A Method of Determining the Typology of Surveyed Employee Groups

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Agenda

- Background on confidentiality and workplace climate surveys
- VA All Employee Survey (AES)
- NCOD Workgroup Mapping project
- Results of mapping project
- Next steps

Confidentiality and Employee Satisfaction Surveys

- Confidentiality concerns are a primary reason for non-response in employee satisfaction surveys
  - Especially for employees with negative opinions, which can lead to overly-positive results[1]
  - Employees may fear being identified and targeted for their opinions[2]

- Reporting results from employee satisfaction surveys requires balancing act:
  - Employees' perceptions and satisfaction based on immediate environment
    - Thus, results must be reported at very local level to be relevant
  - Yet local-level focus can threaten employee perceptions of confidentiality
    - Workplace climate and satisfaction surveys inform local actions, and thus depend on high participation levels

- How to balance the need for useful data with employee confidentiality?

[1]Borg et al. (2008).
[2]Thompson et al. (2003)

VA All Employee Survey

- VA All Employee Survey (AES)
  - Confidential annual census of over 300K VA employees (participation ~60%)
  - Established in 1997 as "One VA Survey", became annual in 2006
  - Measures employee satisfaction and organizational climate
  - Serves as a feedback tool from employees to leadership, as well as resource for action planning and tracking performance benchmarks
  - Results available to all VA employees

- Managed by National Center for Organization Development (NCOD)
  - Internal consulting office on organizational behavior and strategies of optimizing workforce performance within VA

VA All Employee Survey

Theme	Theme Description and Supporting Key Concepts	Scale
Employee Satisfaction	Satisfaction with amount of work, supervision, promotion, praise, etc.; perceived customer satisfaction, and overall satisfaction.	Very Dissatisfied – Very Satisfied (1-5)
Organizational Climate	Engagement and commitment, fairness in performance rating, and balanced workload and job control.	Strongly Disagree - Strongly Agree (1-5)
High-Performing Workplace	Employee skill development and competency, innovation, goal-oriented, planning/evaluation, psychological safety, and access to resources.	Strongly Disagree - Strongly Agree (1-5)
General Workgroup Perceptions	Work-family balance, ethics, accountability, collaboration, safety climate/resources, and communication, among others.	Strongly Disagree - Strongly Agree (1-5)
Supervisory Behaviors	Clear communication, favoritism, advocacy, effective employee-supervisor working relationship, recognizing staff accomplishments, and fostering psychological safety.	Strongly Disagree - Strongly Agree (1-5)
Burnout	Maslach Burnout Inventory scale: exhaustion, depersonalization, and personal achievement.	(Frequency) Never - Every Day (0-6)
Turnover	Employees' general intentions and plans (next 6 months) to leave their current job.	Strongly Disagree - Strongly Agree (1-5)
AES Application	Employee perceptions of whether AES results are shared within the workgroup and used to inform changes in practices and business.	Yes/No

Satisfaction Scale: 1: Very Dissatisfied, 2: Dissatisfied, 3: Neither Satisfied nor Dissatisfied, 4: Satisfied, 5: Very Satisfied.
Agreement Scale: 1: Strongly Disagree, 2: Disagree, 3: Neither Agree nor Disagree, 4: Agree, 5: Strongly Agree
Frequency Scale: 0: Never, 1: A few times a year or less, 2: Once a month or less, 3: A few times a week, 4: Once a week, 5: A few times a week, 6: Every day.

AES Workgroups

- To protect confidentiality, employees are divided ("mapped") into "workgroups"
  - Usually between 10-50 employees
  - Developed by "AES Coordinator" at each VA facility
    - Chosen by facility director
    - Coordinator role is ancillary to employee's main job function
  - NCOD assists with mapping through "AES Companions"
  - Lowest level of AES results available to VA employees

- Each coordinator maps workgroups for his/her facility differently
  - Allows Coordinators to customize how his/her facility receives results to best inform action planning
  - Also dependent on facility-specific traits (e.g. number of total employees, specialty facilities) and facility leaders' approach to action planning

AES Workgroups

- Whereas each Coordinator maps workgroups differently, there is also <u>no centralized tracking</u> of how workgroups are conceptualized and assembled at different facilities

- This creates limits for the ability to compare and summarize results, particularly at levels larger than facility:
  - The effect of how workgroups are formed on AES results
  - How results compare for similar workgroups across facilities
  - Whether there are stable, predictive relationships between aspects of employee perceptions

NCOD Workgroup Mapping Project

- Goals of project:
  - Systematically examine the mapping logic and types of mapping in the VA
  - Assess impact of these on AES results

- Consisted of 2 phases:
  1. Qualitative – interviews with select AES Coordinators
  2. Quantitative – analysis of 2012 AES data from workgroups associated with above Coordinators

Qualitative Inquiry of AES Coordinators

- Qualitative Inquiry:
  - 14 Coordinators selected by Companions as most engaged and involved of the Coordinators they work with
  - Each Coordinator was invited to 30-minute interview
  - Interview questions focused on:
    - Overall approach to mapping and main priorities that determined how they mapped
    - Key characteristics used to group employees (supervisor, service line, occupation, etc.)
    - Whether they utilized pre-established groupings (T&L, organizational chart)
  - Interviewer also referenced each Coordinator's 2013 workgroup map and asked these questions about specific workgroups

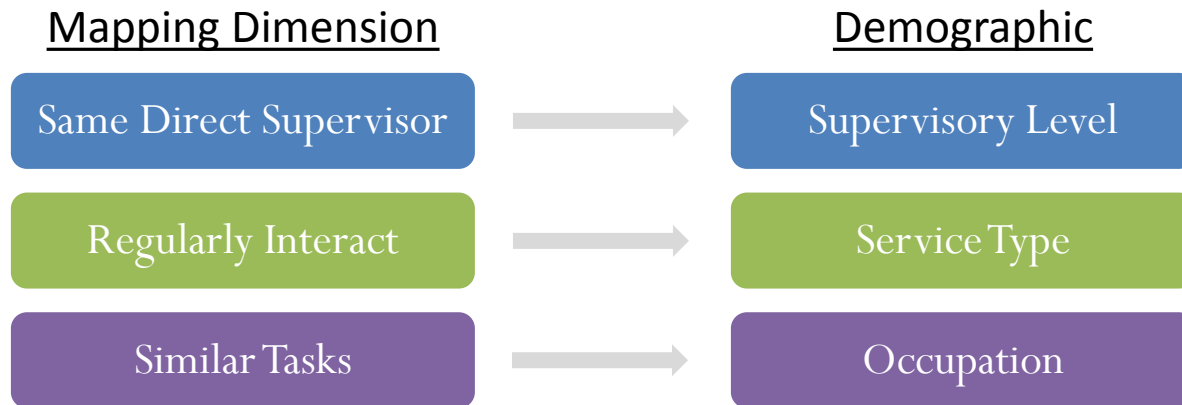# Qualitative Inquiry of AES Coordinators

- Qualitative analysis uncovered five key dimensions that Coordinators used to organize their mapping:

Dimension	Description
Same Direct Supervisor	Most employees in workgroup have their performance rated by the same supervisor. (Yes/No)
Regular Interaction	Most employees in workgroup regularly interact as a part of their work. (Yes/No)
Similar Tasks	Most employees in workgroup generally perform similar work tasks. (Yes/No)
Physical Location	Most employees in workgroup work primarily in the same physical location. (Yes/No)
Type of Work	Most employees in workgroup perform similar functions within the facility (e.g. patient care, facility management, administration). (Yes/No)

- Coordinators used one or more of these dimensions to organize their workgroups
- Interviewed an additional 13 Coordinators to verify these dimensions on additional workgroup data

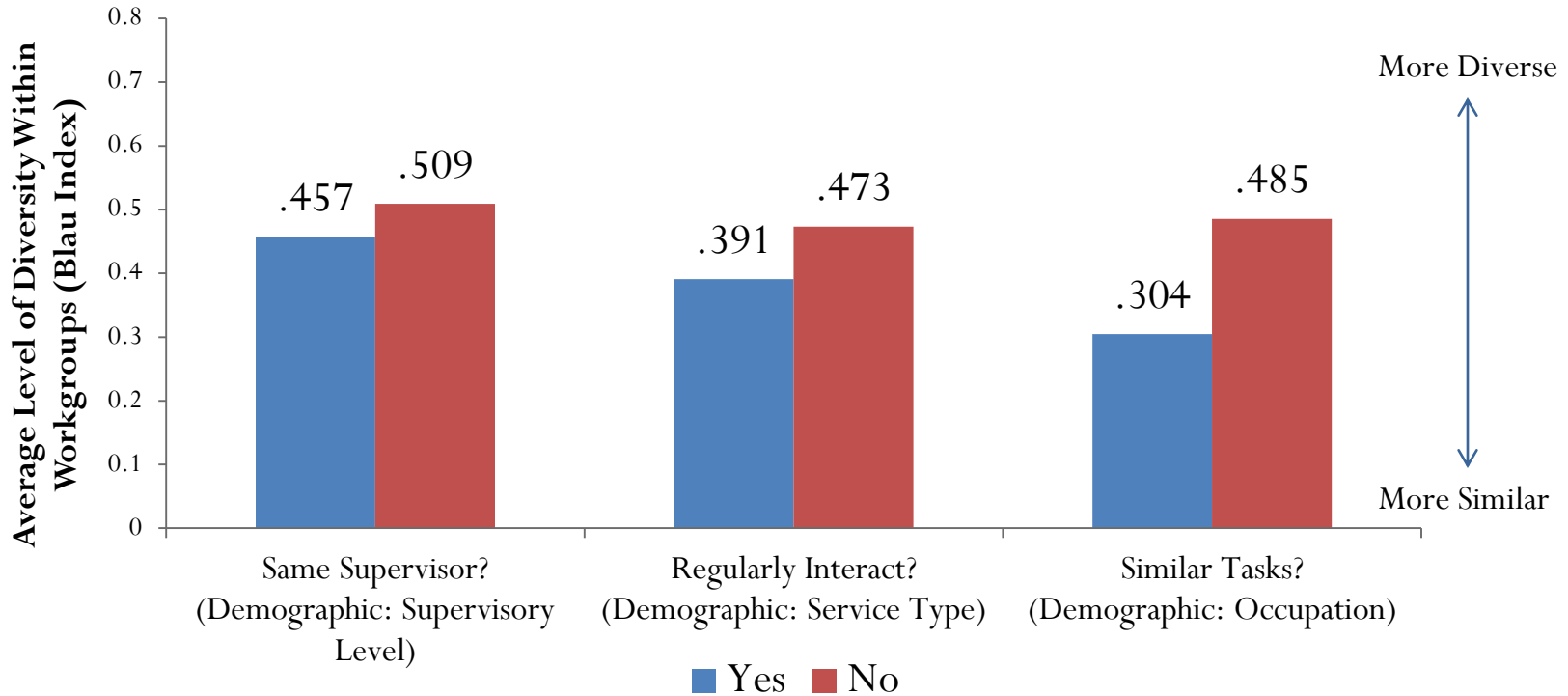# Quantitative Analysis of Workgroup Mapping Data

- First step: verifying the accuracy of mapping dimensions by analyzing demographic composition of workgroups
  - Identified demographic measures associated with key mapping dimensions:

Mapping Dimension		Demographic
Same Direct Supervisor	→	Supervisory Level
Regularly Interact	→	Service Type
Similar Tasks	→	Occupation

- Used a diversity measure (Blau Index) to determine whether employees in a workgroup were more *similar* (low Blau score) or more *diverse* (high Blau score) on a given demographic
  - Assumption: employees in workgroups mapped based on a certain dimension should be more similar than those not mapped on that dimension

Quantitative Analysis of Workgroup Mapping Data

- Mapping dimensions were verified, as the homogenous ("Yes") workgroups were more similar on the relevant demographic than the non-homogenous ("No") workgroups for each dimension

Quantitative Analysis of Workgroup Mapping Data

- Second step: determining impact of mapping dimensions on AES results from the examined groups
  - Compared level of variation in scores between homogenous and non-homogenous groups
  - Assumption: homogenous groups should have less variation in scores than non-homogenous groups on relevant questions
    - Example: Employees in workgroups that were organized by having the same supervisor should be more "unified" in their ratings of the supervisor's performance; they may be likely to respond more similarly to these questions than in groups where employees have different supervisors

- Results were inconclusive—which may reflect insufficient statistical power
  - No consistent pattern of differences in variation, in our examined groups
  - However, this result is based only on 27 workgroups associated with interviewees
    - Unable to separate other workgroups based on mapping dimensions
    - Results may differ when all workgroups are taken into account

Next Steps

- We have established and confirmed the 5 basic dimensions or "types" that appear to characterize all the workgroups created through local mapping

- Potential next steps: inviting all AES Coordinators to note the type of their workgroups when they map the groups (i.e.)
  - Simple response options (Yes/No) allow for easy, quick classification by Coordinators
  - Can incorporate this into existing training and walkthroughs for Coordinators
  - Preserves the Coordinators' ability to customize the mapping at their facilities
  - Adds the ability to compare similarly mapped groups, within and across facilities

- Benefits of classifying all AES workgroups

  - Ability to show important relationships within data that are sensitive to workgroup types
    - Example: Relationship between supervisory support and other employee perceptions (civility, psychological safety, organizational commitment, etc.) likely differ for different mapped workgroup types
  - Assist with national-level action planning by clarifying key associations between elements of the data: e.g., drivers of job satisfaction within specific group types
  - Support local-level action planning by allowing facility directors to compare their workgroups with similar workgroups in other facilities

For more information, please contact VHA National Center for Organization Development (NCOD)

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