the beginning of the survey. Many USCIS employees stated they would not participate in the survey because they were uncomfortable writing what they believed, even on a private Web site. The questions on the URLs were the same, but a significant difference was evident between the responses of the participants who answered the URL listed on paper fliers placed in employee break rooms and cafeterias and the responses of the individuals who answered an electronic invitation.

The final assumption was that the Supervisor Leadership Communication Inventory (SLCI) was a valid and reliable instrument in the area of supervisor leadership communication and employee performance was proven. The instrument was shown to have high reliability in previous studies (Rouse, 2009a). In the current study, an analysis was conducted to verify the reliability of the SLCI items.

The supervisor leadership and communication constructs had high reliability while the employee performance and organizational outcome measures had acceptable reliability. The SLCI's overall Cronbach's alpha was .82. The findings indicated the measures were sufficiently reliable for conducting the statistical analysis.

Research Question #1

A purpose of the mixed-methods study was to discover relationships between supervisor leadership and employee performance. Research Question 1 asked, What

relationship, if any, exists between senior leaders' leadership and employees' performance. The H_{1O} stated there is no significant correlation between supervisor leadership and employee performance within one USCIS directorate. The H_{1A} stated there is a significant correlation between supervisor leadership and employees' performance within one USCIS directorate.

Quantitative responses indicated that supervisors' leadership was significantly correlated ($r = .63, p = .001$) with employee performance. High levels of supervisor leadership were associated with high employee performance, and low supervisor leadership was significantly associated with low employee performance.

The results aligned with conclusions in previous studies that supervisors' leadership affects their employees' performance (Bernerth, 2007; Kerfoot, 2007; Major et al., 2007). Supervisor leadership includes employee motivation, commitment, encouragement, integrity, fair management, creativity, professional development, and employee empowerment (Partnership for Public Service, 2007). Grindley (2009) noted the Federal Government's supervisors and leaders had the responsibility to reestablish a sense of pride into government employees, to create incentives for motivation and commitment, and to encourage employees.

Colbert et al. (2008) stated supervisor leadership was the basic act of engaging others to follow by including reciprocal strategies, trust, and employee engagement. Lunney (2009) stated employees who were fully engaged had higher opinions of their supervisors' abilities while employees with lower engagement had less favorable opinions of their supervisors' abilities. Bohn and Grafton (2002) and Brodsky and Newell (2009) showed a strong correlation between supervisor leadership and employee

performance. Within DHS, correlations of leadership and employee performance were found in studies from the Ballenstedt (2009), Isley (P. Isley, personal communication, March 17, 2008), Rosenberg (2009a, 2009c), Partnership for Public Service (2007), USMSPB (2008), and the current study.

Research Question #2

Research Question 2 asked, What relationship, if any, exists between senior leaders' communication and employees' performance. The H_{1O} stated there is no significant correlation between supervisor communication and employee performance within one USCIS directorate. The H_{1A} stated there is a significant correlation between supervisor communication and employees' performance within one USCIS directorate.

Quantitative responses indicated supervisors' communication was significantly correlated ($r = .62, p = .001$) with employee performance. High levels of supervisor communication were associated with high employee performance, and low supervisor communication was significantly associated with low employee performance.

Such results aligned with conclusions in previous studies that supervisors' communication affects their employees' performances (Dunnigan, 2008; Hargie et al., 2002; Hindi et al., 2004; Madlock, 2008a, 2008b; Pandey & Garnett, 2006). Hindi et al. defined effective leadership communication as a measurable element that included listening to and encouraging employee input to accomplish organizational goals. Bohn and Grafton (2002) stated that, when leaders communicated effectively, employee performance improved, and when leaders communicated ineffectively, employee performance declined. Hindi et al. reported that, within Fortune 200 companies,

ineffective communication was expensive for organizations and created the need for formal training to decrease duplicative paperwork and incorrect emails.

Lussier and Achua (2001) determined a positive relationship between communication and leadership performance, and Madlock (2008a, 2008b) also determined communication satisfaction was linked to employee satisfaction. Major et al. (2007) reported employees perceived supervisors with lack of communication skills negatively. Employees placed a higher value on people-focused communicators than on leaders who communicated less effectively but had higher technical skills. Within DHS, correlations of supervisory and leadership communication and employee performance were found in studies from U.S. Office of Inspector General (DHS, 2009c), Partnership for Public Service (2007), TSA (2007), USCIS (P. Isley, personal communication, March 17, 2008), and the current study.

Research Question #3

Research Question 3 asked, How, if at all, can leaders improve employee performance within USCIS? The question was open ended and, though responses were qualitative, they neatly fit into an a priori system of themes by the Best Places to Work in Federal Government (Partnership for Public Service, 2007). Themes and responses included (a) effective leadership (56%), (b) performance-based rewards and advancement (15%), (c) teamwork (10%), (d) strategic management (6%), (e) employee skills/mission match (1%), and (f) other (12%). The category of other was divided into subcategories that included (a) provide more training (71%), (b) nothing can/should be done (12%), (c) leave the agency (12%), and (d) remove the union (5%).

According to the USOPM's Handbook (2001), employee performance is defined as distinct from productivity and includes employee morale and job satisfaction (O'Connor, 2006). Kerfoot (2007) determined that, if supervisors and leaders were engaged, their employees were more likely to be engaged.

O'Connor (2006) stated low employee morale was not a problem with motivation but with a lack of job certainty and mission support failure. To improve employee morale and employee performance, supervisors should communicate more about the employees' position within the organization's overall mission and assist with training opportunities and other strategies to address skill deficiencies. Major et al. (2007) determined relationships between supervisors and employees were one of the critical elements for positive employee morale and performance. Colbert et al. (2008) found that, when supervisors exhibited a positive influence by motivation, inspiration, and commitment to concern for employees' intellectual opportunities and professional needs employees' morale increased, and employees were more engaged in the organizations' vision, mission, strategies, and goals.

Within DHS (2009c), low performance levels were found in studies from U.S. Office of Inspector General where DHS employees' morale had been low since its creation in 2003, TSA studies where training programs were offered to improve employee confidence and performance (Rosenberg, 2009a, 2009b), studies in the USMSPB (2008) where results showed highly rated employees were four times as likely to leave organizations if they were not engaged, and in the current study supporting that employee performance could be improved by effective communication, effective leadership, and communications training for supervisors and leaders.

General Comments

A post hoc manner was used to gather the comments and suggestions. The results included (a) providing better training and education for managers and supervisors; (b) everything is bad, you cannot fix it; (c) everything is okay and should not be fixed; (d) better hiring practice to obtain quality supervisors and managers; (e) conflict of making production numbers as opposed to providing quality services; (f) USCIS sends its employees too many emails; (g) listening to employees more would increase morale; (h) emphasis on individual developments plans; and (i) easier to navigate website for USCIS employees and customers.

The comments in the current study support findings in the 2008 TSA study that training of supervisors and leaders within the organization as well as employee development training were important. Ensuring quality supervisors are hired and trained to model fair, inclusive, transparent leadership behaviors is equally important (DHS, 2009c). Dunnigan (2008), Friel (2009), Hindi et al. (2004), Madlock (2008a, 2008b), and Rosenberg (2009a, 2009b) obtained findings supporting the current study results with regard to ineffective communication. Unclear, irregular, and miscommunications through electronic mail negatively affect employees' and organizational performance. Conversely, timely distribution of critical information, ongoing exchanges between employees, supervisors, and leaders help built trust and camaraderie between employees and leaders, control stressful situations, and demonstrate professionalism and tact.

Implications

General Leadership

The study results have broad significance for general leadership. Leadership implications of the current study results are (a) there is a proven correlation between supervisory and leader communication and employee and organization performance; (b) employee engagement, including employee morale and job satisfaction, is directly tied to supervisory relationship, communication, and leadership; and (c) employee performance can be improved with increased supervisor leadership, increased supervisor leadership, and training within both areas. Training for supervisors and leaders was included in the responses to one open-ended question (i.e., How can leaders improve employee performance?) and in the general comments and suggestions section. Relationships and communication with supervisors were two of the primary elements for being satisfied with or leaving an organization (Partnership for Public Service, 2007; USMSPB, 2008).

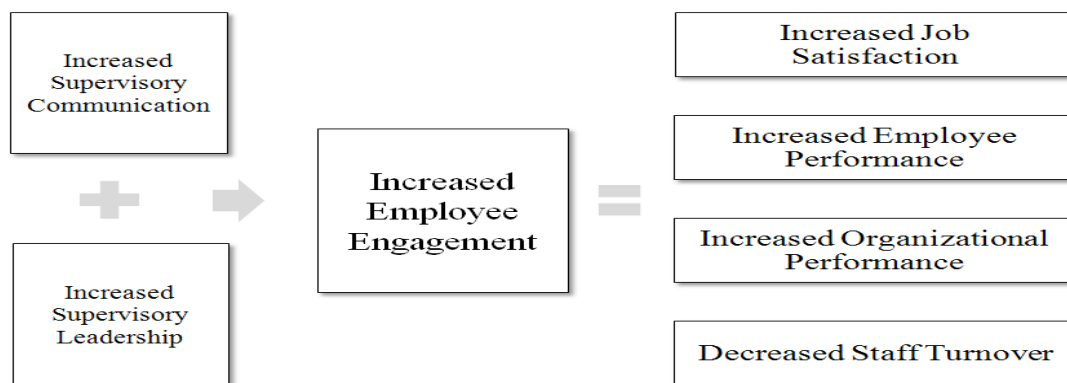


Figure 23. Correlation between supervisor leadership, communication, and employee/organizational performance.

USCIS Leadership

Quantitative responses in the current study indicate field employees had consistently lower perceptions of supervisors than employees located in headquarters. The statistical comparison of the means of both headquarters and field showed highly significant differences. The participants included approximately 80% from the field and 20% from headquarters, a similar distribution as in the current USCIS employee population of 87% field employees and 13% headquarters employees (USCIS, personal communication, July 18, 2009). The qualitative responses were similar to responses that midlevel managers' perceptions of supervisors' communication differed significantly from the perceptions of frontline employees (Rouse, 2009a).

Other gaps were evident in perceptions between field employees and employees at headquarters. Based on the current study findings, USCIS senior leaders should be aware they have a higher perception of their leadership and communications skills than people in the field. As senior leaders within USCIS create communication strategies, they should remember that what they consider sufficient in headquarters was not considered sufficient in field offices.

The DHS agency known as USCIS consists of 230 offices where staff adjudicates over 6 million applications and petitions and creates over 4 million secure immigration documents annually (USCIS, 2007a, 2007b). Within 4 years since the creation of USCIS and DHS, DHS lost 72% of its executives to retirement and to attrition (i.e., executives leaving the department) (USMSPB, 2008). During the same timeframe, one USCIS directorate had an 89% turnover with 24 out of 27 senior leaders leaving the directorate (DHS, 2009b). Added to the large turnover already experienced and a potential turnover

of 90% of SES and 60% of GS employees by 2016, leaders at USCIS should work toward increasing employee engagement of the current and future workforce while actively recruiting new employees from a shrinking global workforce. An increase in employee engagement results in an increase in employee and organizational performance (USMSPB, 2008).

Recommendations

Recommendation #1

Based on findings in the current study, staff at the directorate studied should replicate the study with a directorate-sponsored survey. Results should be analyzed to determine whether the areas of concern on a USCIS sponsored survey are similar to the results discovered within the current study. If the replicated study validates the current study, corrective measures should be implemented to increase supervisor leadership and communication in order to increase employee and organizational performance. As this directorate has the majority of the USCIS staff (72%), corrective measures created from findings at this directorate-wide study could easily be implemented agency wide.

Written comments from the participants of the current study indicated the survey was short, taking less than 10 minutes to complete, easy to understand, and timely in content. The participants who took the study were interested in the results and mentioned the survey was relevant for the current state of affairs in the agency. The responses to the survey aligned with responses to the Federal Human Capital Survey and the 2008 USMSPB study (DHS, 2008, 2009a; USMSPB, 2008).

Recommendation #2

The majority of the participants' responses of the current study fell within the theoretical background for the survey from *Laws of Communication: The Intersection Where Leadership Meets Employee Performance* yellow zone of the two-dimensional, red/yellow/green traffic light grid. The yellow zone listed inconsistent supervisor leadership and behaviors (Schuttler, 2009). Verbal comments from USCIS employees who refused to take the survey because of fear of a negative impact to them further validated the existence of the yellow zone within USCIS.

Approval for the study from an associate deputy director within USCIS and approval of the data collection method by the Ethics Officer within the USCIS Office of Chief Counsel did not prevent many people from refusing to participate or forward the survey to colleagues within USCIS. Several employees stated they feared they would get into trouble with local management, even with headquarters' approval. Such statements indicate a significant gap between communications and perceptions of senior leaders from headquarters and employees in the field. TSA is another DHS component whose participants stated that local leaders felt empowered to do what they wanted despite headquarters directives and policies (DHS, 2009c).

Senior leaders within USCIS should acknowledge an existing relationship and communication gap between people who worked within headquarters and people who worked in field offices. Field employee had different perceptions of senior leadership than middle managers and executives who worked within Washington, DC. To increase employee morale and performance, leaders must communicate to their employees that their jobs are of critical importance to the mission of the agency and define how they fit

within their goals (Colbert, 2008; Major, et al, 2007; O'Connor (2006). Targeted relationship building, assessments in communication and leadership, and training for all levels of leaders -- supervisors, managers and executives -- should be implemented immediately to address the gap between headquarters leadership and field employee perceptions and performance.

Recommendation #3

Supervisor leadership and communication skills are increasingly important in organizations (Dunnigan, 2008). Researchers have shown a correlation between supervisory behaviors and employee performance in many studies, but research within the Federal Government is limited. The Obama administration promised transparency within the executive branch, making the year 2009 an opportune time to study the 2.7 million federal employees (Brodsky & Newell, 2009; Herbert, 2009).

Scholars and students should conduct additional studies within federal, state, and local governments as well as within private and public organizations to determine a better understanding of leadership and leader communication behaviors and their impact on employee and organizational performance. Longitudinal studies (annual or bi-annual), grounded in theory should track performance over time with special attention paid to the demographic data collection to ensure a clearer understanding of the studies throughout a wider audience base. Phenomenological studies should investigate the impact on leadership and leader communication on employee and organizational performance with the phenomena of the large exodus of the Baby-Boomers (those born 1940 – 1964) and the large entry of Generation Y (those born 1980 or afterwards) into the workforce (Dunnigan, 2009).

Summary

The purpose of the current study was to confirm findings in previous studies of relationships between leadership, supervisor communication, employee performance, and organizational performance (Ballenstedt, 2009; Partnership for Public Service, 2007, 2008; USMSPB, 2008). Recommendation #1 based on the current study findings is to replicate the current study within the directorate studied to validate the findings with a directorate-sponsored survey. The second recommendation is to conduct an agency-wide assessment in communication and leadership, targeted relationship building, and training for all levels of USCIS leaders. The third recommendation includes a suggestion for further research within other government agencies and private organizations. The recommendations for further research will add to the body of leadership, communication, employee performance and organizational outcomes knowledge.

If senior leaders and supervisors increase their leadership and communication knowledge and skills, they can increase employee and organizational performance. By developing both sides of the two-dimensional grid, leaders are more likely to be able to move their agencies and organizations from the yellow zone to the green zone. Within the green zone, employees feel valued and become self-directed. Within the green zone, employees “are responsible for performance improvement,” can “modify goals as conditions change,” and “are champions of change” (Schuttler, 2009, p. 14). Employees who feel valued and have higher morale are more likely to feel more engaged in their organizations and are more likely to give higher rating to their performance and their organization’s performance (Brodsky & Newell, 2009; USMSPB, 2008).

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APPENDIX A: LETTER OF COLLABORATION

UNIVERSITY OF PHOENIX
LETTER OF COLLABORATION AMONG INSTITUTIONS

Date: January 8, 2009

To: Office of the Provost/Institutional Review Board
University of Phoenix

This letter acknowledges that Department of Homeland Security, United States Citizenship and Immigration Services, Domestic Operations directorate is collaborating with Sheila Embry enrolled in the Doctor of Management in Organizational Leadership program at the School of Advanced Studies at University of Phoenix in conducting the proposed research. We understand the purpose of this research is to determine the effectiveness of supervisory communication upon employee performance and will be conducted under the supervision of Dr. Richard Schuttler.

This project will be an integral part of our institution/agency and will be conducted as a collaborative effort and will be part of our curriculum/research/data/service delivery model.

Sincerely,



Debra Rogers, Deputy Director
Domestic Operations, USCIS

APPENDIX B: INFORMED CONSENT FORM

UNIVERSITY OF PHOENIX
Informed Consent: Participants 18 years of age and older

I am a student at the University of Phoenix working on a doctoral degree in business administration. I am conducting a research study entitled "Understanding Employee Performance: A Mixed Method Study of Leadership Communication at Department of Homeland Security." The purpose of this study is to examine the relationship between leadership communication and employee performance. This mixed-methods study will use an online survey to permit individuals to respond to a questionnaire.

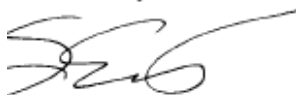
The survey will be conducted through a secured online site, which will prompt you to answer a questionnaire. You may withdraw from the survey, if necessary, at any time.

Your participation in this study is voluntary. The results of the research study may be published but no organization or individual names will be used and your results will be maintained in confidence. In this study, there are no risks to you. The study will not require that you share any identifying information. The website is a private, independent one. It is not located within the DHS system. Therefore, responses are available only to the principle researcher listed below. Aggregated results will be shared with DOMO; however, identity of responses will remain confidential.

I believe there is a profound value in studying how leader and organizational communication affects employee performance. By completing this survey, you can assist in pointing out strengths and weaknesses within the USCIS Domestic Operations communication structure. I also believe the results of this study can assist other leaders in evaluating and improving leader and organizational communication.

If you have any questions concerning the research study, please call me at 202-272-0920. If you have any questions, comments, or complaints about participating in the study, you may also contact my faculty advisor, Dr. Richard Schuttler at RSchuttler@email.phoenix.edu.

Sincerely,



Sheila Embry
May 15, 2009

"By signing this form I acknowledge that I understand the nature of the study, the potential risks to me as a participant, and the means by which my identity will be kept confidential. My signature on this form also indicates that I am 18 years old or older and that I give my permission to voluntarily serve as a participant in the study described."

- I CONSENT** – Use this as my electronic signature consenting to the information above
- I do NOT CONSENT.**

APPENDIX C: PERMISSION TO USE AN EXISTING SURVEY

February 28, 2009

Dr. Ruby A. Rouse
Organizational Troubleshooter, LLC
15319 Rompel Trail
San Antonio, Texas 78232

Thank you for your request for permission to use the Supervisor Leadership Communication Inventory (SLCI) in your doctoral dissertation research study at the University of Phoenix. The instrument is copyright protected by its authors, Dr. Ruby A. Rouse and Dr. Richard S. Schuttler. As indicated in the attached document, Dr. Schuttler has granted approval for Dr. Rouse, as the primary author of the SLCI, to authorize permission to use the instrument in lieu of both signatures.

We are willing to grant you a one-time permission to reproduce the SLCI at no cost with the following understanding:

- You will use the SLCI only for your doctoral research study and will not sell or use it with any compensated management/curriculum development activities.
- You will include copyright notification information on all copies of the instrument, whether on paper or electronic.
- After removal all identifying information about participants, you will provide us with an Excel file containing your SLCI data. The spreadsheet will be sent at the conclusion of the data collection phase of your study. Your data may be aggregated and analyzed with information collected in prior SLCI research. Results from the analyses of aggregated data may be submitted for publication.
- You will provide one copy of your approved dissertation upon the completion of your study.
- Upon completion of your doctoral dissertation, you will provide feedback about the value of the SLCI to your study as well as how it assisted in the completion of your doctoral dissertation.
- Duplication and/or distribution of the SLCI (in whole or in any part), or any related material provided by *Organizational Troubleshooter, LLC*, beyond your doctoral dissertation work will be in violation of copyright law.

If these are acceptable terms and conditions, please indicate so by signing one copy of this agreement and returning the original to us at the above address.

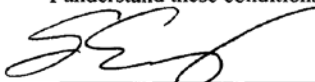
Best wishes with your study!

Sincerely,



Ruby A. Rouse, Ph.D.

I understand these conditions and agree to abide by these terms and conditions.



SHEILA EMBRY

February 28, 2009
Date

Address: 2111 Jefferson Davis Highway, 1119 South Crystal Plaza
Address: Arlington, VA 22202
Phone Number: 571-309-2807 Fax: 202-272-1542

Expected date of completion of research study: September 2009

APPENDIX D: SUPERVISOR LEADERSHIP & COMMUNICATION INVENTORY
& DEMOGRAPHIC QUESTIONS

DEMOGRAPHICS:

A. Choose which office best aligns where you work.

ICS (Information and Customer Service)

Eastern Call Center

Western Call Center

IDP (Integrated Document Production)

OFO (Office of Field Operations)

NBC (National Benefits Center)

Northeast Region (or district office or application support center

located in Northeast Region)

Southeast Region (or district office or application support center

located in Southeast Region)

Central Region (or district office or application support center

located in Central Region)

Western Region (or district office or application support center

located in Western Region)

OPD (Operations Planning Division)

OPS (Office of Policy & Strategy)

RPM (Regulations, Policy Management)

SCOPS (Service Center Operations)

CSC (California Service Center)

NSC (Nebraska Service Center)

TSC (Texas Service Center)

VSC (Vermont Service Center)

Other

B. Choose which ranking you have currently or which one is closest to yours.

GS 5-7

GS 9-11

GS-12

GS-13

GS-14

GS-15

SES

Other

C. How many people do you supervise?

0

1-10

11-25

26- 50

51-99

100 or more

Please think about YOUR DIVISION, then indicate your level of agreement with each statement.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Uncertain	Agree	Strongly Agree
Employees receive FORMAL feedback (i.e., semi-annual and annual performance appraisals).	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Employees receive INFORMAL feedback (i.e., face-to-face, telephone, email, etc.).	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Employees receive TIMELY feedback delivered at an appropriate time and place that helps improve performance.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Employees receive POSITIVE, ENCOURAGING feedback that helps improve performance.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Outstanding performers are formally recognized and rewarded with positive feedback in front of their peers.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Employees are open to change.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Supervisors carefully consider both short and long-term consequences before making any changes.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Employee productivity is high.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Supervisors 'walk-the-talk' by delivering messages consistent with their actions.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Supervisors are consistently willing to be involved with work and subordinates.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Please think about YOUR DIVISION, then indicate your level of agreement with each statement.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Uncertain	Agree	Strongly Agree
Employees put forth effort but still struggle.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Employees do not collaborate.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Employees disregard policies and procedures.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Supervisors treat their employees like children.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Supervisors are shortsighted in their planning.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Supervisors micro-manage employees.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Employee productivity is low.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Supervisors treat individual employees differently and often show favoritism to some.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Supervisors review employees' work looking for mistakes.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Employees lack discipline.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Supervisors frequently change strategic directions.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Supervisors look over employees' shoulders to monitor their work.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Please think about YOUR DIVISION, then indicate your level of agreement with each statement.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Uncertain	Agree	Strongly Agree
Decision-making is based on supervisors' personal opinions.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Instead of working to avoid difficulties, supervisors tend to act only after problems 'flare up.'	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Employees lack clear performance objectives.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Supervisors make quick rather than well thought-out decisions.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Employees do not share information with each other.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Employees flounder without a clear direction.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Supervisors tend to use a 'seat of the pants' approach when making decisions.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Employees request additional training and/or guidance from supervisors.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Employees struggle to perform required tasks.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Supervisors 'fight fires' rather than proactively working to prevent problems.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Inconsistent leadership undermines employee performance.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Supervisors are haphazard in their strategic planning, floundering without a clear purpose.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Please think about YOUR DIVISION, then indicate your level of agreement with each statement.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Uncertain	Agree	Strongly Agree
Employees are innovative and imaginative problem-solvers for the organization.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Performance is high at all levels in the organization.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Supervisors communicate effectively.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Employees adapt to feedback from their supervisors.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Supervisors are inconsistent role models for employees to emulate.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Mentoring/coaching helps employees learn from supervisors' experience.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The work culture reflects openness and trust.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Employee morale is high.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Supervisors are effective role models for employees to emulate.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Supervisors depend on 'gut instinct' when making decisions rather than collaborating with others.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Supervisors deal with issues after significant problems occur and decisions have been made.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Supervisors do not clearly explain processes, policies, and procedures to employees.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Please think about YOUR DIVISION, then indicate your level of agreement with each statement.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Uncertain	Agree	Strongly Agree
Supervisors are open to new ideas from employees.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Employees are open to new ideas.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Employees communicate effectively.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Mentoring/coaching is routine in the organization.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Employees are empowered to make decisions that result in performance improvements.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Supervisors put their personal self-interests ahead of the best interests of the organization.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Employees do only what they are told to do.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

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OPEN-ENDED QUESTIONS:

How, if at all, can leaders improve communication?

How, if at all, can leaders improve employee performance?

Comments and suggestions:

APPENDIX E: CODEBOOK OF VARIABLES

Demographic Name	Demographics - 32 Items	Coding
Location	Choose which office answer best aligns where you work.	1 = ICS 2 = Eastern Call Center 3 = Western Call Center 4 = IDP 5 = OFO 6 = NBC 7 = Northeast Region 8 = Southeast Region 9 = Central Region 10 = Western Region 11 = OPM 12 = RPM 13 = SCOPS 14 = CSC 15 = NSC 16 = TSC 17 = VSC 18 = Other
Rank	Choose which ranking you have currently or which one is closest to yours.	1 = GS5-7 2 = GS9-11 3 = GS12 4 = GS13 5 = GS14 6 = GS15 7 = SES 8 = Other 0 = 0
Number Supervised	How many people do you supervise?	1 = 1-10 2 = 11-25 3 = 26-50 4 = 51-99 5 = 100 or more

Variable Name	Supervisor Communication – 18 Items	Coding
RSComm1-R *	Supervisors micro-manage employees.	
RSComm2-R *	Supervisors look over employees' shoulders to monitor their work.	
RSComm3-R *	Supervisors frequently change strategic directions.	
YSComm1-R *	Employees lack clear performance objectives.	
YSComm2-R *	Supervisors do not clearly explain processes, policies, and procedures to employees.	
YSComm3-R *	Supervisors are inconsistent role models for employees to emulate.	
YSComm4-R *	Supervisors treat individual employees differently and often show favoritism to some.	
YSComm5-R *	Supervisors are haphazard in their strategic planning, floundering without a clear purpose.	
GSComm1	Supervisors communicate effectively.	
GSComm2	Supervisors are open to new ideas from employees.	
GSComm3	Employees receive formal feedback (i.e., semi-annual and annual performance appraisals).	
GSComm4	Employees receive informal feedback (i.e., face-to-face, telephone, email, etc.).	
GSComm5	Employees receive timely feedback delivered at an appropriate time and place that helps improve performance.	
GSComm6	Employees receive positive, encouraging feedback that helps improve performance.	
GSComm7	Outstanding performers are formally recognized and rewarded with positive feedback in front of their peers.	
GSComm8	Mentoring/coaching is routine in the organization.	
GSComm9	Supervisors are effective role models for employees to emulate.	
GSComm10	Supervisors 'walk-the-talk' by delivering messages consistent with their actions.	

1 = Strongly disagree
2 = Disagree
3 = Uncertain
4 = Agree
5 = Strongly agree

* Reverse scored

Construct Name	Supervisor Communication	Coding
RSCommAverage	Red - Supervisor Communication – Average	$(RSComm1-Recoded + RSComm2-Recoded + RSComm3-Recoded)/3$
YSCommAverage	Yellow - Supervisor Communication – Average	$(YSComm1-Recoded + YSComm2-Recoded + YSComm3-Recoded + YSComm4-Recoded + YSComm5-Recoded)/5$
GSCommAverage	Green - Supervisor Communication - Average	$(GSComm1 + GSComm2 + GSComm3 + GSComm4 + GSComm5 + GSComm6 + GSComm7 + GSComm8 + GSComm9 + GSComm10)/10$
SCommAverage	Supervisor Communication - Average	$(RSCommAverage + YSCommAverage + GSCommAverage)/3$

Variable Name	Supervisor Leadership - 15 Items	Coding
RSLeadership1-R *	Supervisors are shortsighted in their planning.	
RSLeadership2-R *	Supervisors carefully consider both short and long-term consequences before making any changes.	
RSLeadership3-R *	Supervisors review employees' work looking for mistakes.	
RSLeadership4-R *	Supervisors treat their employees like children.	
YSLeadership1-R *	Supervisors deal with issues after significant problems occur and decisions have been made.	
YSLeadership2-R *	Supervisors 'fight fires' rather than proactively working to prevent problems.	
YSLeadership3-R *	Instead of working to avoid difficulties, supervisors tend to act only after problems 'flare up.'	
YSLeadership4-R *	Supervisors put their personal self-interests ahead of the best interests of the organization.	
YSLeadership5-R *	Inconsistent leadership undermines employee performance.	
YSLeadership6-R *	Supervisors make quick rather than well thought-out decisions.	
YSLeadership7-R *	Supervisors tend to use a 'seat of the pants' approach when making decisions.	
YSLeadership8-R *	Supervisors depend on 'gut instinct' when making decisions rather than collaborating with others.	
YSLeadership9-R *	Decision-making is based on supervisors' personal opinions.	
GSLeadership1	Supervisors are consistently willing to be involved with work and subordinates.	
GSLeadership2	Mentoring/coaching helps employees learn from supervisors' experience.	

1 = Strongly disagree
2 = Disagree
3 = Uncertain
4 = Agree
5 = Strongly agree

* Reverse scored

Construct Name	Supervisor Leadership	Coding
RSLeadershipAverage	Red - Supervisor Leadership - Average	$(RSLeadership1-Recoded + RSLeadership2-Recoded + RSLeadership3-Recoded + RSLeadership4-Recoded)/4$
YSLeadershipAverage	Yellow - Supervisor Leadership - Average	$(YSLeadership1-Recoded + YSLeadership2-Recoded + YSLeadership3-Recoded + YSLeadership4-Recoded + YSLeadership5-Recoded + YSLeadership6-Recoded + YSLeadership7-Recoded + YSLeadership8-Recoded + YSLeadership9-Recoded)/9$
GSLeadershipAverage	Green - Supervisor Leadership - Average	$(GSLeadership1 + GSLeadership2)/2$
SLeadershipAverage	Supervisor Leadership - Average	$(RSLeadershipAverage + YSLeadershipAverage + GSLeadershipAverage)/3$
SupervisorAverage	Supervisor Average	$(SCommAverage + SLeadershipAverage)/2$

Variable Name	Employee Performance - 15 Items	Coding
REmployee1-R *	Employees lack discipline.	
REmployee2-R *	Employees disregard policies and procedures.	
REmployee3-R *	Employees do only what they are told to do.	
YEmployee1-R *	Employees do not share information with each other.	
YEmployee2-R *	Employees do not collaborate.	
YEmployee3-R *	Employees flounder without a clear direction.	
YEmployee4-R *	Employees struggle to perform required tasks.	
YEmployee5-R *	Employees put forth effort but still struggle.	1 = Strongly disagree
YEmployee6-R *	Employees request additional training and/or guidance from supervisors.	2 = Disagree
YEmployee7-R *	Employees adapt to feedback from their supervisors.	3 = Uncertain
GEmployee1	Employees communicate effectively.	4 = Agree
GEmployee2	Employees are innovative and imaginative problem-solvers for the organization.	5 = Strongly agree
GEmployee3	Employees are open to new ideas.	
GEmployee4	Employees are open to change.	
GEmployee5	Employees are empowered to make decisions that result in performance improvements.	
* Reverse scored		

Construct Name	Employee Performance	Coding
REmployeeAverage	Red - Employee - Average	$(REmployee1-Recoded + REmployee2-Recoded + REmployee3-Recoded)/3$
YEmployeeAverage	Yellow - Employee - Average	$(YEmployee1-Recoded + YEmployee2-Recoded + YEmployee3-Recoded + YEmployee4-Recoded + YEmployee5-Recoded + YEmployee6-Recoded + YEmployee7-Recoded)/7$
GSEmployeeAverage	Green - Employee - Average	$(GEmployee1 + GEmployee2 + GEmployee3 + GEmployee4 + GEmployee5)/5$
EmployeeAverage	Employee Average	$(REmployeeAverage + YEmployeeAverage + GEmployeeAverage)/3$

Variable Name	Organizational Outcomes - 5 items	Coding
Outcome1-R *	Employee productivity is low.	
Outcome2	Employee productivity is high.	
Outcome3	Performance is high at all levels in the organization.	1 = Strongly disagree 2 = Disagree 3 = Uncertain 4 = Agree 5 = Strongly agree
Outcome4	Employee morale is high.	
Outcome5	The work culture reflects openness and trust.	

* Reverse scored

Construct Name	Organizational Outcomes	Coding
OutcomeAverage	Outcome - Average	(Outcome1-Recoded + Outcome2 + Outcome3 + Outcome4 + Outcome5)/5
Composite	Organization's Overall Score	(SupervisorAverage + EmployeeAverage + OutcomeAverage)/3

Variable	Open-ended Questions	Coding
Communication recommendations	How, if at all, can leaders improve communication?	Open-ended (up to 4000 characters)
Employee performance recommendations	How, if at all, can leaders improve employee performance?	Open-ended (up to 4000 characters)
Other comments	Comments and suggestions:	Open-ended (up to 4000 characters)