

**The Construct of Substance Abuse Enabling
Applied to Poor Performance Management:
How Managers Deal With Poor Performing Employees**

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to examine the attributions and responses that managers make to poor performance using the construct of enabling from the field of substance abuse. Approximately 200 government and 55 non-government managers responded to a three-part questionnaire exploring managers' enabling behaviors, attribution of the causes of poor performance for a current or previous poor performer, and demographics of the managers and their selected poor performing subordinate.

The research data showed that there was no appreciable relationship between the managers' demographics and the managers' enabling or non-enabling behaviors toward the poor performer. The data also indicated that managers attribute poor performance to internal attributions instead of external attributions. Furthermore, there was no evidence from the data that attribution played a part in which enabling or non-enabling behavior the managers exhibited toward the poor performer.

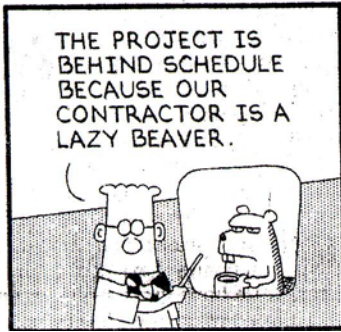
Analysis of the data showed that managers chose the enabling behavior of micromanaging the poor performer by providing close, daily support; eliminating the employee's responsibilities by extending the deadline; and transferring the problem by transferring the employee to another office. Additionally, some managers indicated that they would reward the poor performance by doing things such as giving ratings commensurate with the norm of the office, before avoiding the poor performance by reducing the requirements of the task.

Managers also chose non-enabling behaviors. When combined with enabling behaviors, non-enabling behaviors were the second choice, after micromanaging and before eliminating the employees' responsibilities. The top three non-enabling

behaviors used by the managers were giving an oral warning, consulting with management, and giving a written warning.

The research not only showed that managers exhibited enabling and non-enabling behaviors towards poor performing employees, it clearly indicated that a continuum of enabling behavior exists. At one end of the continuum are non-enabling behaviors in which managers require poor performers to accept the consequences for their poor performance. At the opposite end of the continuum are behaviors in which managers do not attempt to do anything about either the performance issue or the poor performer.

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Dedicated to:
My Beloved Sister
Gwender Laryne Magee
March 9, 1957 – July 25, 2002
A Beautiful Gift Returned

**A Special Thank You To:
Dennis Fitzgerald**

Dennis is a friend, a mentor, and a very special person who has been a part of my professional career for many years. He endured the fire and the rain of many narrow-minded individuals and allowed me the opportunity to fail...in order to succeed, not just academically, but professionally. There are not many managers who would have done so much for one person just because it was the right thing to do. For this and much, much, more...I THANK YOU!

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CHAPTER ONE INTRODUCTION

At some point during a manager's career he or she will have to deal with a poor performing employee (Perry, 1998, Miner 1963, Liden et al., 1999, O'Reilly & Weitz, 1980). This inevitable task can be overwhelming for some managers. Several studies regarding the managing of poor employee performance have been conducted and discussed in the research literature. These studies include dealing with poor performance in groups (Liden et al., 1999), understanding how poor performance affects productivity in organizations (Mitchell & O'Reilly, 1983), and dealing with the cost of poor performing employees (Heerwagen, Beach, & Mitchell, 1985).

How managers respond, or should respond, to poor performance in the workplace has also been discussed extensively in the literature (Balsler & Stern, Schwartz, 1992, Gavin, Green, & Fairhurst, 1995, O'Reilly & Weitz, 1980, Miner, 1963, Mitchell & O'Reilly, 1983). A common theme shared by several of the researchers, in terms of performance, was the assessment of the cause of the performance behavior. Attribution Theory discusses what managers look at when assessing poor performance. Once a manager has determined what he or she believed was the cause of the poor performance, some type of action was usually taken based on the perceived cause of the problem. It is the behavior that some managers' display when dealing with a poor performer that resembles the behaviors demonstrated by individuals who are described as enablers in the substance abuse literature.

CONCEPT OF ENABLING

In an effort to explain some of the complex behaviors experienced and displayed by individuals close to substance abusers, behavioral scientists needed to come up with a new construct. This construct became known as 'enabling,' which is defined as behaviors that unwittingly allow or encourage alcohol and other drug related problems to continue or progress without having the substance abuser experience the consequences of his or her behavior (Landry 1994, Doweiko 1999, Potter-Effron 1986,

Nelson 1985, Roche 1990, Nuechterlein 1993, Johnson 1986, Johnson Institute 1982, 1987). Thomas, Yoshioka, & Ager (1996) in their study on alcohol abuse and spouse enabling, discuss two classes of enabling:

- Direct Enabling – the behavior that acts upon the substance abuser’s actual drinking behavior.
 - Type I – accelerates potential increasers of the substance abuser’s drinking – i.e. stating it’s okay to drink, attending social functions with the substance abuser where drinking will occur, offering a substance abuser a drink.
 - Type II – decelerates potential decreases of the substance abuser’s drinking – i.e. cleaning up the substance abuser’s alcohol related messes, avoiding social contact, calling in sick for the substance abuser.
- Indirect Enabling – the behavior that acts upon the substance abuser’s nondrinking behavior.
 - Type III – decelerates potential increasers of the substance abuser’s nondrinking behavior – i.e. spouse persuades substance abuser to go to the movie instead of Alcohol Anonymous meeting and interferes with a hobby the drinker only does when sober.
 - Type IV – accelerates potential decreaseers of nondrinking behavior – spouse increases the level of stress, anxiety, frustration, and conflict in the substance abuser’s life, which precipitates the substance abuser’s return to drinking.

Behaviors exhibited by the enabler may vary from person to person. However, some of the more commonly noted behaviors are (1) being dishonest (e.g. calling the substance abuser’s employer stating that he/she is ill when in fact, he/she is suffering from a hangover); (2) avoiding the substance abuser; (3) encouraging the substance abuser to drink/drug by supplying him/her with alcohol or drugs; and (4) taking on additional work/house responsibilities of the substance abuser.(Ellis, Minerney, Diguiseppe, & Yeager, Treadway, Johnson Institute 1982, Thomas, Yoshioka, & Ager 1996, Blair, 1987).

The Johnson Institute (1991), known for its work in alcohol and drug abuse, describes enabling as the “ideas, feelings, attitudes, and behaviors” (p. 7) that unintentionally continue to foster drug related problems or make matters worse by not allowing the substance abuser to deal with the consequences of his/her addiction. The Johnson Institute (1991) believes enabling is also seen in the workplace and, as a result, tends to create a culture that makes it easier for drug related problems to progress.

ATTRIBUTION THEORY

Attribution theory is a concept used within organizations to look at how managers assess the performance of poor performers. Attribution theory is defined as the labeling of causes of behavior that supervisors attach to an employee's performance (Heerwagen et al, 1985, Dobbins, 1985, Liden et al., 1999, Moser, 1992, Fedor & Rowland, 1989, Klaas & Wheeler, 1990). The main components of attribution theory have been the characterization of the cause of the behavior as either internal factors or external factors (Thomson & Martinko, 1995, Wiswell & Lawrence, 1994, Fedor & Rowland, 1989, Moser, 1992, Mitchell & O'Reilly, 1983, Liden et al., 1999, Dobbins, 1985, Heerwagen et al., 1985, Balser & Stern, 1999, Latham et al., 1980, Klaas & Wheeler, 1990). Internal factors relate specifically to the person's ability and effort--causes that the individual has control over. External factors, on the other hand, relate specifically to the environment, task difficulty, material availability, and bad luck. These causes, according to the authors, are influences that the individual did not have any control over (Mitchell & O'Reilly, 1983, Fedor & Rowland, 1989, Liden et al., 1999, Heerwagen et al., 1985). Figure 1.1 shows the model developed by Mitchell and Wood (1980) to illustrate this concept.

The literature suggests that managers tend to be more lenient toward those employees whose poor performance was attributed to external factors. Conversely, managers tend to be more punitive on poor performing employees when the problem was attributed to internal factors (Liden et al., 1999, Dobbins, 1985, Heerwagen, 1985). This might have been, as Moser (1992) suggested, because individuals whose

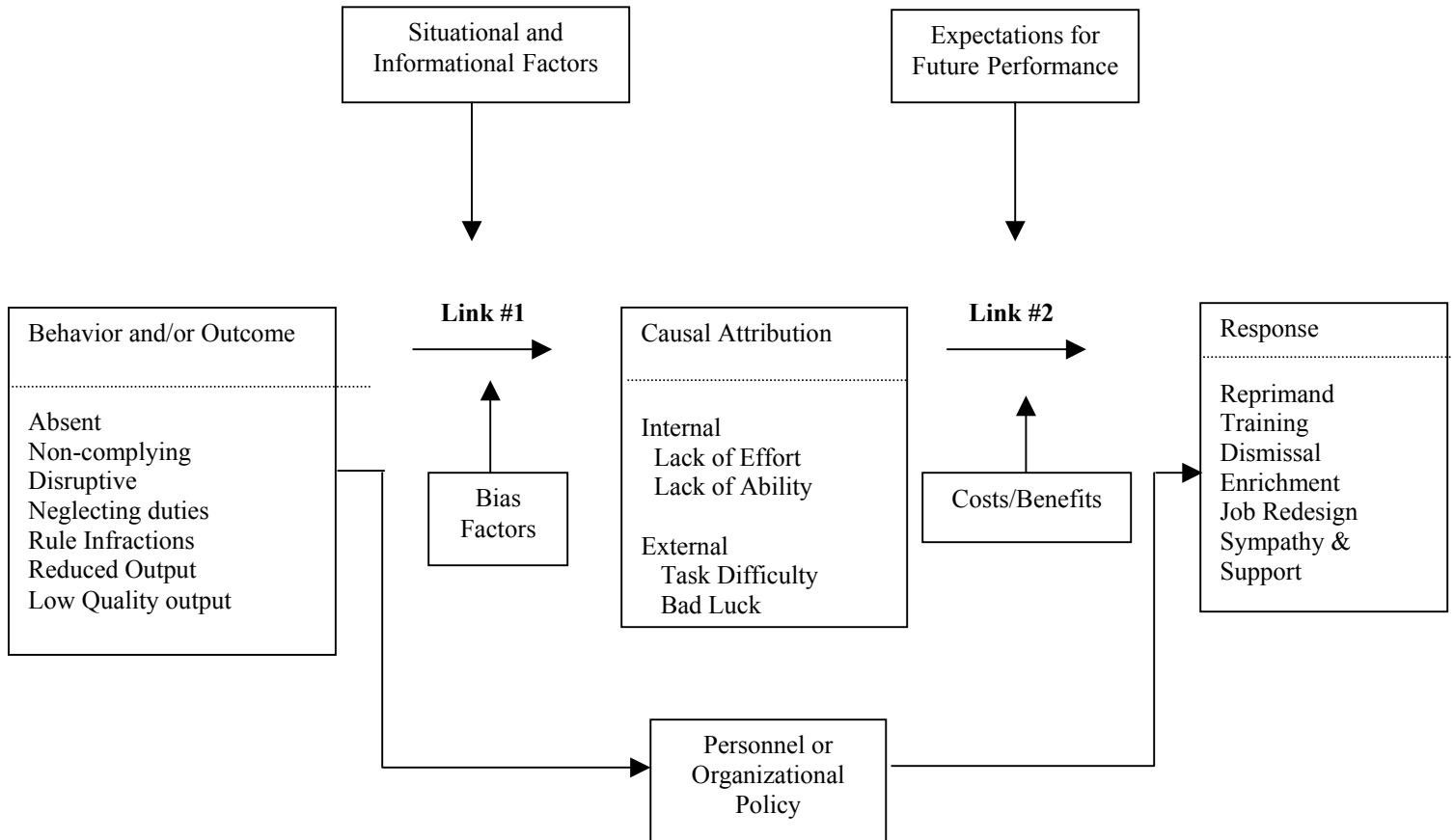


Figure 1.1
An Attributional Model of a Leader's Response to a Subordinate's Performance

Reprinted from Organizational Behavior and Human Performance, 25, Mitchell, T.R., & Wood, R.E., Supervisor's responses to subordinate poor performance: A test of an attributional model, 123-138, 1980, with permission from Elsevier Science.

performance was attributed to internal factors “were in effect, being blamed for their failures” just as those whose performance was attributed to external factors, “were being excused from blame” (p. 6).

In some cases, the attribution assessed could be dependent on the gender of the manager. Dobbins (1985), in his study of the Effects of Gender in the Attributional Model of Leadership, discovered that male leaders were harder on employees when they felt the poor performance was internal. However, female leaders treated employees the same in both internal and external attributions.

PROBLEM STATEMENT

After reviewing some of the characteristics of substance abuse enabling, and the actions of some managers dealing with poor performance, it appeared that some of the same behaviors were seen in both areas. For instance, in both areas, an enabler may want to protect the individual in question thereby allowing no consequences for the behavior – drinking or poor performance. Alternatively, enablers may ignore the problem in hopes that it will go away or cover up specific behaviors by taking on the substance abuser’s or poor performer’s responsibilities.

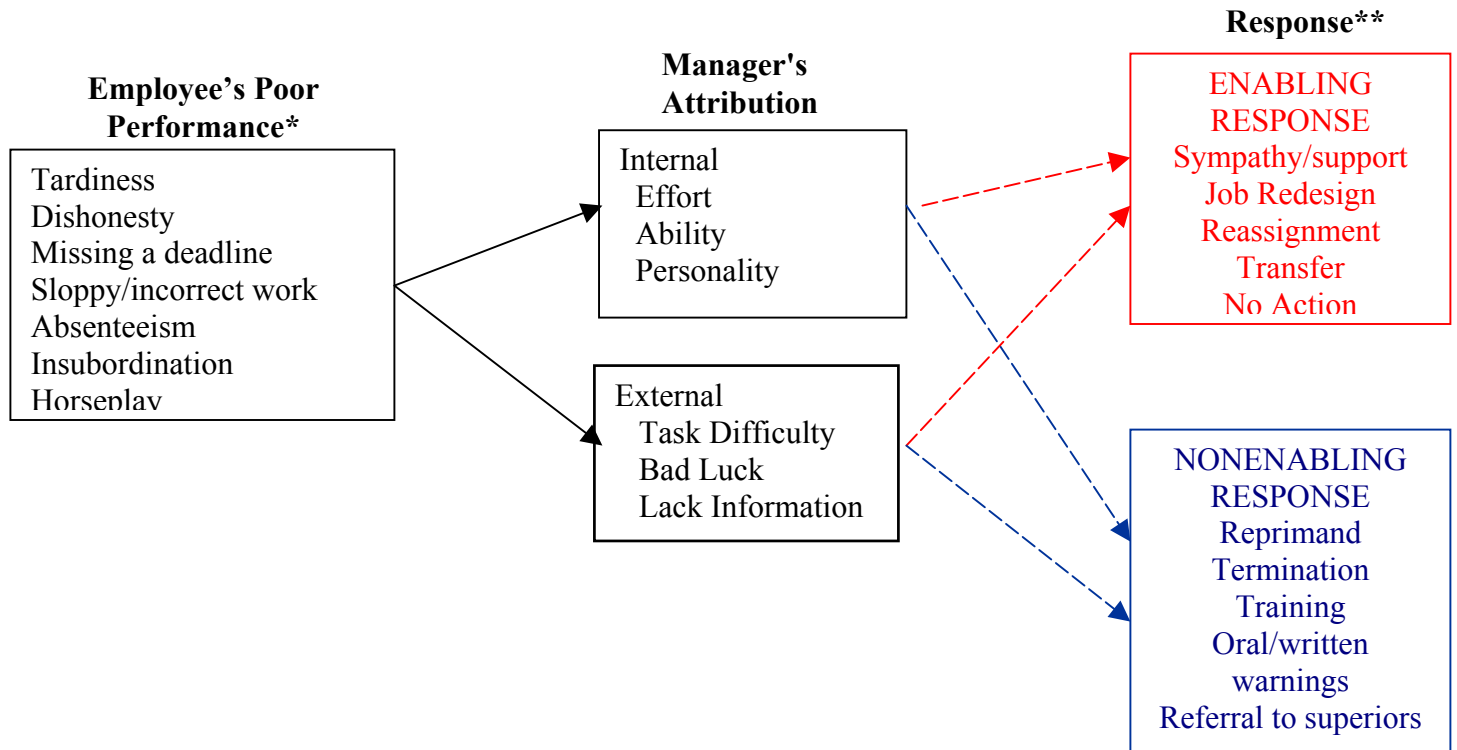
As stated previously, there is ample research on the theoretical concept of enabling as it relates to substance abuse. There is also a great deal of research on the management of poor performers and how managers assess the causes of poor performance. However, to date, the two concepts are not coupled in the literature. The concept of enabling is not connected to the field of performance management in the workplace. Clinicians, as well as the renowned Johnson Institute, address the interaction of supervisors and managers with substance abusers; however, the discussion of managers who enable poor performance, when that performance has nothing to do with substance abuse, has yet to be explored. Research was needed to investigate if the concept of substance abuse enabling is useful for explaining how some managers’ deal with poor performance. If this could be demonstrated, it is possible that future research into the interventions used in the substance abuse discipline to curtail enabling could be utilized in the workplace.

HYPOTHESIZED RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ATTRIBUTION THEORY AND ENABLING

As Figure 1.1 indicates, once the cause of the performance has been assessed, managers use a wide range of disciplinary actions to deal with the poor performance. Some managers feel that a punitive approach is required, such as dismissal (Green et al., 1986, Freed 2000, Miner & Brewer, 1976). Others believe that cooperation and interaction with the employee (Gavin et al., 1998) instead of punishment (Mitchell & O'Reilly, 1983), is the best way to approach poor performers.

Additionally, Stoeberl & Schniederjans (1981) suggested that ineffective employees are sometimes kept in place and not dealt with in order to maintain adequate minority representation or to respect the seniority of an employee. Their study also demonstrated that the primary action taken by upper management for dealing with an ineffective subordinate was to transfer them out without addressing the poor performance.

Whether a manager determines that the cause of the behavior is internal or external, allowing the poor performance to continue can be considered as *enabling of poor performance*. Adapting Mitchell and Wood's (1980) model, Figure 1.2 shows that after the assessment, the type of action taken could be categorized into an enabling or nonenabling response. The foundation of my position is that there are certain characteristic behaviors of substance abuse enablers that are also seen in managers who are dealing with poor performing employees. Table 1.1 provides a few parallel examples.



An employee's poor performance forces a manager to assess the cause of the poor performance. The manager's attribution determines the response.

* See Appendix A for complete list

**See Appendix D for complete list

Figure 1.2
Hypothesized Relationship Between a Manager's Attribution of Employees' Poor Performance and an Enabling/Nonenabling Response

Table 1.1
Substance Abuse and Workplace Enabling Behavior.

SUBSTANCE ABUSE ENABLING BEHAVIORS	WORKPLACE ENABLING BEHAVIORS
Avoidance of the person	Avoid/Ignore the poor performance
Taking on household responsibilities	Manager does the work or assigns it to others
Dishonest about the addiction	Not informing management of the problem
Acceptance of the problem	Accepting excuses/rationalizing the problem
Cleaning up alcohol related messes	Covering up the poor performance

Therefore, the conceptual framework for my research was to overlay the construct of substance abuse enabling with the theory of attribution within the field of performance management. In addition, I used a modified framework of Thomas et al.'s (1996) study to show that the response some managers take falls into one of two categories:

- Direct Enabling – the manager's behavior that responds directly to the employee's poor performance:
 - *Rewarding* the poor performance through positive performance appraisals and bonuses.
 - *Hiding* the poor performance by covering up the problem or eliminating the employee's responsibilities.
- Indirect Enabling – the manager's behavior that indirectly responds to the employee's poor performance:
 - *Denying* the poor performance by accepting excuses/broken promises or rationalizing the problem.
 - *Aggravating* the situation by berating/criticizing the employee or setting the employee up to fail.

PURPOSE STATEMENT

The purpose of this research was twofold: (a) To explore how much of the definition and characteristics of enabling in substance abuse relates to the managers' behavior towards poor performers in the workplace, and (b) Managers' attribution of the causes of poor employee performance and how that attribution reflects their response to the poor performer. As stated previously, managers attribute poor performance to either internal or external causes. This research will add to the field of attribution theory by looking at the response to the poor performance that managers make (enabling or nonenabling) based on their attribution (internal or external). In addition, demographics of the managers were examined to assess whether they played a role in determining the attribution and the response. Finally, the poor performers and managers' demographics were analyzed to see if there is a relationship to the manager's attribution decision and enabling/nonenabling response.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. What is the relationship between manager's self-reported enabling behaviors and their attribution of the causes for poor employee performance? In particular, what types of enabling responses are associated with managers who attribute poor performance to:
 - a. Internal causes?
 - b. External causes?
2. What is the relationship between certain demographic characteristics of managers and their self-reported enabling behaviors? In particular, what types of enabling responses are associated with managers who differ in terms of:
 - a. Years of experience as a supervisor/manager
 - b. Age
 - c. Nationality/Race
 - d. Sex

3. To what extent can manager's attributions and demographic characteristics be used to predict direct and indirect enabling behaviors?

Additionally, I explored the possibility of the interrelationship between the demographics of the manager and the demographics of a current or previous poor performer. As mentioned previously, Dobbins (1985) looked at the effects of gender when managers make attributional assessments. There was also a possibility that other demographics could contribute to the manager's assessment when looking at a subordinate's poor performance.

DELIMITATION

In addition to attribution, behavioral scientists use the concept of co-dependency in the study of substance abuse. Although there is still some discussion over the actual definition of codependency, the generally accepted definition includes some form of psychological, emotional, behavioral, and sometimes physical actions of an individual who is in a relationship with a substance abuser (Landry 1994, Doweiko 1999, Johnson 1997, Nuechterlein 1993). More recently, Rotunda and Doman (2001) suggested that the term codependency not be used, and that research should begin "employing a behavior-systems framework to more efficaciously study enabling behaviors and complex family member responses to addiction" (p. 268).

For the purposes of this research, I used the terms enabling and enablers, those who help to continue the process of addiction, as the theoretical construct. However, codependency will be discussed in Chapter Two to clarify the distinction between the two concepts. In addition, this research will not address the interventions necessary for stopping the enabling of poor performance. Although some intervention research exists in regards to substance abuse, in an effort to narrow the scope of this research, it was not addressed.

SUMMARY

There is an abundance of literature regarding attribution theory and the concept of substance abuse enabling. Chapter two contains a review of what has been reported in the literature about those two topics. The literature review also touches on what some believe to be enabling's counterpart – codependency. Chapter Three describes the method, procedures, and analyses that were used to show the interrelationship between attribution theory and managers' enabling behaviors. The results are presented in Chapter four. Chapter five contains a summary of those results along with my conclusions and implications for managers and organizations, and future research.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

As mentioned in Chapter One, managers will eventually have to deal with at least one poor performing employee during their careers (Perry, 1998, Miner 1963, Liden et al., 1999, O'Reilly & Weitz, 1980). In some cases, managers feel that one of the hardest challenges of their job is the handling of performance problems (OPM 2002). The literature is rich with studies regarding the managing of poor employee performance. Studies dealing with poor performance in groups (Liden et. al., 1999), how poor performance affects productivity in organizations (Mitchell & O'Reilly, 1983), and the cost of dealing with poor performing employees (Heerwagen, Beach, & Mitchell, 1985) are some of the performance issues discussed in the literature.

Also, a great deal of literature discusses how managers deal with poor performance. One way of handling poor performance is to assess the causes of the performance behavior. The literature on Attribution Theory discusses managers' criterion for assessing poor performance. Once managers determine what they believe was the cause of the poor performance, some type of action was usually taken based on the cause of the problem. It is the behavior that some managers display when dealing with a poor performer that resembles the behaviors demonstrated by individuals who are described as enablers in the substance abuse literature.

The purpose of this chapter is to present the literature on the definitions of poor performance, the construct of attribution theory in the workplace, and the actions taken by managers once an assessment of the poor performance is made. In addition, a review of the literature regarding substance abuse enabling and the close relationship it has to the construct of codependency will be accomplished. Finally, this literature review will give examples of enabling of poor performance in the work place when the cause of the poor performance is not the result of substance abuse.

DEFINITION OF POOR PERFORMANCE

Poor performance has been defined in a variety of ways. Miner (1963) explained that in many organizations “Individual performance is characteristically judged or measured in terms of its contribution to the goals of the particular organization” (p. 3). In addition, he has suggested that, in a capitalist society such as the United States, the goal typically has been tied to profitability for the organization. Latham et al. (1980) agreed and stated that such things as “profits, costs, product quantity and quality, returns on investment, etc” (p.3) have measured employee productivity. Similarly, OPM, in discussing why performance issues need to be addressed, suggests that, “with staff cutbacks, it is critical that all employees produce, and ignoring poor performance by some staff can no longer be tolerated” (OPM 2003).

Mitchell and O'Reilly (1983) also tied performance to organizational goals in their quest to develop a model that exemplifies the process, which supervisors follow when handling poor performance, (see Figure 1.1). However, performance must not simply be tied to the bottom line. Miner (1963) and Mitchell & O'Reilly (1983) found that in most instances performance was linked to some type of unsatisfactory behavior that was below a particular set of standards. Miner (1963) suggested the following definition of ineffective performance: “A man who has failed if his performance is considered unsatisfactory either by his superiors or in terms of organizational standards” (p. 3). However, Mitchell and O'Reilly (1983) defined poor performance as “specific, agreed-upon deviations from expected behavior” (p. 205).

Similarly, when the Office of Personnel Management conducted a study in 1999 on poor performance of government employees, they also had difficulty defining poor performance. In order to have a “broad, common-sense definition of poor performance” (p. 6), the supervisor was asked to think of a poor performer as one that was a real disappointment and not pulling his or her weight. Also, supervisors were to think of an employee that they would only give modified work to, based on what they thought the employee could accomplish. Finally, poor performance has generally been described as an employee's failure to achieve agreed upon goals or milestones. For the purpose of this research, poor performance is defined as, “the failure of an employee to do the

job at an acceptable level...typically defined in terms of quality, quantity, or timeliness” (OPM 2002).

THE HANDLING OF POOR PERFORMANCE

As demonstrated above, the definition of poor performance can vary. Similarly, how supervisors deal with poor performing employees can vary as well. Balser and Stern (1999) conducted a study about managers who dealt with poor performing employees. A three-phase approach to the way supervisors' deal with poor performance was studied. In phase one, the manager determined that the employee was not performing to the standards set for him or her. Phase two consisted of an exchange of information between the manager and the employee on the performance issues. Phase three included the specific steps the manager took to remedy the poor performance. While the Balser and Stern study dealt primarily with the informal exchanges between supervisors and employees working through performance issues, the study confirmed that open communications between supervisors and employees is critical.

Additionally, Schwartz (1992) proposed two methods for handling poor performance. One, the employee reviews his or her behavior and determines what action needs to be taken - “the therapeutic approach” (p.11). Secondly, if the therapeutic approach did not work, the manager steps in and formally criticizes the employee. This action was called the “the punitive approach”(p.12).

Gavin et al. (1995) researched the effects of both a judicial approach and a problem-solving approach to poor performance. The judicial approach generally had some form of stern punitive punishment, whereas the problem-solving approach served to form some type of “interaction, cooperation, and non-punitive” (p. 209) punishment. In their longitudinal study using 182 undergraduates, Gavin et al. (1995) looked at control strategies for repeated poor performance issues in a bank environment. They hypothesized (p. 210):

When the performance problem is seen as more severe or the subordinate has lower typical performance, managers are more likely to use a judicial control strategy within an episode such that:

(a) the use of punitive corrective actions is more likely, (b) the use of threatening influence tactics is more likely, and (c) the use of reasoning influence tactics is less likely.

The study indicated that managers reviewed the performance history of the subordinate and were less likely to impose a severe punishment if the subordinate was typically an above average performer. However, if the poor performance persisted, the manager “might react with more punitive corrective actions” (p. 217). In another study, Green, Fairhurst & Snively (1986) studied eighty-four bank branch managers and their behavior in handling poor performance. They concluded “managers reported better resolution of the problems when more punitive control tactics were employed by them” (p. 7).

David H. Freed, President of Overlook Hospital in Summit, New Jersey, presented a very direct way of dealing with poor performing employees--fire them! He believed that the decision as to how to handle poor performers was analogous to the decision of whether a doctor should perform a tracheotomy. It was recommended to medical students not to hesitate--“If you’re thinking about doing a tracheotomy, do a tracheotomy” (Freed 2000 p. 45). By the same token, Freed believed that a poor performer should not be allowed to tarnish the rest of the workforce. After attempting to help the poor performer improve, Freed stated, “That person’s removal is the right thing to do and should be accomplished immediately” (p. 51). Steinmetz (1969) also stated that the effect of a poor-performing employee on the rest of the workforce could create further work problems and poor morale. Miner & Brewer (1976) concurred that releasing an employee was the “preferred solution to problems of performance failure” (p. 1001).

Along the same lines, O’Reilly and Weitz (1980) conducted a study of the use of warnings and dismissals in an effort by managers to deal with poor performance. Their questionnaire, answered by 141 retail sales managers, explored the following propositions (p. 470):

- 1a. Differences in perception of employee problems will be associated with variations in the use of sanctions.

1b. Differences in supervisor style facets will be associated with variations in the use of sanctions.

1c. Differences in the perception of employee problems will be associated with variations in supervisor style facets.

2. Supervisors who apply sanctions more frequently will have higher performing units than supervisors who apply sanctions less frequently.

They concluded (a) that managers dealt differently with employees depending on the manager's style of leadership, (b) and that the more sanctions used in the work group, the higher the performance. They also found that not using sanctions when necessary would cause continued poor performance. In contrast, Mitchell and O'Reilly (1983) suggested that the use of punishment was not recommended. In their view, punishment was considered a negative response and resulted merely in stopping the immediate behavior, not in solving the on-going problem of continued poor performance.

DEFINITION OF ATTRIBUTION

Mitchell and O'Reilly (1983) defined attribution as "the process of determining the causes of behavior." Moser (1992) defined it as "the assessment of responsibility." In organizations, attribution has been defined as the labeling of causes of behavior that supervisors attach to an employee's performance (Thomson & Martinko, 1995, Fedor & Rowland, 1989, Moser, 1992, Mitchell & O'Reilly, 1983, Liden et. al., 1999, Dobbins, 1985, Heerwagen et al., 1985).

Additionally, Attribution Theory has been defined as "people's naïve assumptions about the causes of their own behavior and the behavior of others" (Mitchell & O'Reilly, 1983, Latham, et al., 1980). Thomson and Martinko (1995) concurred and suggested "individuals act as naïve psychologists...explaining the relationship between causal reasoning (attributions), expectancies, behavior, affect, and outcomes" (p. 22). For this study, attribution is defined as the causes managers assign to the employee's poor performance.

ATTRIBUTION THEORY IN THE WORKPLACE

Attribution theory has been used within organizations to understand how managers assess the performance of poor performers (Heerwagen et al., 1985, Dobbins, 1985, Liden et al., 1999, Moser, 1992, Fedor & Rowland, 1989, Klaas & Wheeler, 1990). Attribution theory categorizes the cause of the behavior as either internal or external (Thomson & Martinko, 1995, Wiswell & Lawrence, 1994, Fedor & Rowland, 1989, Moser, 1992, Mitchell & O'Reilly, 1983, Liden et al., 1999, Dobbins, 1985, Heerwagen et al., 1985, Balser & Stern, 1999, Latham et al., 1980, Klaas & Wheeler, 1990). Internal factors relate specifically to the person's ability and effort, causes over which the individual had control. External factors, on the other hand, relate specifically to the environment, task difficulty, material availability, and bad luck. These causes, the authors believed, were influences over which the individual had no control (Mitchell & O'Reilly, 1983, Fedor & Rowland, 1989, Liden et al., 1999, Heerwagen et al. 1985). Additionally, Latham et al. (1980) and Mitchell & O'Reilly (1983) stated that the response the manager made to the poor performance (training, reprimand, etc.) was directly related to what the manager saw as the cause of the performance (ability, task difficulty, etc.)

The literature suggested that managers tended to be more lenient toward those employees whose poor performance was attributed to external factors. For example, Liden et al., (1999) stated "empirical research has consistently shown that external attributions are associated with less severe responses to poor performance, such as discussion of the problem or a verbal warning" (p. 837). Conversely, managers tend to be more punitive on poor performing employees when the problem was attributed to internal factors (Dobbins, 1985, Heerwagen, 1985). Liden et al., (1999) identified "Docking of pay, probation, or termination" as possible punitive actions. This might have been, as Moser (1992) suggested, because individuals whose performance was attributed to internal factors "were in effect, being blamed for their failures" (p.6), just as

those whose performance was attributed to external factors, “were being excused from blame” (p. 6).

Several authors stated that the information managers use to attribute the cause of poor performance can be placed in three categories – consistency, distinctiveness, and consensus (Moser, 1992, Fedor & Rowland, 1989, Latham et al., 1980, Mitchell, et. al 1981, Dobbins & Russell, 1986). In Moser’s 1992 study of *The Effect of Conflicting Information on Leader Attributions of Poor Performance*, he reviewed these three components, which were considered the principle of covariation, theorized by Kelley in 1967 (Mitchell, Green, & Wood, 1981, Dobbins & Russell, 1986):

1. Consistency (time/modality aspect) refers to the performance on the current task as compared to other tasks that are similar.
2. Distinctiveness (entity aspect) is an assessment of how unusual the performance on the current task is compared to performance on other tasks.
3. Consensus (person aspect) deals with the comparison of how well other employees vs. the focal person perform the present task (p. 6).

Fedor and Rowland (1989) defined consistency as performance in similar situations, distinctiveness as performance in dissimilar situations, and consensus as performance to a norm (p. 406). Moser (1992) and Fedor and Rowland (1989) believed that:

1. High consistency was demonstrated when performance was good on the current task, and on tasks that were similar in nature.
2. Low consistency/high distinctiveness was when the performance differed between tasks – i.e. the employee performed poorly on the current task, but generally performed well on other tasks.
3. Low distinctiveness would be attributed to an employee who performed the same with all types of task.
4. High consensus was for those employees who performed the same as their coworkers.
5. Low consensus was when an employee did not perform on the same level as his or her coworkers.

Based on these definitions, managers could determine if the poor performance should be attributed to internal factors or external factors. When a performance was high in consistency, low in distinctiveness, and low consensus, managers tended to attribute the performance to internal factors. Conversely, external factors were considered when performance was low in consistency, high in distinctiveness, and high consensus (Fedor & Rowland, 1989, Moser, 1992). Latham, et al., (1980) simplified the concept and stated that less distinctiveness equaled external attribution, more consistency equaled internal attribution, and lower consensus equaled internal attribution. Mitchell et al. (1981) gave the follow example to demonstrate the above:

Suppose you are a physician, and you have asked a nurse to administer some medication to one of your patients. You check back later in the day, and you find that the medication was not given. Upon further discussions with the nurse, the supervisor, and other involved parties, you discover that (1) this nurse has failed to administer the proper medication on other occasions (low distinctiveness), and (2) this nurse has had difficulty on other tasks such as charting or patient care (high consistency), and (3) none of the other nurses have failed to carry out a physicians' order in the last three months (low consensus). The nurse has performed poorly on this task before; he or she has performed poorly on other tasks, and no one else seems to have this difficulty. In this case, context or entity attributions are unlikely. The physician will most probably make a person attribution-the cause of the poor performance was some characteristic or trait of that particular nurse (e.g., lack of effort or ability) (p. 199).

Taking internal and external factors a step further, Dobbins & Russell (1986) conducted a study, *The Biasing Effects of Subordinate Likeableness on Leaders'*

Responses to Poor Performers, to determine if “(1) leaders will attribute poor performance more to internal factors when the subordinate is disliked than when the subordinate is liked” (p.761), and (2)“leaders will respond more punitively toward disliked poorly performing subordinates than toward liked poorly performing subordinates” (p. 762). In both laboratory and field studies, Dobbins & Russell concluded that attribution and punishment were directly related to whether the manager liked or disliked the subordinate.

In another study, *The Effects of Gender in the Attributional Model of Leadership*, Dobbins (1985) hypothesized that: (a) The action taken by managers against poorly performing employees will differ depending on the gender of the employee, (b) The actual reaction to poorly performing employees will differ depending on the gender of the manager. The study showed that male leaders were more likely to provide emotional support to both males and females, while female leaders tended to be more supportive of their female subordinates than of their male subordinates. When looking at internal versus external causes for poor performance, male leaders were harder on employees when they felt the poor performance was internal. However, women leaders treated employees the same in both internal and external attributions.

The literature clearly suggests that managers dealing with poor performers will go through a process of trying to determine what caused the poor performance. Managers may consider the employee’s overall work habits, consistency, distinctiveness, or consensus, to help them make an assessment. Additionally, managers look at the employee’s ability and effort, as well as, situational factors, bad luck and task difficulty to determine what action they will take regarding the poor performance.

CAUSES OF POOR PERFORMANCE

The literature on how managers assess and respond to poor performance also addressed some of the types or causes of ineffective performance. Robert Liden in his 1981 dissertation, *Contextual and Behavioral Factors Influencing Perceptions of Ineffective Performance and Managerial Responses*, documents several types of

performance problems from the Bureau of National Affairs (BNA) Editorial Staff's Grievance Guide (1978), Lawler (1976), Miner & Brewer (1976), and the study's pretest. Liden categorized the performance problems into four primary areas: Poor job attendance (Withdrawal), Insubordination, Misconduct (Disruptive Behavior), Poor Work (p. 7). Liden included disability under Poor Work because it was one of the performance issues mentioned by the BNA Grievance Guide, however, he considered disability a cause of poor performance, not a type. Appendix A shows the specific performance problems associated with each category.

Miner & Brewer (1976, p. 997-999) cited several strategic factors they consider contribute to ineffective performance. They included organizational factors such as lack of proper motivational environment and improper supervision; personal shortcomings like lack of motivation and chronic absenteeism; and outside influences such as government actions and social mores. Additional factors cited by Miner & Brewer can be found in Appendix B.

Mitchell and O'Reilly (1983) combined the causes from Steinmetz (1969) and Miner (1963) and identified fourteen causes and definitions for ineffective performance. Those causes include insufficient intellectual ability, alcoholism or drug addiction, family crises, and counterproductive work environment. Several causes and definitions cited by Mitchell & O'Reilly are located in Appendix C.

RESPONSE TO POOR PERFORMANCE

Liden (1981) discusses several courses of action available to a manager once the cause of the poor performance has been assessed. His list includes, increased supervision, referral to a specialist, termination, no action, transfer, and oral warnings (see Appendix for the complete list).

However, sometimes, and for different reasons, managers chose not to confront the employee, therefore, allowing the poor performance to continue. The literature cites several reasons why managers chose not to confront poor performance. Gavin et al. (1995) suggested that, "managers are initially reluctant to give negative feedback even

if the problem is perceived as severe” (p. 217). Miner and Brewer (1976) cited the cost of constant turnover, waiting for an ineffective employee to leave voluntarily, and poor public image for the company as reasons for it being easier to manage or control ineffective performance.

Stoeberl & Schniederjans (1981) conducted a study on why ineffective subordinates were retained. Approximately, 150 managers from lower, middle and upper levels of management were asked to choose from four reasons given as to why they allowed an ineffective subordinate to stay. The four reasons were: “nepotism or friendship; adequate representation with respect to the disadvantaged, seniority or past work contributions, and perceived personal failure by supervisors, if subordinate is dismissed” (p.73). They also identified four ways managers deal with poor performing employees: counseling, transfer employee out of the office, accomplish the work in spite of the employee, and leave the poor performance issue unresolved. The study demonstrated that the primary method used by upper management for dealing with an ineffective subordinate was to transfer them out. The behavior the manager exhibits, which allow this poor performance to continue, can be considered as *enabling of poor performance*.

DEFINITION OF ENABLING

The theoretical concept of enabling became a part of the substance abuse vocabulary of rehabilitation professionals during the late 1970’s (Doweiko 1999). Enabling has been described as behaviors that unwittingly allow or encourage problems to continue or progress without having the individual experience the consequences of his behavior (Landry et al., 1994, Doweiko, 1999, Potter-Effron, 1986, Roche, 1990, Nuechterlein, 1993, Johnson, 1986, Johnson Institute, 1979, 1982, 1987, 1991).

The Johnson Institute (1991), known for its work in alcohol and drug abuse, describes enabling as the, “ideas, feelings, attitudes, and behaviors” (p. 7) that unintentionally continues to foster drug related problems or make matters worse by not allowing the substance abuser to deal with the consequences of his/her addiction. Enabling is also used in family counseling and clinical interventions to describe anyone

who continues to shield an individual, usually a loved one, from experiencing the consequences of his problems (Roche 1990, Johnson 1997, Dunst et al. 1987, 1988). Holler (2001) describes enabling as the family's positive assisting of the abuser, which actually results in helping the dependency continue. He lists the following behaviors for enabling: "discouraging; stealing the power to do something; doing for someone what they can do on their own; and being too concerned with being a good friend and doing everything for somebody else" (2001). The person doing the enabling is called an enabler.

The term enabler refers to an individual who shields an abuser from the consequence of his actions and thereby allowing the addiction to progress (Landry 1994, Doweiko 1999, Potter-Effron 1986, Nelson 1985, Roche 1990, Nuechterlein 1993, Blair 1987, Johnson Institute 1982, 1987). An enabler is therefore someone whose actions protect the substance abuser from coming to terms with the consequences of their actions. Liepman, Nirenberg, Begin (1989) concurs that an enabler contributes and encourages the progression of alcoholism by not allowing the individual to suffer the painful consequences of his/her behavior. When referring to social workers, Levinson and Ashenberg-Straussner (1989) state that:

"The enabler refers to a person (or even an institution) caught up in the patient's process in such a way as to allow for the continuation and downhill progression of the disease of alcoholism...In essence, the enabler joins the alcoholic in covering up and denying the problem" (p. 14).

ENABLING BEHAVIORS

Enablers exhibit numerous enabling behaviors. For instance, a person who calls in sick for his/her spouse, when a hangover is the real reason, doesn't allow the spouse to suffer the consequences of the hangover. (Johnson Institute 1982, Thomas, Yoshioka, & Ager 1996, Blair 1987) Other behaviors of enabling are: avoidance of the person, going along with the drinking, taking on work/household the responsibilities of the abuser, and canceling social events were there is drinking (Ellis, Minerney,

Diguiseppe, & Yeager 1988, Treadway 1990, Johnson Institute 1982, Thomas, Yoshioka, & Ager 1996, Blair 1987). Also, in an attempt to shield the abuser from negative consequences the enabler will lie to family and friends to keep the addiction concealed (Mapes, Johnson, & Sandler, 1984). Appendix E shows several types of enabling behaviors.

Some researchers have broken down the behaviors of enabling into categories. Thomas, Yoshioka, & Ager (1996) in their study of, *Spouse Enabling of Alcohol Abuse: Conception, Assessment, and Modification*, discuss two classes of enabling.

- Direct Enabling – the behavior that acts upon the abuser’s actual drinking behavior.
 - Type I – accelerates potential increasers of the abuser’s drinking – i.e. stating it’s okay to drink, attending social functions with drinking, offering an abuser a drink.
 - Type II – decelerates potential decreases of the abuser’s drinking – i.e. cleaning up the abuser’s alcohol related messes, avoiding social contact, calling in sick for the abuser.
- Indirect Enabling – the behavior that acts upon the abuser’s nondrinking behavior.
 - Type III – decelerates potential increasers of the abuser’s nondrinking behavior – i.e. spouse persuades abuser to go to the movie instead of A.A. meeting and interferes with a hobby the drinker only does when sober.
 - Type IV – accelerates potential decreaseers of nondrinking behavior – spouse increases the level of stress, anxiety, frustration, and conflict in the abuser’s life, which precipitates the abuser’s return to drinking.

Additionally, Ellis, et al. (1988), gave titles to the different types of enablers. For instance a joiner is the person who openly supports the abuser’s habit by either providing money or taking the drugs with the individual. In contrast, the enabler who is considered a messiah opposes the abuser’s habit but will pay his or her bill and continually intervene so that the abuser never realizes the negative consequences of his or her behavior.

Roche (1990) does not limit enabling to the alcoholic's helper. She describes enabling as any behavior friends and family exhibit that protects the individual from, "the familial, legal, social or work-related implications of ongoing excessive use" (p. 5). She believes that enabling encompasses both attitude and behavior and falls into two distinct categories. The first category, control, is when the enabler attempts to monitor the amount of substance use. In the second category, protection, the enabler denies or rationalizes the problem, and attempts to correct the disorder surrounding the abuser. Appendix F shows an instrument to rate oneself as an enabler.

DEFINITION OF CODEPENDENCY

Throughout the literature, enabling and codependency are often used interchangeably. However, there are definite differences between the two. The original term for codependency was coalcoholism (Landry, Smith, & Morrison 1994, Gorski 1992, Cermak 1986, Whitfield 1984). By 1970, chemical dependence became the term widely used and alcoholism became a subtype of chemical dependence. Subsequently, co-alcoholic was generalized as codependent (Cermak 1986, Gorski 1992). However, some believe that the term was conceptualized much earlier, shortly after the establishment of Alcoholics Anonymous around the 1940's when wives of alcoholics gathered to discuss concerns regarding their alcoholic spouses (O'Brien & Gaborit 1992, Kaminer 1990, Beattie 1987, Collins 1993). At that time, it seemed that codependency related to any adult that lived in a committed relationship with an alcoholic, and was damaged by the relationship (Gorski 1992, O'Brien & Gaborit 1992, Beattie 1987). Sutton and Rotunda (1998) concur that initially codependency took into account the personality traits of the chemically dependent partners, and now it includes excessive devotion, sacrifice, and attachment to the alcoholic in an unhealthy way.

Family support groups attempting to cope with a member of the family who was an alcoholic also used the term codependency (Beattie 1987). Codependency soon became a term used by a follow on group to Alcohol Anonymous, designed to focus on "each family member's contribution to the family's dysfunction" (Cermak, 1986, p. 15).

Since then, several definitions have been used to describe the term(s) coalcoholism/codependence; Some of those definitions are:

- Brown & Lewis (1999 p. 287):
 - Coalcoholism - a compulsive preoccupation with controlling the alcoholic.
 - Codependence – follows from coalcoholism: any reactive, submissive response to the dominance of another; the individual sacrifices personal autonomy and choice to the control or perceived control of another.
- Landry, Smith, & Morrison (1994 p. 210):
 - Coalcoholism – a recognizable pattern of behavior and attitudes characteristically found in members of alcoholic families.
 - Codependence - the psychological and behavioral reaction and adaptation by family members to the ongoing trauma of addiction in their family.
- Schaeff (1986) & Whitfield (1989) both state several definitions from pioneers in the field:
 - Wegscheider-Cruse: “All persons who are in love or marriage relationship with an alcoholic, have one or more alcoholic parents or grandparents, or grew up in an emotionally repressive family (Schaeff p. 14, Whitfield p. 20).
 - Sandra Smalley: Codependency is a pattern of learned behaviors, feelings, and beliefs that make life painful. (Schaeff p. 14, Whitfield p. 19)
 - Robert Subby: An emotional, psychological, and behavioral condition that develops as a result of an individual’s prolonged exposure to, and practice of, a set of oppressive rules-rules which prevent the open expression of feeling as well as the direct discussion of personal and interpersonal problem (Schaeff p. 15, Whitfield p. 20)
 - Charles Whitfield: Ill health, or maladaptive or problematic behavior that is associated with living, working with, or otherwise being close to a person with alcoholism (Schaeff p. 16, Whitfield p. 20)

Even though the genesis of codependency centered on marriage and spouses of alcoholics, it has come to include anyone who experienced stress as a direct result of being in a long-term relationship with an alcoholic or chemically dependent person (Whitfield 1989, Erekson & Perkins 1989). As a result, there is still not a universally

applied definition of the term (Doweiko, 1999, Landry, Smith, & Morrison 1994, Beattie, 1987, Treadway, 1990).

CHARACTERISTICS OF CODEPENDENCY

Schaef (1986) discusses several categories of codependency and their subsequent subcategories. For instance, external referenting refers to those relationships between two individuals; caretaking takes into account an individual who makes him/herself indispensable to other people; and the belief that codependents think that everything that happens to a significant other happens to them. Beattie (1987) gives an exhaustive list of the characteristics of codependents. Her list includes caretaking, low self worth, repression, obsession, controlling, denial, dependency, poor communication, weak boundaries, lack of trust, anger, and sex problems. Landry, Smith, & Morrison (1994), list five characteristics of codependency: currently or recently residing with an addicted person, an obsession on the needs and behaviors of the addicted person, a enthusiastic tendency to please the addicted person and to deprive oneself, identity confusion, and dimly low self-esteem. In addition to these characteristics, there are some researchers who believe that the symptoms of these characteristics could lead to illness – possibly death (Collins 1993, Schaef 1986, Wegscheider-Cruse & Cruse 1990). The generally accepted characteristics of codependency are those cited by Al-Anon/Codependents Anonymous. Appendix F shows typical characteristics of codependents.

ENABLING VERSUS CODEPENDENCY

In an effort to explain some of the complex behaviors experienced and displayed by individuals close to substance abusers, behavioral scientist developed the constructs of codependency and enabling (Doweiko 1999). The definitions of codependency and enabling were found to overlap in some cases. For instance, Roche's (1990) enabling factors included loyalty, personal responsibility, and wishing to control the alcoholic; each one of these characteristics shows up in the codependency literature. Also, some

authors believed that enabling behaviors became codependent behaviors or that enabling and codependency are really one and the same. Initially individuals were considered enablers if they helped to protect and shield the abuser, and codependents had a “recognizable pattern of emotions, attitudes, and behaviors” (Nuechterlein 1993, p.13). Treadway (1990) concurred and stated “until recently, codependency was simply a term used in the substance abuse field to describe the enabling behavior of the typical spouse of an alcoholic” (p.40).

There are several instances where the literature uses both codependency and enabling in the same definition. Doweiko (1999) stated that the constructs overlapped, and that it was possible for a person to be both codependent and an enabler, but emphasizes as well, that a person could enable an abuser without being codependent. He goes on to say “enabling refers to specific behaviors, while codependency refers to a relationship pattern” (p. 333). The Johnson Institute (1987) describes the relationship as a progressive one where a person “moves from enabling to codependency if you continue to pick up the pieces after each episode while growing more protective, controlling, and blaming”(p.55). Lastly, Whitfield (1984) considered enabling behavior synonymous with coalcoholic behavior, and that if a coalcoholic did not receive treatment, he or she was an enabler to the abuser.

Additionally, some authors provide definitions for both terms within the same piece of literature. S. Johnson (1997) considers an enabler a person who reacts to the symptoms of the abuser, while the codependent becomes preoccupied with the abuser to the point of neglect. Landry et al. (1994) stated that it is the behavior of family and friends that enables the abuse to continue, and it is considered codependency when “psychological and behavioral reaction and adaptation by family members to the ongoing trauma of addiction in their family” (p.210) is exhibited. Sutton and Rotunda (1998) concurred and summarized the major difference between enabling and codependency “enabling implies a pattern of behavioral responses...codependency tends to refer to (pathological, unhealthy) personality traits” (retrieved 2001). More recently, Rotunda and Doman (2001) suggested that the term codependency not be used, and that research should begin “employing a behavior-systems framework to

more efficaciously study enabling behaviors and complex family member responses to addiction” (p. 268).

In summary, the literature indicates that, codependency and enabling are linked together in the fields of alcohol and drug abuse. Although there is not complete agreement on the exact definitions of the two terms, many of the characteristics and behaviors of the two overlap. An important difference between codependency and enabling is that enabling is an action that typically is not internalized by the helper to the point of affecting the individual physically. On the other hand, as a codependent, the individual internalizes the substance abuser’s addiction to the point that it may be physically harmful to the helper. Additionally, enabling is a constant helping mechanism that one uses to allow an individual to escape the consequences of his or her behavior. This behavior can either be conscious or unconscious, intentional or unintentional. Conversely, a codependent internalizes the alcoholic’s behavior in an attempt to maintain some sort of balance to their relationship.

As mentioned previously, Doweiko (1999) stated that the constructs of codependency and enabling overlapped and that it was possible for a person to be both codependent and an enabler, however, he stated it was essential that one remembers that, “enabling and codependency are separate patterns of behavior that may, or may not, be found in the same person” (p. 325).

Adapting Doweiko’s 1999 description of the relationship between codependency and enabling, and compiling many definitions of codependency and enabling from several authors, The Johnson Institute (1987), Whitfield (1984), S. Johnson (1997), and Landry et al. (1994), Figure 2.1 shows this author’s interpretation of how codependency and enabling are related. Those behaviors under Codependency, and those under Enabling were consistently defined that way in the literature. Those behaviors in the middle of the overlapping section of the circle were those behaviors that were defined under both enabling and codependency behaviors throughout the literature. No attempt was made to prioritize the characteristics, however, it was considered that *having a close relationship* with the abuser very important to the codependent and therefore was put first. In contrast, it is not necessary for the enabler to have a close personal relationship with the abuser, but he or she might.

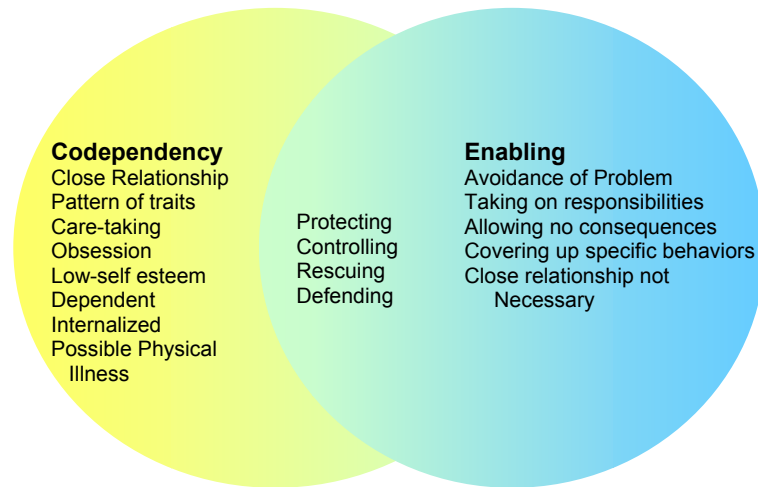


Figure 2.1
Relationship Between Enabling and Codependency

ENABLING OF POOR PERFORMANCE IN THE WORKPLACE

Managers enable poor performing employees, and become enablers for different reasons. In some cases the employee is considered a valuable individual to a project, so coworkers and managers want to protect the employee (Johnson Institute 1991). If a personal relationship exists, between a supervisor and subordinate, the supervisor may not want to endanger the friendship. Oftentimes the enabler feels good because his or her perception is that helping the poor performer is actually making the enabler look good to *his or her* management. The WPEAPM (1990) stated that the supervisor could have feelings of incompetence, anger, hurt, low self-esteem, and discouragement that helped to create the enabling.

The Johnson Institute (1987) stated that when a manager enabled he was in effect assuming that the employee's problem was his or her fault. Blair (1987) stated that a supervisor was considered enabling when he or she "continually accepted, broken promises or once again makes special arrangements for the alcoholic" (p.7). She also indicated that allowing the enabling, for most supervisors, was easy. She cited the tension created by difficult employees, the complicated disciplinary procedures, and the emotional barriers of the alcoholic (the supervisor may not know

that the employee is an alcoholic) as reasons for some supervisors to continuing to enable the poor performer.

The WPEAPM (1990) described several emotional reasons why a supervisor continues to enable poor performance:

- Anger because of several disappointments by the employee
- Hurt because the employee was considered a trusted worker
- Guilt as a result of angry outburst to the employee or lowering of expectations
- Incompetence because he or she could be a better supervisor
- Low self-esteem because the supervisor could have caused the employee's problem
- Isolation and discouragement when the problem employee does not seem to get better--it must be the supervisor's fault, so he or she does not want to tell upper management. (p. 12 – 13).

The WPEAPM goes on to cite several ways a supervisor continues to enable:

- Covering up and sympathizing
- Looking the other way
- Delegating work to others
- Doing the work
- Accepting elaborate explanations
- Continuing to accept promises that have been broken many times before
- Minimizing and rationalizing the problem (p.14).

SUMMARY

As indicated by the literature, the issue of poor performance in the workplace has existed for decades. Understanding poor performance and how to handle it continues to be an issue in many types of organizations. The ability to successfully assess the cause of poor performance, and the implementation of a process to improve it, will continue to be a managerial necessity.

The literature affirms that how managers handle the poor performance once the cause is assessed is an issue managers are constantly reviewing. For example, the

manager might use the therapeutic approach suggested by Schwartz (1992) and allow the employee to review his or her behavior and determine the course of action. Or the manager could use the more direct approach suggested by Freed (2000) and fire them. It is also possible that a verbal warning or written reprimand might be sufficient to get an employee back on track. However, as OPM suggest, “poor performance usually only gets worse over time...rarely does it correct itself without action on the part of the supervisor” (OPM 2002).

The literature suggests that the characteristics of enabling, used by counselors in the area of substance abuse, does occur in the workplace, but has not be labeled as such. Studies have not documented enabling behavior in the workplace unless alcohol was the cause of the poor performance. Combining the construct of enabling with manager’s handling of poor performers will add to the already existing information available in the field of performance management. Additionally, this research will provide information, which will give managers better insight into the handling of poor performance issues within their organizations.

CHAPTER THREE

METHOD

As mentioned earlier in Chapters One and Two, managers will eventually have to deal with a poor performing employee during their careers (Perry, 1998, Miner 1963, Liden et al., 1999, O'Reilly & Weitz, 1980). As shown in Chapter Two, the literature is rich with studies regarding the managing of poor employee performance, as well as information relating to the behavior exemplified by people who enable substance abusers (Landry 1994, Doweiko 1999, Potter-Effron 1986, Nelson 1985, Roche 1990, Nuechterlein 1993, Johnson 1986, Johnson Institute 1982, 1987). Bridging the two concepts, Table 1.1 showed some of the similarities between substance abuse enabling and workplace enabling.

The purpose of this research was twofold: (a) To explore how much of the definition and characteristics of enabling in substance abuse relates to the managers' behavior towards poor performers in the workplace, and (b) Managers' attribution of the causes of poor employee performance and how that attribution reflects their response to the poor performer. This chapter presents the steps taken to determine the sampling process, how the enabling and attributional variables were developed, the development of the survey instrument, and the tedious procedures used to acquire email address of the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) employees.

POPULATION AND SAMPLE

During my literature research, I reviewed a special study conducted by the Office of Merit Systems Oversight and Effectiveness (OMSOE), within the Office of Personnel Management (OPM), entitled, *Poor Performers in Government: A Quest for the True Story* (OPM 1999). Being a federal worker myself, I contacted the individuals who performed the study for further information. Because of the large number of managers employed throughout the federal government, and after discussing the study with the OMSOE staff, I asked them if OPM would be interested in additional information regarding how managers deal with poor performers. Once I explained the purpose of

my research, the supervisor of OMSOE was delighted to offer the assistance of his staff and the OPM federal workers database.

As of September 2001, there were approximately 1.8 million federal workers in the OPM database. The database included all federal employees domestic and foreign *except* for Intelligence Community agencies such as the Central Intelligence Agency, National Security Agency, and Defense Intelligence Agency. In addition, the database included some, but not all, personnel information for the Federal Bureau of Investigations, Drug Enforcement, Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms, and the Secret Service. Table 3.1 shows the demographics of the federal workforce based on OPM's September 2001 database.

Table 3.1
Federal Workforce Demographics

RACE NATIONAL ORIGIN	MEN	WOMEN	TOTAL	%*
Blacks	112,197	186,504	298,701	17.0
Hispanic	65,488	49,759	115,247	6.6
Asian/Pacific Islander	44,009	34,960	78,969	4.5
American Indian/ Alaskan Native	17,737	20,199	37,936	2.2
Total Minority	239,431	291,422	530,853	30.2
Whites	726,089	498,747	1,224,836	69.8
TOTAL	965,520 (55%)	790,169 (45%)	1,755,689	100.0

*Percentage of total population

Per OMSOE, of the 1.8 million employees, there are approximately 200,000 who are considered managers. To keep the population manageable, it was decided to use full-time permanent managers selected from the continental United States, which included 176,170 people. Once again this population was scaled down to include Human Resource Offices that had at least 200 managers. The resulting population was

116,170, which was then stratified by minority status (minority/non-minority) and sex. Table 3.2 shows the OPM managers' breakdown.

Table 3.2
Target Population

RACE NATIONAL ORIGIN	MEN	WOMEN	TOTAL	%
Blacks	7284	7333	14617	12.6
Hispanic	4474	1809	6283	5.4
Asian/ Pacific Islander	1747	893	2640	2.3
American Indian/ Alaskan Native	762	444	1206	1.0
Total Minority	14307	10490	24797	21.3
Whites	66581	24843	91424	78.7
TOTAL	80848 (70%)	35322 (30%)	116,170	100.0

Sampling Procedures

From the 116,170 managers shown in Table 3.2, I received 4000 randomly selected managers' names from OPM. Initially, when OPM was identified as a research site, a paper survey was going to be delivered to managers at their work office. Therefore, I received the sample sorted by the human resource office and agency for the individual. It was my responsibility to contact approximately 200 human resource officers to receive approval to send the forms to the individual offices. Unfortunately, by the time the survey was to be delivered, the events of September 11, 2001 and the anthrax scare had occurred. Government mail was at a complete stand still for some time, while new scanning and X-ray procedures were put in place for all mail delivered to government offices. The estimated time for mail to be delivered was four months.

Because of the new mail procedures, it was decided to conduct an on-line survey. However, the sample list did not contain email addresses, and OPM did not have a database with email addresses of their employees. It was known upfront that contacting federal workers would at best be a long and tedious process. There are approximately 400 separate agencies within OPM. Each agency has its own policy on giving out personnel information and on distributing surveys. The data collection steps I used to obtain email accounts are listed below.

1. Received 4000 supervisor/manager names via email from OPM.
2. Received 200 Human Resource Officers' (HRO) names for contacting the 4000 supervisors/managers.
3. Reviewed data file. Data showed that:
 - a. Each HRO was responsible for a certain number of managers ranging from 2 – 225.
 - b. In some cases, the HRO was responsible for managers from several states.
 - c. Some agencies had several HROs. For instance, the Department of Agriculture had four different HROs to contact, for a total of 125 managers.
4. Separated the HROs based on where they were located. Those HROs in the local area were singled out in case I needed to have a personal meeting to request the email accounts. Three categories were established:
 - a. Maryland - 460 managers; 20 HROs
 - b. Washington, DC – 840 manager; 30 HROs
 - c. Virginia – 485 managers; 13 HROs
5. Established a Fact Sheet covering details of the survey
6. Developed a Telephone Script and FAX sheet
7. Called HROs:
 - a. Asked for email accounts over the phone, if unable to get emails over the phone,
 - b. Faxed fact sheet or emailed information to HRO.
 - c. After 2-3 days, if nothing was received, made a follow-up request.

This was a very tedious process. Most often I left a voice mail or left messages with secretaries. Not everybody was interested in helping. Some HROs never called back. Others referred me to another individual. Several phone numbers were no longer in service and many times, the HRO had retired or moved to another job. In cases where the number was no longer good, I called information (411) and tracked down the agency's personnel office. In those instances where the individual no longer worked there, I asked to speak to his/her replacement.

However, a handful of HROs were helpful and took the time to give me the email addresses over the phone. Those lists of addresses contained 2 – 25 names. One of the Department of Defense HROs was extremely helpful. Because some managers were no longer available due to new jobs, or permanent change of assignment, or other reasons, he agreed to find other managers so that I would still have access to 26 managers that showed up under his HRO.

One agency administrator referred me to their psychologist and for weeks proceeded to pass my request for email addresses up their chain of command until I was finally told that they would not be participating. One of the security agencies immediately said they would not participate for security reasons. Some HROs just never returned my calls.

During this process, it occurred to me that if I knew the email address "code" for each agency I could just use that and not bother the HRO. For instance, the Department of Education is `firstname.lastname@ed.gov`. The use of the code was not fool proof. For instance, the code did not work if there were managers with the same name. Also, in some cases I did not have the first and last name, just the first initial and last name. Additionally, most of the agencies had different email address codes for the different departments of that agency, and for the different geographical locations of the managers' offices. For example, for the Department of Health and Human Services/Indian Health Service, the email account was `firstname.lastname@State location.hhs` or the Center for Disease Control used the managers' initials and a numerical number `@CDC.hhs`. If the person did not have a middle initial, an "X" was used.

In an attempt to obtain as many email addresses as possible, from the list of 4000 names received from OPM, I went on-line and searched the Internet. Through the Internet, I was able to access the sites and identify the e-mail code for the Department of Commerce, Department of Agriculture, Department of Health and Human Services, and other agencies. Through this process of separately typing in each name and recording the email addresses, I acquired 500+ emails. Some of these emails were not part of the 1,600 that came from Maryland, Virginia, and Washington, D.C. Once I found a site that would give me email addresses, I would look up all of the managers who were on the original 4000 list of names from OPM.

As a result of the above actions, emails were sent to 1,384 OPM managers with a link to a web site containing the questionnaire. Immediately, 369 emails were returned due to a failed receipt. An additional 296 individuals were unable to respond because their agencies requested that they not participate in the survey. (One individual reported me to the Inspector General's Office of her agency, and I spent two weeks convincing him that the survey was legitimate.) Therefore, the total possible number of responses that could have been obtained was 719. I received 202 responses, for a 28% response rate.

Though not part of the initial research questions, I decided to survey some non-federal managers to compare their responses with those from the federal managers. Twenty non-federal managers that I know were sent the survey and asked to participate. They were also asked to email the survey to other non-federal managers within their organizations and ask them to participate in the survey. I received 55 non-federal responses.

INSTRUMENT DEVELOPMENT

A three-part questionnaire (see Appendix G) was developed. Part I contained 37 questions exploring managers' enabling behaviors. Part II assessed manager's attribution of poor performance for their least effective performer through 12 questions, and collected demographic information on the subordinate: race/national origin, sex,

educational level, and age. Part III requested demographic information on the manager: race/national origin, sex, age, educational level, and years as a manager.

Development of Enabling Variables

Part I of the questionnaire was adapted from the substance abuse enabling checklist for managers and supervisors presented by the Johnson Institute (1991). This checklist was designed to help the manager, “become aware of any enabling behaviors you may engage in with employees” (p.27). The enabling items in Part I of the questionnaire were developed by analyzing the behaviors used by enablers of substance abusers, and then matching those behaviors with actions that managers often take when dealing with poor performers. For instance, in the Johnson Institute’s (1991) checklist the question, “I deny inappropriate behavior or poor job performance by ignoring, minimizing, justifying, or rationalizing it” (p. 27), equated to both, *avoid/ignore the poor performance*, and *accepting excuses/rationalizing the problem*, for managers’ behaviors toward poor performers. The result of that analysis is shown in Table 1.1.

Once the checklist items were adapted to match the managers’ workplace behaviors, these specific actions were categorized into four categories of managers’ enabling responses to a poor performer: Eliminate Employee, Eliminate Employee’s Responsibilities, Deny the Problem, and Harass the Employee. For instance, the behavior of accepting excuses and rationalizing the problem was put under the category of Deny the problem. The four enabling categories were given one-word labels for manager’s response to poor performance: Reward, Hide, Deny, and Aggravate

Finally, the four categories were aligned with a modified version of Thomas, et al.’s (1996) concept of Direct and Indirect enabling. As shown in Figure 3.1, rewarding and hiding the poor performance are Direct Enabling – the manager’s behavior that responds directly to the employee’s poor performance. Denying and aggravating the problem are indirect enabling behaviors.

Enabling Type	Category of Enabling Responses	Action
DIRECT	Reward the poor performance	Eliminate Employee from office <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote • Transfer • Good Ratings • Bonuses
	Hide the poor performance	Eliminate Employee's Responsibility <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assign employee's work to others • Do the work yourself • Cover up the poor performance • Don't Inform superiors
INDIRECT	Deny the poor performance	Deny the problem <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accept excuses • Accept broken promises • Rationalize the problem
	Aggravate the poor performance	Harass Employee <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nagging • Criticizing • Assigning problematic task • Setting the employee up to fail

Figure 3.1
Manager's Enabling Types

Once specific enabling behavior actions were organized into categories and enabling types, questionnaire items were written to address each behavior. For instance, one item to assess Deny the Problem was, *accept childcare issues as the reason for incomplete work*. A total of 37 items were written.

At this point, a small pilot study was conducted with the questionnaire. Students enrolled in a survey and design course at Virginia Tech, Northern Virginia Center, were asked to review and comment on the questionnaire. Ten students responded. They commented on all aspects of the questionnaire including the Likert scale, ordering and wording of the questions, and the placement of items into categories. Two of the students reordered the questions into categories they felt they fit into, and their categories were compared to the categories previously developed. For instance, one student categorized questions that were related to Eliminate Employee's Responsibilities as: Actions Taken as a Result of a Poor Performer. The other student grouped several of the questions from all four categories into one entitled: Managing

the Poor Performer. After reviewing the comments from the students, some questions were reworded and the Likert scale was modified to contain only five response options.

To finalize the questionnaire for distribution, I used an on-line survey program offered by Virginia Tech. The survey program allowed me to format a questionnaire and make it available, on-line, to my survey population. Some questions had to be reworded to meet the requirement of the survey program. Instead of long, wordy independent questions, one question was asked with several responses. Appendix G shows the final distributed questionnaire.

Developing Attribution Variables

Part II of the instrument measured managers' attribution of poor performance. Each respondent was asked to think about a current or previous poor performer. They were then asked to respond to several questions about the cause of the poor performance. These questions were adapted from a study by Dobbins (1985), *The Effects of Gender in the Attributional Model of Leadership*. He asked the managers to respond to the following question:

To what extent was the subordinate's performance caused by

1. His or her personal characteristics
2. Characteristics of the situation
3. Something that reflects an aspect of the situation
4. Inside the subordinate
5. Something about the situation

As mentioned in Chapter two, this study looked at managers internal and external attributions based on sex. I modified Dobbins' questions for my questionnaire to measure attribution by the managers.

DATA ANALYSIS

Describing the Sample

Descriptive analyses were conducted on data received from all three parts of the questionnaire. This included the enabling/nonenabling and attributional items described in the previous section along with demographic information about both the manager and the chosen poor performer.

A review of the managers' demographic information showed that they were unevenly distributed across the four minority categories: 58 Black, 26 Hispanic, 15 Asian/Pacific Islander, and 3 American Indian/Alaskan Natives. These respondents were combined in a single "minority" category and all analyses compared only two groups: minority versus non-minority (white). Responses about the demographics of the poor performers were also combined to reflect only two race categories. After this recoding, crosstabulations was performed to compare managers' race and sex with poor performers' race and sex.

Scale Assessment

Factor analyses were performed on Part I and II of the survey. Part I, the enabling and non-enabling items were factor analyzed together and separately. A series of factor analyses were run, using principal components, principal axis factoring, and alpha factoring extraction methods, all with varimax rotation.

Part II, internal and external attribution items, were factor analyzed into a forced two-factor solution using principal component analysis and varimax rotation, as well as using the criterion of eigenvalues greater than one. Finally, reliability assessment of each item set was performed using Cronbach's alpha.

Relationships Among Constructs

In order to answer the research questions, correlations, crosstabulations, and ANOVAs were run on the following combinations:

1. Enabling and nonenabling items.

2. Enabling/nonenabling and internal/external items.
3. Managers' demographics and enabling/nonenabling items
4. Managers' demographics and internal/external items.

SUMMARY

As mentioned in Chapter One, the purpose of this study was to look at managers' attribution of the causes of poor employee performance and how that attribution reflects their response to the poor performer. The above data analyses described in this chapter allowed me to examine the managers' demographics and assess whether those demographics played a role in determining the managers' attribution and response. Additionally, the data analyses helped determine if there was a relationship between the demographics of the poor performer and the manager's attribution decision and enabling/nonenabling response.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS

As stated in Chapter One, the purpose of this study was to look at managers' attribution of the causes of poor employee performance and how that attribution influences their response to the poor performer. The goal was to explore the relationship between manager's enabling behaviors and their attribution of the causes for poor employee performance. Research data collected shows that managers deal with poor performers in several different ways. To a large extent, managers tended to micromanage a poor performer and they seldom respond by rewarding the poor performance. The data also show that the majority of managers attribute poor performance to those things that the employee can control, such as ability, effort, and motivation.

This chapter provides a review of the research results and details manager's enabling and nonenabling behaviors, as well as their attribution of the employee's poor performance. As part of the research, demographics of the managers were examined to assess whether those demographics played a role in determining the attribution of the poor performance and the response to the poor performer. A crosstabulation of demographics of the poor performer and managers were analyzed to see if there was a relationship between the manager's attribution decision and enabling/nonenabling response. Additionally, a short comparison between federal government managers and non-federal managers is discussed. Finally, written comments given by the both federal and non-federal managers are discussed.

SAMPLE

As stated in Chapter Three, the initial sample was 4000 randomly selected managers, but because of several unavoidable issues, only 1,384 OPM managers were sent the survey. Of that number, 369 emails were instantly returned due to a failed receipt and 296 individuals were unable to respond because their agency requested that they not participate in the survey. The total possible number of responses that

could have been obtained was 719. Two hundred two responses were received for a 28% response rate.

Managers

The respondents had an average of 11 years tenure in their management positions. The longest tenure was 48 years and the shortest was one year. Table 4.1 shows the educational and age demographics of the managers who responded. The managers ranged in age from less than 20 to 60 with 39% in their fifties and 36% in their forties. Over 75% of the managers had a college or post-graduate degree. Thirty-four percent held bachelor degrees, 21% indicated they had a master's degree, and 25 respondents (12%) had a doctorate degree. The number of men and women who had college degrees was fairly evenly split, with 69% of the men and 67% of the women holding degrees. Nineteen percent of the men indicated they only had a high school education compared to 26% for women.

Table 4.1
Age/Educational Level of Managers

	Number	% Of Sample
Age		
<20	3	2%
20's	5	3%
30's	25	12%
40's	71	36%
50's	76	39%
60's	15	7%
Education		
High School	44	22%
Bachelors	68	34%
Masters	42	21%
Post-graduate	18	9%
Doctorate	25	12%

Table 4.2 shows a crosstabulation of the race and sex of the respondents. Forty-eight percent of the managers were men, 46% women. A little more than half of the respondents were minorities (52%), non-minorities made up 42% of the sample, and approximately 6% of the respondents chose not to indicate their race or sex.

Table 4.2
Manager Demographics by Race and Sex

RACE/NATIONAL ORIGIN	MEN	WOMEN	No Response to Sex	TOTAL	% of Sample
Blacks	24	34	2	60	29.7%
Hispanic	19	6	1	26	12.9%
Asian/Pacific Islander	8	5	2	15	7.4%
American Indian/Alaskan Native	2	1	0	3	1.5%
Total Minority	53	46	5	104	51.5%
Whites	40	42	3	85	42.1%
No Response to Race	4	4	5	13	6.4%
TOTAL	97 48%	92 46%	13	202	100%

The survey sample differs from the federal managers breakdown given by OPM. In OPM's breakdown, 70% of the managers in the workforce are men and 30% are women. Additionally, only 21% are minorities, while 79% are non-minority. The more equal breakdown of both men/women and minority/non-minority responses in this study provides more accurate comparisons between groups than would have been possible if the demographics had matched the OPM statistics. If the respondents had been primarily male and non-minority, the results may have been skewed towards those specific demographics.

Poor Performing Employee

Managers were asked to consider the behavior of a current or previous poor performer when responding to several attributional questions. Forty-three percent of the poor performers selected were younger than the manager, 35% about the same age, and 20% were older than the manager. Almost half (49%) of the poor performers had a high school education, 41% had bachelors or masters degree, and 2.5% had a doctorate degree. The minimum number of years that the manager had supervised this particular poor performer was one, the maximum was 21 years, and the average time was three years. Table 4.3 shows a crosstabulation of the manager and poor performer by race.

Table 4.3
Managers' and Employees' Race Compared

Managers' Race	Employee Race		
	Non-Minority	Minority	Total
Non-Minority Count	57	25	82
%w/in mgr race	69.5%	30.5%	100%
Minority Count	47	51	98
% w/in mgr race	48.%	52%	100%
Total Count	104	76	180
% w/in mgr race	57.80%	42.20%	100%

Overall, less than half of the poor performers that the managers discussed were minority (42%). Minority managers were almost evenly split between discussing minority (52%) and non-minority (48%) poor performing employees. However, non-minority managers were much more likely to discuss non-minority poor performers (70%).

Managers chose to discuss more men as poor performers (58%) than women (42%) (see Table 4.4). Female managers were almost evenly split between discussing men (48%) and women (52%) poor performing employees. However, male managers were much more likely to discuss men (67%) as poor performers than women (33%).

Table 4.4
Managers' and Employees' Sex Compared

	Employee Sex		
	Male	Female	Total
Male Count	63	31	94
%w/in mgr sex	67%	33%	100%
Female Count	43	46	89
% w/in mgr sex	48%	52%	100%
Total Count	106	77	183
% w/in mgr sex	57.9%	42.1%	100%

ATTRIBUTION FACTORS

Nine items were used to determine internal and external attributions. These nine items were factor analyzed using principal component analysis and varimax rotation. Through a forced two-factor solution, 48% of the variance of the original nine items was explained. Table 4.5 shows the factor loadings with values less than .30 not included in the table. The four internal items had a reliability value of .67. However, if the personal characteristics item were deleted, the internal consistency of the remaining three items increased to .75. Therefore, motivation, effort, and employee attitude were retained as a measure of internal attribution. Similarly, the five external items had a reliability value of .66, but when family problems were deleted, the reliability increased to .70. The external factors that were retained were adequate resources, task difficulty, proper information and bad luck. When using the criterion of eignvalues greater than one, family problems and personal characteristics formed a third factor. This fact, along with their low loadings on the internal and external factors and their lowering of the scale reliability values, contributed to the decision to drop these two items.

Table 4.5
Factor analysis of internal/external items

	F1 External	F2 Internal
Adequate Resources	0.774	
Task Difficulty	0.764	
Proper Information	0.747	
Bad Luck	0.517	
Family Problems	0.441	
Effort		0.832
Motivation		0.802
Employee Attitude		0.729
Personal Characteristics		0.361

ENABLING BEHAVIORS

Note: In this section, and in the following sections, behavior categories are capitalized (Eliminate the Employee) and variable items (*extend the deadline*) are italicized.

As indicated in Chapter Three, the enabling items were developed by studying enabling behaviors in substance abuse enabling, and matching those behaviors with the manager's behavior as was shown in Table 1.1. The list of enabling items was then categorized into four outcome categories Eliminate Employee, Eliminate Employee's Responsibilities/Hide the Problem, Deny the Problem, and Harass the Employee. The four outcome categories were then given one-word labels for manager's response to poor performance: Reward, Hide, Deny, and Aggravate. Finally, these four responses were applied to a modified version of Thomas, et al.'s (1996) concept of Direct and Indirect enabling.

An initial factor analysis was conducted on all of the enabling items. The first analysis indicated that eight factors explained twenty-eight items. The items *childcare*, *physical illness*, *family issues*, and *insufficient training* loaded together, however, the other actions under Deny the Problem did not. The variable *traffic* stood alone, while

the variables *consider the lack of knowledge* and *consider their skills* loaded together. Four of the five variables under Eliminate Employee's Responsibilities loaded well together, with the variable *reassigning the job to another employee* falling out of that category. Similarly, three variables under Reward the Poor Performance loaded together well, except for *giving annual bonuses to all employees*. The only category that loaded as expected was Eliminate Employee. The variables for that factor were; *recommend another job that has less requirements*, *recommend a job that fits the skill level of the employee*, and *transfer the employee to another office*.

A second factor analysis was conducted and the actions were forced into seven factors. The patterns looked like the first run, except all the variables under Deny the Problem scattered throughout the other variables. *Lack of knowledge* and *Lack of skills* remained together. After a series of additional factor analyses, using different extraction methods with varimax rotation, items that cross-loaded or were unstable were removed.

At this time, a Senior Human Resource (HR) specialist was consulted about the initial categorization of the items and their grouping under the final set of six factors. During a four-hour session, the HR specialist identified why certain items were loading together into the six factors. For instance, the variable *give annual bonuses to all employees so no one employee is singled out*, was initially considered Rewarding the Poor Performance. However it loaded better with Avoid the Poor Performance. The HR specialist stated that giving bonuses to everyone is one way of avoiding confrontation with a poor performer. In addition to reorganizing the items, it became clear that two of the categories needed to be renamed, and a new one needed to be added. Figure 4.1 shows the new categories and where the variables were placed. The numbers in bold are Cronbach Alpha reliabilities for each set of items.

Non-Enabling Behaviors

All nine non-enabling items loaded on one factor when analyzed alone. However, when included with the enabling variables, the variable *counseling the employee* cross-loaded with one of the enabling factors. All nine items had a reliability

factor of .79, and only dropped to .78 without the item on counseling. The eight non-enabling items are shown in Figure 4.2.

PROFILE OF ATTRIBUTION AND ENABLING VARIABLES

Managers clearly attributed the employee's poor performance to internal causes (mean = 3.9, std. dev. 1.03) versus external causes (mean = 1.17, std. dev. 0.69). Table 4.6 shows that within internal causes, managers chose *employee attitude* (median = 5) as the main reason for the poor performance. Effort and motivation were also identified as key reasons for poor performance (median = 4). Table 4.6 also shows that if a manager chose external causes, *task difficulty* was the major factor (median = 2), with *adequate resources* and *proper information* very close second and third choices.

Behavior Categories and Reliability	Items Within Each Category
Eliminate Employee's Responsibilities .56	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Extend the deadline 2. Work with the employee to complete the task 3. Complete the task yourself 4. Continue to work the performance issue yourself
Avoid the poor performance .77	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Do nothing because of the possibility of having a grievance filed against you 2. Do nothing because of the possible negative reaction of the employee 3. Give annual bonuses to all employees so no one employee is singled out 4. Reduce the requirements of the task
Transfer the problem .70	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Recommend another job that has less requirements 2. Recommend a job that fits the employee's skill level 3. Assign different tasks until you find one the employee can accomplish 4. Transfer the employee to another office 5. Reassign the job to another employee
Reward the poor performance .60	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Promote employee into another job 2. Give performance ratings commensurate with the norm of the office 3. Concur on promotion recommendations to help employee find another job 4. Increase the employee's responsibilities to show you believe in his/her abilities
Micromanage the problem .60	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Provide close, daily support 2. Continue to request updates on incomplete projects 3. Request documentation of all work activities 4. Provide daily counseling
Accept Excuses .56	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Do not respond because of personal family issues of the employee 2. Accept child care issues as the reason for incomplete work 3. Accept traffic problems as an excuse for missed deadlines 4. Be lenient because of Insufficient training 5. Excuse the problem due to a physical illness

Figure 4.1
New Categories for Enabling Items, with Reliability

Non-enabling Actions .78	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Give an oral warning 2. Give a written warning 3. Remove employee from the job 4. Refer employee to an EAP counselor 5. Impose a harsh reprimand (i.e. docking of pay) 6. Recommend termination 7. Consult a Human Resource representative for help 8. Consult with upper management
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Figure 4.2
Non-Enabling Variables, with Reliability

Table 4.6
Internal versus External Attribution

	Mean (Std)	Median ^a	Frequency of Behavior ^b
Internal	3.90(1.03)	4	
Employee attitude		5	76%
Effort		4	67.3%
Motivation		4	64.2%
External	1.17(.69)	1.75	
Task difficulty		2	14.3%
Adequate Resources		2	8.1%
Proper Information		2	5.6%
Bad Luck		1	1.5%

^aResponses went from 1=not at all to 5=a lot

^b Percent responding either 5 or 4, represents a self-reported frequent use of the behavior.

As shown in Table 4.7, managers chose the enabling behavior of Micromanaging the poor performer (mean = 3.8, std .075) by *requesting updates on incomplete projects, providing daily support to the poor performer, requesting documentation of all work activities, and providing daily counseling*. Secondly, in dealing with the poor performance, managers indicated that they would Eliminate the Employee's Responsibilities (mean = 3.0) prior to Transferring the Problem (mean = 2.9). Additionally, some managers indicated that they would Reward the Poor Performance by doing things such as *giving ratings commensurate with the norm of the office* before Avoiding the Poor Performance by *reducing the requirements of the task*.

Managers of poor performers also performed non-enabling behaviors. When considered with enabling behaviors, the use of non-enabling behaviors was the second choice of the managers (mean = 3.5, std .75) after Micromanaging the Poor Performer,

Table 4.7
Manager's Enabling Behavior

	Mean (Std)	Median ^a	Frequency of Behavior ^b
Micromanage the problem	3.81(.75)	4	
Request updates		5	84.3%
Request Documentation		4	66.3%
Provide daily support		4	64.6%
Daily counseling		3	48.2%
Eliminate Employee's Responsibilities	3.01(.80)	3	
Work w/employee to complete		4	64.5%
Continue to work issue		4	50.8%
Extend the deadline		3	25.1%
Complete the task yourself		2	20.5%
Transfer the problem	2.86 (.85)	3	
Job that fits skill level		4	61.8%
Assign different task		3	34.3%
Job with less requirements		3	31.7%
Reassign the job		3	37%
Transfer employee		2	12.1%
Accept Excuses	2.05 (.63)	2	
Insufficient training		3	15.6%
Physical illness		2	8.6%
Family issues		2	6.6%
Childcare issues		1	21.3%
Traffic problems		1	1.0%
Reward the poor performance	1.74 (.67)	1.58	
Give ratings like the norm		2	29.8%
Increase responsibility		1	4.6%
Concur on promotion		1	7.1%
Promote to another job		1	1.0%
Avoid the poor performance	1.48 (.66)	1.25	
Reduce the task		2	8.5%
Negative reaction		1	3.1%
Possible grievance filed		1	3.0%
Annual bonuses to all		1	5.1%

^aResponses went from 1=not at all to 5=a lot

^bPercent responding either 5 or 4, represents a self-reported frequent use of the behavior.

and before Eliminating The Employee's Responsibilities. As table 4.8 shows, within non-enabling behaviors, managers *gave an oral warning, consulted with management, and gave a written warning* as the top three ways of not enabling the poor performance. Of note, managers chose to *remove the employee from the job or terminate the employee before rendering a harsh reprimand like docking of pay.*

RELATIONSHIPS AMONG CONSTRUCTS

As a first step in answering the research questions, Table 4.9 gives the correlations between the managers' attribution (internal or external) and their enabling/non-enabling behaviors. Internal Attribution did not seem to be related to any behaviors. Eliminate Employee's Responsibilities and Accept Excuses had a statistically significant relationship to External Attribution. However, both of these correlations were extremely low.

It was interesting to note from the correlations between different enabling behaviors, that managers who chose to Avoid the poor performance was less likely to Micromanage the Poor Performer ($r = -.32$), and less likely to select Non-Enabling actions ($r = -.40$) (See Table 4.10). However, those same managers who chose to Avoid the Poor Performance had a tendency to Accept Excuses from the Poor Performer ($r = .36$), Reward the Poor Performance ($r = .38$), and Eliminate the Employee's Responsibilities ($r = .32$). Also, managers who chose to Eliminate the Employee's Responsibilities had a tendency to Accept Excuses from the Poor Performer ($r = .35$). Additionally, those managers who Micromanaged their poor performers were more likely to select non-enabling actions ($r = .40$) and less likely to Avoid the poor performance ($r = -.32$).

Table 4.8
Manager's Non-Enabling Behavior

	Mean (Std)	Median ^a	Frequency of Behavior ^b
Non-Enabling Behavior	3.47 (.71)	3.56	
Give an oral warning	4.23	5	81%
Consult w/upper management	4.22	5	81%
Give a written warning	4.06	4	75.9%
Consult a HR for help	3.71	4	66.5%
Refer employee EAP	2.93	3	37.5%
Remove employee from job	2.84	3	33.5%
Recommend termination	2.65	3	31%
Harsh reprimand	1.86	1	11.2%

^aResponses went from 1=not at all to 5=a lot

^bPercent responding either 5 or 4, represents a self-reported frequent use of the behavior.

Table 4.9
Relationship Between Attribution and Enabling/Non-Enabling Behaviors

	Internal	External
Micromanage the problem	.016	.028
Eliminate Employee's Responsibilities	.000	.164*
Transfer the problem	-.010	.094
Accept Excuses	.066	.141*
Reward the poor performance	.125	.125
Avoid the poor performance	.092	.061
Non-Enabling	.071	-.035

*Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Table 4.10
Relationship Between Enabling/Non-Enabling Behaviors

	Eliminate	Avoid	Transfer	Reward	Micro- manage	Accept Excuses	Non- Enabling
Eliminate Employee's Responsibilities	1.000						
Avoid the poor performance	.320**	1.000					
Transfer the problem	.238**	.131	1.000				
Reward the poor performance	.173*	.376**	.112	1.000			
Micromanage the problem	.089	-.317	.141*	-0.149	1.000		
Accept Excuses	.346**	.360**	.298**	.328**	-.012	1.000	
Non-Enabling	-.164	-.396	.208**	-.098	.401**	.003	1.000

*Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Behaviors and Attributions by Managers' Demographics

Based on a correlation between manager's demographics and the enabling behaviors, as shown in Table 4.11, managers' race showed a very slight negative correlation with Eliminate the Employee's Responsibility ($r = -.25$) and Accept Excuses ($r = -.16$). There was a slight negative correlation between Years of Experience as a manager and Avoiding the Poor Performance ($r = -.21$) and Rewarding the Poor Performance ($r = -.18$). However, a slight positive correlation was seen between managers' Years of Experience and Micromanaging the Problem (.19), and Non-Enabling behaviors (.15).

To explore the nature of the relationships, further analysis showed that minority managers differed slightly with respect to Accept Excuses (mean = 2.0, std = .65) than non-minority managers (mean = 2.2, std = .60); $F(1,187)=4.4615$, $p=.033$) Also, non-minority managers were more likely to Eliminate the Employee's Responsibilities (mean = 3.2, std = .72) than minority managers (mean = 2.8, std = .80); $F(1,187)=12.008$, $p=.001$). Both the weak correlations and the small mean differences indicate no appreciable differences in how managers behave with poor employees, regardless of managers' demographics.

Table 4.11
Relationship Between Behaviors and Managers' Demographics

BEHAVIORS	MANAGERS' DEMOGRAPHICS				
	Race	Sex	Age	Education	Experience
Eliminate Employee's Responsibilities	-.246**	0.047	0.032	0.061	0.031
Avoid the poor performance	-0.069	-0.077	0.006	0.078	-0.207**
Transfer the problem	-0.064	0.082	0.059	0.042	0.017
Reward the poor performance	0.057	0.057	-0.073	0.025	-0.175*
Micromanage the problem	-0.079	0.087	0.136	-0.071	.191**
Accept Excuses	-0.155*	0.018	-0.088	-0.009	-0.125
Non-Enabling	-0.025	0.119	0.068	-0.078	.149*

Correlations is significant at the .01 level (2-tailed)

Correlation is significant at the .05 level (2-tailed).

^a Sex coded 0=male; 1=female

^b Spearman rho correlations were used for education

As shown in Table 4.12, managers did not differentiate in their attributions regardless of whether the employee was younger, about the same age, or older than they were. This was evident for both internal attribution scores ($F = .816$, $p = .44$) and external attribution scores ($F = .017$, $p = .98$). In general, managers tended to attribute poor performance to internal factors (mean = 3.9, std = 1.0), but not to external factors (mean = 1.8, std = .69). Both male and female managers did not tend to attribute poor performance to external factors ($F = 2.7$, $p = .10$). However, male managers had slightly higher internal attribution scores (mean 4.1, std = 1.0) than female managers (mean = 3.8, std = 1.0) ($F = 5.48$, $p = .02$).

Behaviors and Attributions by Poor Performers' Demographics

Table 4.13 shows the correlations between Poor Performers' demographics and enabling/non-enabling behaviors. Managers were more likely to Reward the Poor Performance based on the Poor Performer's race ($r = .17$). Minority poor performers were rewarded more (mean=1.89, std=.756), than non-minority poor performers (mean=1.66, std = .583); $F(1,181)=5.01$, $p=.026$). Conversely, managers' were less likely to Reward the Poor Performance because of the Poor Performer's sex ($r = -.147$); and females were less likely to be rewarded (mean=1.64, std=.622) than males

(mean=1.84, std=.703); $F(1,189)=4.15$, $p=.043$). Additionally, Table 4.13 shows a very slight positive correlation between the Poor Performers Education and three managers' behaviors: Eliminating the Employee's Responsibilities ($r=.18$); Avoiding the Poor Performance ($r=.16$); and Transferring the Problem ($r=.150$).

Table 4.12
Relationship Between Attributions and
Managers' Demographics

(N)	INTERNAL mean (std)	EXTERNAL mean (std)
Employee was		
Younger (86)	3.99 (.95)	1.77 (.740)
Same age (70)	3.91 (.99)	1.79 (.643)
Older (40)	3.75 (1.2)	1.78 (.657)
Total 196	3.92 (1.01)	1.78 (.687)
Than the Manager		
	F=.816; p=.44	F.017; p=.98

Managers' Race		
Minority (102)	3.99 (.99)	1.8 (.730)
Non-Minority (84)	3.94 (1.11)	1.74 (.638)
Total 186	3.91 (1.04)	1.77 (.688)
	F=.111; p=.74	F=.300; p=.58

Manager's Sex		
Female (91)	3.76 (1.04)	1.68 (.607)
Male (95)	4.10 (.979)	1.84 (.742)
Total 186	3.94 (1.02)	1.76 (.682)
	F=5.47; p=.02	F=2.71; p=.10

Table 4.13
Relationship Between Behaviors and
Poor Performers' Demographics

BEHAVIORS	POOR PERFORMERS' DEMOGRAPHICS				
	Race ^a	Age	Sex ^b	Education ^c	Years Under Managers' Supervision
Eliminate Employee's Responsibilities	-.046	.133	-.009	.179*	.150*
Avoid the poor performance	.088	.127	.066	.155*	.087
Transfer the problem	.030	-.081	-.023	.150*	-.052
Reward the poor performance	.165*	.094	.147*	.097	.021
Micromanage the problem	-.022	.011	.043	-.046	.046
Accept Excuses	.075	-.028	-.042	.067	.016
Non-Enabling	.025	-.056	-.060	.004	-.033

Correlations is significant at the .01 level (2-tailed)

Correlation is significant at the .05 level (2-tailed).

^aRace coded 0=non-minority; 1=minority

^bSex coded 0=male; 1=female

^cSpearman rho correlations were used for education

As mentioned previously, managers tended to attribute poor performance to internal factors (mean = 3.9, std = 1.0), but not to external factors (mean = 1.8, std = .69). As shown in Table 4.14, managers had a greater tendency to attribute poor performance to internal factors for minorities (mean=4.1, std=.86), than non-minorities (mean=3.8, std=1.1)., managers also attributed internal factors to poor performance more for males (mean=4.06, std=1) than females (mean=3.8, std=1.1). Regarding attribution, the data seems to indicate a slight appreciable difference in how managers behave towards poor employees, based on the poor performers' race and sex. However, as with the managers' demographics, both the weak correlations and the small mean differences indicate no appreciable differences in managers' enabling behavior with poor employees, regardless of the poor performers' demographics.

Table 4.14
Relationship Between Attributions and
Poor Performers' Demographics

Employees' Race	Internal	External
Minority (76)	4.14(.860)	1.78(.709)
Non-Minority (107)	3.77(1.10)	1.76(.639)
Total 183	3.92(1.02)	1.77(.667)
	F=6.09; p=.01	F=.043; p=.84

Employee Sex	Internal	External
Female (80)	3.79(1.08)	1.69(.662)
Male (111)	4.03(.967)	1.83(.696)
Total 191	3.93(1.10)	1.77(.684)
	F=2.58; p=.11	F=1.84; p=.18

MANAGERS' COMMENTS

A little over 25% of the managers who responded to the survey wrote additional comments. Several of the comments pertained to the instrument, some felt it was too black and white, others thought it was easy and user friendly. A few of the managers suggested that the subject of employee poor performance was a very complex topic and possibly too difficult to handle with a short survey. The majority of the comments however, dealt with the issue of poor performance. Several managers felt that they did not have the proper authority from upper management to handle their poor performers. They stated that their hands were tied by contracts or they did not have the necessary resources to deal with performance problems. Some managers complained of having their employees selected for them and not being able to remove the poor performer even if the employee was not qualified to perform the job with additional training. One manager commented that, "Employee rights, probationary periods, disciplinary issues, and available training resources," predestines what managers are able to do. The manager went on to state that, "A problem employee may be carried longer than another based on the fact that we may have already expended large sums to train the employee to the point where they are now. If we have sufficient personnel or

insufficient resources we may not try so extensively to save the individual, but look to a future worker who may pay us back more bang for the buck.”

Managers indicated that some of the major problems with poor performance were the abuse of sick leave and annual leave. Several managers commented that even when they did want to officially deal with the poor performer, the process was difficult and challenging for the manager. If a poor performer files an erroneous allegation against the manager once an action is taken, a lot of time is lost in follow-up investigations. Managers felt that upper management tends to want to settle with the poor performer quickly because of the amount of time lost by the government. Managers also commented that they would like more help from their Human Resource Offices and their Employee Assistance Program Offices. One manager's comment exhibits his/her frustration with the issue of poor performance,

Due to existing regulations, non-performing employees at a minimum output can't be removed from their present position because there is no place to transfer them to; there is no vehicle to punish poor performers due to current rules and regulations, and it takes time and effort to document performance and these steps are not effective for getting rid of poor performers. It was ruled in the past that as long as an employee comes to work on time, it is the responsibility of management to make them productive.

On a different note, a few managers commented that poor management and leadership was the major complaint in the federal government. Some managers believed that it was the managers' responsibility to nurture the employee through honest feedback on performance appraisals, counseling, mentoring, and coaching. One manager commented that a good manager, should be able to motivate employees to becoming dedicated, productive professionals.

On the cusp of America going to war, one military officer offered the following:

Dealing with military members presents its own challenges. Certain behaviors are not acceptable in military organizations but may be acceptable in the private sector. Poor performance is a “force readiness” issue. Because of unique settings, rank structure, and critical skill set with multiple

interdependencies, poor performance can literally be deadly. Everyone in the unit is affected; everyone is expected to perform at certain levels. Training is a mandatory activity and is germane to the units' ability to accomplish its mission, goals, and objectives. While poor performance is generally not tolerated, everything possible is done to try to eliminate the weak member's deficits. Corrective actions focus on maximizing individual strengths. Often, one-on-one instruction is given, counseling (behavioral, financial, family, etc.) is offered and sometimes directed (mandated) as circumstances require. If the member is in a deployed location, he/she is returned to the United States...to leave him/her in certain environments would risk the lives of everyone in the unit."

NON-FEDERAL MANAGERS' RESPONSE

As stated in Chapter Three, though not part of the initial research questions, the survey instrument was distributed to a small number of non-federal managers to compare their responses with the responses of the federal managers. Of the 55 non-federal responses received, 40% were non-minority and 62% were black; 59% were female and 40.4% were male. Of the non-federal poor performers chosen by the non-federal managers, 60% were male and 48% were female; 60% were non-minority and 48% minority. The respondents had an average of 11 years tenure in their management positions. The longest tenure was 34 years and the shortest was one year. The managers had supervised their employees an average of two years, with the minimum being one year and the longest being five years.

The data indicates that non-federal managers' behavior towards poor performing employees is congruent with those of federal managers. Table 4.15 shows no appreciable difference in the enabling/non-enabling behaviors of both sets of managers. Non-federal managers chose the enabling behavior of Micromanaging the poor performer (mean = 3.7, std= .75) first, Eliminate the Employee's Responsibilities (mean = 3.1, std= .70) second, and thirdly, transfer the Problem (mean = 2.8, std= .68) as did the federal employees. Additionally, non-federal managers of poor performers also performed non-enabling behaviors. When considered with enabling behaviors, like their

federal counterparts, the use of non-enabling behaviors was the second choice of the non-federal managers (mean = 3.5, std= .52) after Micromanaging the Poor Performer, and before Eliminating The Employee's Responsibilities.

As Table 4.16 shows, non-federal managers, like federal managers, clearly attributed the employee's poor performance to internal causes (mean=3.6, std=1.1) versus external causes (mean=1.7, std=.54). Non-federal managers also did not differentiate in their attributions depending on whether the employee was younger, about the same age, or older than they were. This was evident for both internal attribution scores ($F = .187, p = .83$) and external attribution scores ($F = .51, p = .60$). Both male and female managers did not tend to attribute poor performance to external factors ($F = .925, p=.34$). However, unlike male federal managers (mean 4.1, std = 1.0) and female federal managers (mean = 3.8, std = 1.0) ($F = 5.48, p = .02$), female non-federal managers had slightly higher internal attribution scores (mean 3.6, std = 1.1) than male non-federal managers (mean= 3.5, std= 1.2); ($F=.30, p = .56$).

Table 4.15
Federal Managers' and Non-Federal Managers'
Enabling Behaviors Compared

	Federal Mean (Std)	Non-Federal Mean (Std)
Micromanage the problem	3.81 (.75)	3.70 (.80)
Non-Enabling	3.47 (.71)	3.53 (.52)
Eliminate Employee's Responsibilities	3.01 (.80)	3.08 (.70)
Transfer the problem	2.86 (.85)	2.83 (.68)
Accept Excuses	2.05 (.63)	1.88 (.57)
Reward the poor performance	1.74 (.67)	1.63 (.54)
Avoid the poor performance	1.48 (.66)	1.50 (.48)

Table 4.16
Federal Managers' and Non-Federal Managers'
Attribution Compared

	Federal Mean (Std)	Non-Federal Mean (Std)
Internal	3.9 (1.03)	3.6 (1.1)
External	1.17 (.69)	1.73 (.54)

NON-FEDERAL MANAGERS' COMMENTS

Only 14% of the non-federal managers wrote comments. A few of the comments related to the younger workers and their perception that all that is required is to have a college degree and they are able to enjoy a “good lay-back-in-your-chair-job.” Two additional non-federal managers’ indicated that they had worked for both the government and private industry. One comment captures the essence of their thoughts well:

The responsibilities of a federal government employee and a manager in a technical organization are completely different. Most government jobs do not require a person to have a bachelor’s degree. Most employees began working for the government after high school and have been in their positions for years. They tend to be more laid back and relaxed in their duties. However, I am finding the work ethics of my technical employees are starting to decline. It seems everyone wants to get paid high salaries, but no wants to be responsible for anything. Some of my employees seem to be more concerned about themselves then they are the group as a whole.

SUMMARY

The research data collected shows that managers’ behavior towards poor performers is not differentiated by managers’ or poor performers’ race, sex, or age. To a large extent, managers tend to micromanage a poor performer and seldom respond by rewarding the poor performance. Managers of poor performers also performed non-enabling behaviors. When considered with enabling behaviors, the use of non-enabling behaviors was the second choice of the managers after Micromanaging the Poor Performer, and before Eliminating The Employee’s Responsibilities.

The data also show that managers attribute poor performance to internal attributions, those things that the employee can control, such as ability, effort, and motivation versus external attributions, those the employee has no control over such as task difficulty, adequate resources, proper information, and bad luck. Though it was

clear that managers' attribute poor performance to internal causes, there is no evidence from the data that attribution played a part in which enabling/nonenabling behavior the managers exhibited toward the poor performer. This research was directed at federal employees; however, these findings appear to be consistent with how non-federal managers respond to their poor performers as well.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of this study was to examine managers' attribution of poor performance, and how that attribution reflects their response to the poor performer. The goal was to explore the relationship between managers' enabling behaviors, and their attribution of the causes for poor employee performance. Specifically, (1) what types of enabling responses are associated with managers who attribute poor performance to internal and external causes, (2) what types of enabling responses are associated with managers who differ in terms of years of experience as a manager, age, nationality/race, and sex, (3) to what extent can manager's attributions and demographic characteristics be used to predict direct and indirect enabling behaviors, and (4) is there a relationship between the managers' demographics and employees' demographics based on the managers' attribution and enabling behaviors?

The foundation of my position was that there are certain characteristic behaviors of substance abuse enablers that are also seen in managers who are dealing with poor performing employees. Therefore, the conceptual framework for my research was to overlay the construct of substance abuse enabling on the theory of attribution within the field of performance management.

The Johnson Institute (1991), known for its work in alcohol and drug abuse, describes enabling as the "ideas, feelings, attitudes, and behaviors" (p. 7) that unintentionally continue to foster drug related problems or make matters worse by not allowing the substance abuser to deal with the consequences of his/her addiction. When applied to poor performance in the workplace, enabling occurs when, for varying reasons, managers chose not to confront the poor performing employee, therefore, allowing poor performance to continue.

Managers attribute poor performance to either internal or external causes. Internal factors relate specifically to the person's ability and effort, causes over which the individual has control. External factors, on the other hand, relate specifically to the environment, task difficulty, material availability, and bad luck. External causes are influences over which the individual has no control (Mitchell & O'Reilly, 1983, Fedor &

Rowland, 1989, Liden et al., 1999, Heerwagen et al. 1985). Whether a manager determines that the cause of the behavior is internal or external, I consider allowing poor performance to continue as the *enabling of poor performance*.

What the Literature Said

Latham et al. (1980) and Mitchell & O'Reilly (1983) stated that the response the manager made to the poor performance (training, reprimand, etc.) was directly related to what the manager saw as the cause of the performance (ability, task difficulty, etc.) The literature suggested that managers tended to be more lenient toward those employees whose poor performance was the result of external factors. For example, Liden et al., (1999) stated, "empirical research has consistently shown that external attributions are associated with less severe responses to poor performance, such as discussion of the problem or a verbal warning" (p. 837). Conversely, managers tend to be more punitive on poor performing employees when the problem was attributed to internal factors (Dobbins, 1985, Heerwagen, 1985). My study did not show any appreciable difference between managers' attributions and their response to the poor performance. This may have been, at least in part, due to the fact that most managers made internal attributions.

Dobbins' (1985) study showed that male leaders were more likely to provide emotional support to both males and females, while female leaders tended to be more supportive of their female subordinates than of their male subordinates. When looking at internal versus external causes for poor performance, male leaders were harder on employees when they felt the poor performance was internal. However, women leaders treated employees the same in both internal and external attributions. My study did not show any appreciable difference between male and females' response to poor performers.

What the Research Said

Two hundred two managers from the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) and 55 non-federal managers participated in the survey. Based on the managers' responses the answers to the research questions are as followings:

Question 1: The research data collected showed that there was no appreciable relationship between the managers' attribution of the poor performance, internal or external, and the managers' behavior, enabling or non-enabling, toward the poor performer.

Question 2: The data showed no appreciable relationship between the managers' demographics and the enabling behaviors the managers chose.

Question 3: Because there was no appreciable relationship between managers' demographics and enabling/non-enabling behaviors and managers' attribution of the poor performance it was not possible to predict managers' direct and indirect enabling behaviors.

Question 4: There was no appreciable relationship between the managers' demographics and employees' demographics based on the managers' attribution and enabling behaviors.

Although answers to the research questions were not as expected, the data clearly indicated that managers attribute poor performance to internal attributions rather than to external attributions. More importantly, managers exhibit some of the same type of enabling behaviors towards poor performing employees as enablers of substance abusers. Examples of those behaviors are avoiding the problem and eliminating the person's responsibilities. Additionally, managers performed certain enabling behaviors more than other enabling behaviors.

1. Managers' first choice of enabling behaviors was Micromanaging the Poor Performer by *requesting updates on incomplete projects, providing daily support to the poor performer, requesting documentation of all work activities, and providing daily counseling.*

2. Managers' second choice was to, Eliminate the Employee's Responsibilities by *extending project deadlines, continuing to request updates on incomplete projects, requesting documentation of all work activities, and providing daily counseling.*
3. Managers' third choice was to Transfer the Problem by *recommending another job that has less requirements, recommending a job that fits the employee's skill level assigning different tasks until they find one the employee can accomplish, transfer the employee to another office, and reassigning the job to another employee.*
4. Additionally, but with less frequency, managers indicated that they would Accept Excuses from the employee regarding *personal family issues, insufficient training, and physical illness*; Reward the Poor Performance by *giving ratings commensurate with the norm of the office, and promoting the employee into another job*, and Avoid the Poor Performance by *reducing the requirements of the task, and doing nothing because of the possibility of having a grievance filed against them.*

When considered with enabling behaviors, the use of non-enabling behaviors was the second choice of the managers after the enabling behaviors of Micromanaging the Poor Performer, and before Eliminating The Employee's Responsibilities.

CONCLUSIONS

As mentioned previously, the results from this research suggests that managers who deal with poor performers exhibit some of the same characteristics of enablers of substance abuse. For instance, enablers of substance abusers may take on the substance abusers' household responsibilities, and managers may eliminate the employee's responsibilities. Likewise, enablers of substance abusers avoid the individual and accept excuses for the abuse and managers accept excuses from poor performers whether due to family/childcare issues, physical illness, or insufficient training.

Thomas et al. suggested that substance abuse enabling behaviors could be categorized into Direct and Indirect Enabling. Substance abuse Direct Enabling is the behavior that focuses on abusers' actual drinking behavior while Indirect Enabling focuses on abusers' non-drinking behavior. Neither category allows substance abusers to fully understand and accept the consequences of their addiction.

As in substance abuse enabling, Direct and Indirect enabling of poor performance, does not allow the poor performer to fully understand and accept the consequences of the poor performance. Table 5.1 illustrates Direct and Indirect Enabling behaviors that managers' use with poor performers.

Direct Enabling is the managers' behavior that attempts to address the performance issue, but does not address the poor performer. Some of these Direct enabling behaviors are: Micromanaging the Poor Performer by *requesting updates on incomplete projects, providing daily support to the poor performer, requesting documentation of all work activities, and providing daily counseling*; Eliminating the Employee's Responsibilities by *extending project deadlines, continuing to request updates on incomplete projects, requesting documentation of all work activities, and providing daily counseling*; and Transferring the Problem by *recommending another job that has less requirements, recommending a job that fits the employee's skill level assigning different tasks until they find one the employee can accomplish, transfer the employee to another office, and reassigning the job to another employee*.

In Indirect Enabling of poor performance, the manager does not attempt to address either the performance issue or the poor performer, but to varying degrees, avoids both issues. Indirect Enabling behaviors by the manager are: Accepting Excuses from the employee regarding *personal family issues, insufficient training, and physical illness*; Rewarding the Poor Performance on less frequent bases by doing things such as *giving ratings commensurate with the norm of the office, and promoting employee into another job, before Avoiding the Poor Performance by reducing the requirements of the task, and doing nothing because of the possibility of having a grievance filed against them*.

Not only did the research show that managers exhibit enabling behaviors towards poor performing employees, it clearly indicated that an enabling behavior

Table 5.1
Managers' Enabling Types

Enabling Type	Manager's Response	Action
DIRECT	Micromanage the problem	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide close, daily support • Continue to request updates on incomplete projects • Request documentation of all work activities • Provide daily counseling
	Eliminate Employee's Responsibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extend the deadline • Work with the employee to complete the task • Complete the task yourself • Continue to work the performance issue yourself
	Transfer the problem	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recommend another job that has less requirements • Recommend a job that fits the employee's skill level • Assign different tasks until you find one the employee can accomplish • Transfer the employee to another office • Reassign the job to another employee
INDIRECT	Accept Excuses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do not respond because of personal family issues of the employee • Accept child care issues as the reason for incomplete work • Accept traffic problems as an excuse for missed deadlines • Be lenient because of Insufficient training • Excuse the problem due to a physical illness
	Reward the poor performance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote employee into another job • Give performance ratings commensurate with the norm of the office • Concur on promotion recommendations to help employee find another job • Increase the employee's responsibilities to show you believe in his/her abilities
	Avoid the poor performance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do nothing because of the possibility of having a grievance filed against you • Do nothing because of the possible negative reaction of the employee • Give annual bonuses to all employees so no one employee is singled out • Reduce the requirements of the task

continuum exists. This continuum of Non-Enabling and Enabling actions is supported by the frequency of the behaviors exhibited by managers in my study. At one end of the continuum are Non-Enabling in which managers require poor performers to accept the responsibilities of the job and to perform that job at an acceptable level or deal with the consequences of the poor performance. After non-enabling behaviors the next area of the continuum shows behaviors in which managers attempt to address the poor performance by *continuing to request updates on incomplete projects* and *working with the employee to complete the task*, however, actions in this part of the continuum still do not make the poor performer deal with the consequences of the poor performance. In the middle of the continuum, are behaviors in which the manager does not address the poor performer, but works to eliminate the performance issue by separating the poor performer from the job such as *transferring the employee to another office*, and *reassigning the job to another employee*.

At the opposite end of the continuum are behaviors in which managers do not attempt to do anything about either the performance issue or the poor performer. Managers exhibit such behaviors as *doing nothing because of the possible negative reactions of the employee* and *giving performance ratings commensurate with the norm of the office*, and *accepting family/child care issues for incomplete work*. Table 5.2 shows the areas of the continuum with characteristic behaviors for each area.

The managers' responses to the survey follow the continuum. However, some of their comments suggest that the behaviors managers actually exhibit in the workplace are more towards the avoidance end of the continuum. An example of these comments is:

Due to existing regulations, a non-performing employees at a minimum output can't be removed from their present position because there is no place to transfer them to; there is no vehicle to punish poor performers due to current rules and regulations, and it takes time and effort to document performance and these steps are not effective for getting rid of poor performers. It was 'ruled' in the past that as long as an employee comes to work on time, it is the responsibility of management to make them productive.

Table 5.2
Enabling Continuum

Areas of Continuum	Behaviors Within Each Area
Manager addresses both the performance issue and the poor performer.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Give an oral warning Consult w/upper management Give a written warning Consult a HR for help Refer employee EAP Remove employee from job Recommend termination Harsh reprimand
Manager addresses the performance issue, but not the poor performer.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Request updates Provide daily support Request Documentation Daily counseling Work w/employee to complete Continue to work issue Extend the deadline Complete the task yourself
Manager eliminates the performance issue by separating the poor performer from the job.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Job that fits skill level Assign different task Job with less requirements Reassign the job Transfer employee
Manager does not address the performance issue or the poor performer.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Give ratings like the norm Increase responsibility Promote to another job Insufficient training Physical illness Family issues Concur on promotion Childcare issues Traffic problems Reduce the task Negative reaction Possible grievance filed Annual bonuses to all

It is quite possible that the managers responding to the survey answered the survey questions based on what they *would do* and not what they *actually do*, and the comments are more indicative of their actual behavior. However, it should be noted that the small sample of non-federal employees responded in a similar fashion as the federal managers.

RECOMMENDATIONS

For Managers and Organizations

This research documents, for the first time, the concept of enabling in the workplace when the enabling has nothing to do with substance abuse. However, like substance abuse enablers, managers who enable poor performers may not realize that the behaviors they exhibit, as helpful as they may think they are being, are actually detrimental to the process of helping the poor performer become a productive performer. Educating managers to the fact that enabling does occur in the workplace, and making them aware of what constitutes enabling behaviors, would clearly help managers deal more effectively with poor performers. This would also be true for the organization as a whole.

Managers may enable poor performers because of the constraints imposed upon them by the organization's culture. Several of the comments received by the managers indicated that there was a concern about dealing with performance issues because the organization would not support the managers' decisions or that the process the managers have to go through is challenging. For example, several managers felt that they did not have the proper authority from upper management to handle their poor performers, that their hands were tied by contracts, and they did not have the necessary resources to deal with performance problems. Therefore, organizations need to develop and support policies that encourage non-enabling behaviors.

For Future Research

Certainly, the results of this survey would have been more conclusive if more managers had responded. Most government agencies were hesitant about letting employees respond to a survey that was not officially conducted by the Office of Personnel Management (OPM). Once the results of this study are reported back to OPM's Office of Merit Systems Oversight and Effectiveness, it is my hope that that organization will conduct a similar study.

Several studies from the literature reported definite causal effects between managers' attributions and responses to poor performance. Because this study did not show an appreciable difference between the managers' internal or external attributions and enabling or non-enabling behaviors, further research is needed to understand why certain managers chose particular corrective behaviors and on what they base those choices.

A qualitative study on the subject of attribution and enabling behaviors would also be beneficial. Interviews in which managers are asked follow-on questions will allow those managers to give additional information about the poor performer's performance. This type of study will also permit additional dialogue and more insight into the attribution decision and why particular enabling or non-enabling behaviors were chosen.

Additionally, a study to understand why managers choose internal or external attributions and the biases associated with that decision would add to the understanding of this subject. There may be a relationship between why the managers choose a particular attribution and their enabling or non-enabling behavior.

There are a great deal of resources available on the subject of intervention for substance abuse. Enablers of substance abusers have several guides to help them learn how to stop the enabling process. Similar guides are not available for enablers of poor performance. Research into what steps managers can take to stop enabling behaviors with a poor performer would clearly help the manager become more effective and would help the employee become more productive.

Research is also needed to determine if the culture of the organization plays a part in managers' attribution of the poor performance. For example, it is possible that an organization's culture influences the enabling/non-enabling behaviors that managers exhibit toward poor performance.

Finally, though the enabling behaviors formed a continuum it was interesting to note that when the non-enabling behaviors were coupled with the enabling behaviors, the use of non-enabling behaviors was the second choice of the managers after Micromanaging the Poor Performer, and before Eliminating The Employee's Responsibilities. Research to determine the basis on which managers take enabling versus non-enabling actions is needed.

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APPENDIX A
TYPES OF PERFORMANCE PROBLEMS ^A
 ROBERT C. LIDEN, 1981 (PP. 7-9)

I. Poor job attendance (Withdrawal)	Absenteeism
Chronic illness	Alcoholism
Imprisonment	Religious beliefs
Weather conditions, riots, etc.	Overstaying leaves, vacations
Personal business	Tardiness
II. Insubordination	Refusal to take tests
Refusal to sign patent agreement	Refusal to obey an order
Violation of safety rules	Refusal to work overtime
Assaults on supervisors	Physical assault
Threat of physical violence	Abusive language
Disrespectful attitude	III. Misconduct (Disruptive Behavior)
Damaging company property	Sabotage
Conspiracy to commit sabotage	Dishonesty
Falsification of job application	Disclosing criminal convictions
Stealing company property	Falsifying work or time records
Falsifying expense accounts	Falsifying to obtain health benefits
Embezzlement ^b	Revealing Confidential information to outsiders ^c
Inappropriate dress and grooming	For public image
For safety and health	Fights and altercations
Gambling	Unorganized
Organized	Garnishment
Horseplay and gossiping ^c	Intoxication and alcoholism
Drug abuse	Outside employment (moonlighting)
False claims to cover moonlighting	Working for competition
Direct competition	Sleeping and loafing
Loafing after making incentive quota	Sleeping during break
Strike activities	Wildcat Strikes
Misconduct during legal strikes	Violation of non-smoking rule
Loan Sharking	Violation of no-firearms rule
Political activity on company property	Failure to report an accident
Subversive activity	Communist activity
KKK Activity	IV. Poor work
Inadequate (incomplete) performance	Failure to meet production Standards
^c Slowing down before holidays for overtime	Failure to manage time effectively ^c
Late in completing projects ^c	Unwilling to do mundane tasks ^c
Errors	Lack of concern for quality ^c
Needless attention to detail ^c	Lack of knowledge
Inadequately trained ^c	Does not know what customers want ^c
Does not have necessary ability ^c	Carelessness
Gross negligence	Accident repetition
Failure to follow proper procedure	
Disability	Mental illness
Poor physical condition	Stress and emotional disorder ^d

^a Performance problems adopted from the Bureau of National Affairs Editorial Staff (1978) unless noted below.

^b From Lawler (1976)

^c From the pretest of the investigation; ^d From Miner and Brewer (1976)

APPENDIX B**LISTS OF STRATEGIC FACTORS CONTRIBUTION TO INEFFECTIVE PERFORMANCE**

John Miner, J. Frank Brewer, 1976 (pp. 998 – 999)

Business Organizations: Miner (1963, 1966, 1975)

1. Intelligence and job knowledge
 - a. Insufficient verbal ability
 - b. Insufficient special ability other than verbal
 - c. Insufficient job knowledge
 - d. Defect of judgment or memory
2. Emotions and emotional illness
 - a. Continuing disruptive emotion (anxiety, depression, anger, excitement, shame, guilt, jealousy)
 - b. Psychosis (with anxiety, depression, anger, etc., predominating)
 - c. Neurosis (with anxiety, depression, anger, etc., predominating)
 - d. Alcoholism and drug problems
3. Individual motivation to work
 - a. Strong motives frustrated at work
 - b. Unintegrated means to satisfy motives
 - c. Excessively low personal work standards
 - d. Generalized low work motivation
4. Physical characteristics and disorders
 - a. Physical illness or handicap, including brain damage
 - b. Physical disorders of emotional origin
 - c. Inappropriate physical characteristics
 - d. Insufficient muscular or sensory ability
5. Family ties
 - a. Family crises
 - b. Separation from an emotionally significant family
 - c. Social isolation
 - d. Predominance of family considerations over work demands
6. The groups at work
 - a. Negative consequences associated with group cohesion
 - b. Ineffective management
 - c. Inappropriate managerial standards or criteria
7. The company
 - a. Insufficient organizational action
 - b. Placement error
 - c. Organizational over-permissiveness
 - d. Excessive span of control
 - e. Inappropriate organizational standards or criteria
8. Society and its values
 - a. Application of legal sanctions
 - b. Enforcement of cultural values by means not connected with the administration of the law
 - c. Conflict between job demands and cultural values as individually held (equity, freedom, morality, etc.)

9. Situational forces
 - a. Negative consequences of economic forces
 - b. Negative consequences of geographic location
 - c. Detrimental conditions of work
 - d. Excessive danger
 - e. Problems in the work itself

Business Organizations: Steinmetz (1969)

1. Managerial and organizational shortcomings
 - a. Lack of proper motivational environment
 - b. Personality problems
 - c. Inappropriate job assignment
 - d. Improper supervision
 - e. Lack of training
 - f. Failure to establish duties
2. Individual, personal shortcomings of the employee
 - a. Lack of motivation
 - b. Laziness
 - c. Personality clashes
 - d. Dissatisfaction with job assignment
 - e. Failure to understand one's duties
 - f. Chronic absenteeism
 - g. Alcoholism
 - h. Mental illness
 - i. Chronic illness
 - j. Senility
 - k. Sex
3. Outside influences
 - a. Family problems
 - b. Social mores
 - c. Conditions of the labor market
 - d. Governmental actions
 - e. Union policies
 - f. Climate

APPENDIX C**DEFINITIONS OF POSSIBLE CAUSES OF POOR PERFORMANCE**

Terence r. Mitchell & Charles A. O'Reilly, 1983 (p.210)

1. Insufficient intellectual ability: A lack of the ability to understand, learn, or express oneself well, e.g., low IQ or low verbal ability.
2. Insufficient job knowledge: A lack of adequate information about job duties and/or job requirements or a lack of experience with a particular type of job, e.g., being unaware of a company policy or production technique.
3. Counterproductive emotional states: Emotional states, which interfere with or prevent satisfactory performance on the job, e.g., severe anxiety or depression.
4. Use of drugs or alcohol: Being under the influence of, or in the aftereffect of, drugs or alcohol, e.g., drunk, under influence of amphetamines, or hangover.
5. Alcoholism or drug addiction: Having a dependency on the drug as well as being under the influence of its aftereffects of, e.g., amphetamines addiction or alcoholism.
6. Low work standards: A worker defining success in terms of very low personal standards and or experiencing satisfaction at low levels of performance, e.g., a worker being content to be the least productive employee.
7. Low work motivation: A generally demonstrated lack of interest in the job and/or a general lack of effort on the job, e.g., the "lazy" or "uninvolved" worker.
8. Physical limitations: Insufficient, personal physical capacities for a particular job, e.g., a person may be too short, too weak, blind, uncoordinated.
9. Family crises: Unusual family situations, which interfere with or prevent satisfactory job performance, e.g., divorce, sickness, or death in family.
10. Predominance of family considerations over work demands: A noncrisis family situation one which the worker is more responsive to family demands, e.g., taking job time for child care refusing to travel because of family commitments.
11. Negative work group influences: Informal work group influences, which are counterproductive for the organization, e.g., group norm to restrict output or a group ostracizing a worker and negatively affecting his/her/work.
12. Counterproductive work environment: Environment factors which interfere with or prevent satisfactory job performance, e.g., excessive heat or cold for a particular worker or excessive noise level.
13. Inadequate communications to the worker concerning performance: The organization does not clearly communicate expectations about job performance and/or does not give feedback about deficiencies which need correcting, e.g., failing to make clear when a worker is to be at work or a supervisor failing to tell a worker he/she is breaking a work rule.
14. Conflict of personal values and job requirements: The worker's personal values, derived from family and culture, prevent or interfere with the worker performing satisfactorily, e.g., religious values proscribe a worker from working overtime on Saturday.

APPENDIX D**TYPES OF MANAGER REACTONS TO PERFORMANCE PROBLEMS**

Robert C. Liden, 1981 (P. 12)

1. Kipnis & Cosentino (1969)
 - a. Verbal (diagnostic; corrective)
 - b. Increased supervision (extra instruction; inspection)
 - c. Situational change (reassignment; transfer)
 - d. Penalty (reprimand; extra work; reduced privileges)
 - e. Referral (to a superior, peer, specialist, personnel)
 - f. Written warning
 - g. Termination

2. Rosen & Jerdee (1974)
 - a. No action
 - b. Oral warning; no written record
 - c. Oral warning; written record
 - d. Written reprimand
 - e. One week suspension without pay
 - f. Discharge

3. Miner & Brewer (1976)
 - a. Transfer
 - b. Change job
 - c. Warning
 - d. Suspension (no Pay)
 - e. Counseling
 - f. Training
 - g. Discharge

4. BNA Editorial Staff (1978)
 - a. Oral warning
 - b. Written warning
 - c. Disciplinary layoff (suspension)
 - d. Discharge

5. Pretest (actions not listed above)
 - a. Discuss the incident; no warning

APPENDIX E

ENABLING BEHAVIORS
JOHNSON INSTITUTE 1982

1. Doing something helpful and supportive.
2. An individual who reacts to an alcoholic in such a way as to shield the alcoholic from experiencing the full impact of the harmful consequences of alcoholism.
3. Helps person think that drinking is not the problem – wife calling in sick for the husband.
4. Person who goes along with the alcoholics' drinking "to calm his nerves," "to endure her sadness or loneliness," because he works so hard," or for any other reason.
5. Taking on the responsibilities that the drinking person would be doing but isn't. Doing for the alcoholic what the alcoholic normally would be doing for self.
6. Enablers look at it as a sincere effort to help both the family and the drinker.
7. The enabler seldom views the drinker as one who cannot control drinking, but rather as an individual who simply chose to drink in order to cope with some pressure.
8. Excuses the behavior because it is seen as the result of another problem.
9. Rationalize their behavior – see themselves as concerned people who want to help someone they care very much about.
10. Avoids the person – simply withdraws from all possible contact.
11. Enabler tries to control things in the family by:
 - a. Canceling social events where there is drinking
 - b. Disposing of extra quantities of liquor
 - c. Calling home at midday to determine if the alcoholic is sober
 - d. Relieving the alcoholic of a portion of office work and personally doing the job
 - e. Assuming household responsibilities that the alcoholic used to hold.

APPENDIX F**TYPICAL CHARACTERISTICS OF CODEPENDENTS (ZERWEKH & MICHAELS 1989)**

1. We assume responsibility for other's feelings and/or behaviors.
2. We feel overly responsible for others' feelings and/or behaviors.
3. We have difficulty in identifying feelings – Am I angry? Lonely? Sad? Happy? Joyful?
4. We have difficulty expressing feelings – I am feeling...happy, sad, hurt, joyful.
5. We tend to fear and/or worry how others may respond to our feelings.
6. We are perfectionists and place too many expectations on ourselves and others
7. We have difficulty making decisions.
8. We tend to minimize, alter, or even deny the truth about how we feel.
9. Other people's actions and attitudes tend to determine how we respond/react.
10. We tend to put other people's wants and needs first.
11. Our fear of other's feelings (anger) determines what we say and do.
12. We question or ignore our own values to connect with significant others. We value others' opinions more than our own.
13. Our self-esteem is bolstered by outer-other influences. We cannot acknowledge good things about ourselves.
14. Our serenity and mental attention are determined by how others are feeling and/or behaving.
15. We tend to judge everything we do, think, or say harshly, by someone else's standards – nothing is don, said, or thought "good enough."
16. We do not know or believe that being vulnerable and asking for help is both okay and normal.
17. We do not know that it is okay to talk about problems outside the family, that feelings just are feelings, and that it is better to share them than to deny, minimize, or justify them.
18. We are steadfastly loyal, even when the loyalty is unjustified and often personally harmful.
19. We have to be "needed" in order to have a relationship with others.

APPENDIX G
QUESTIONNAIRE

As a manager, if an employee CONTINUALLY does not meet the acceptable level of performance required, how likely are you to...	Very Likely			Not Likely	
1. Consider the lack of skills	5	4	3	2	1
2. Refer employee to an EAP counselor	5	4	3	2	1
3. Extend the deadline	5	4	3	2	1
4. Continue to work the performance issue yourself	5	4	3	2	1
5. Recommend another job that has less requirements	5	4	3	2	1
6. Promote employee into another job	5	4	3	2	1
7. Provide close, daily support	5	4	3	2	1
8. Don't respond because of personal family issues of the employee	5	4	3	2	1
9. Be lenient because of insufficient training	5	4	3	2	1
10. Counsel the employee	5	4	3	2	1
11. Reassign the job to another employee	5	4	3	2	1
12. Complete the task yourself	5	4	3	2	1
13. Remove employee from the job	5	4	3	2	1
14. Increase the employee's responsibilities to show that you believe in his/her abilities	5	4	3	2	1
15. Excuse the problem due to a physical illness	5	4	3	2	1
16. Work with the employee to complete the task	5	4	3	2	1
17. Consult a Human Resource representative for help	5	4	3	2	1
18. Give performance ratings commensurate with the norm of the office	5	4	3	2	1
19. Assign different tasks until you find one that the employee can accomplish	5	4	3	2	1
20. Recommend termination	5	4	3	2	1
21. Recommend a job that fits the employee's skill level	5	4	3	2	1
22. Accept traffic problems as an excuse for missed deadlines	5	4	3	2	1
23. Give an oral warning	5	4	3	2	1
24. Reduce the requirements of the task	5	4	3	2	1
25. Consult with upper management	5	4	3	2	1
26. Transfer the employee to another office	5	4	3	2	1
27. Give annual bonuses to all employees so no one employee is singled out	5	4	3	2	1
28. Give a written warning	5	4	3	2	1
29. Do nothing because of the possibility of having a grievance filed	5	4	3	2	1
30. Continue to request updates on incomplete projects	5	4	3	2	1
31. Concur on promotion recommendations to help employee find another job	5	4	3	2	1
32. Provide daily counseling	5	4	3	2	1
33. Request documentation of all work activities	5	4	3	2	1
34. Impose a harsh reprimand (like docking of pay)	5	4	3	2	1
35. Accept child care issues as the reason for incomplete work	5	4	3	2	1
36. Consider the lack of knowledge of the requirements	5	4	3	2	1
37. Do nothing because of the possible negative reaction of the employee	5	4	3	2	1

Please think about a current, or a previous poor performer in answering the following items...

1. To what extent is/was the cause of the poor performance due to...	A lot				Not at all
	5	4	3	2	1
a. personal characteristics of the employee	5	4	3	2	1
b. the difficulty of the task	5	4	3	2	1
c. lack of adequate resources	5	4	3	2	1
d. employee's attitude	5	4	3	2	1
e. bad luck	5	4	3	2	1
f. family problems	5	4	3	2	1
g. lack of motivation	5	4	3	2	1
h. lack of effort	5	4	3	2	1
i. lack of proper information to complete the job	5	4	3	2	1
2. To what extent is/was the cause of the subordinate's performance...	5	4	3	2	1
a. unchangeable	5	4	3	2	1
b. temporary	5	4	3	2	1
c. stable over time	5	4	3	2	1

Please choose one the following response as it pertains to your current/previous poor performer...

Based on your age, is the person	Younger	About the same age	Older
Race/National Origin	Asian/Pacific Islander	Black (not Hispanic)	Hispanic
	White (not Hispanic)	American Indian/Alaskan Native	
Sex	Female	Male	
Education	High School	Bachelors	Masters Post-graduate
How many years has/was employee under your supervision?			

Please chose one of the following response as it pertains to you...

Number of years as a supervisor/manager							
Age	Less than 20	20's	30's	40's	50's	60's	70 or more
Race/National Origin	Asian/Pacific Islander	Black (not Hispanic)	Hispanic				
	White (not Hispanic)	American Indian/Alaskan Native					
Sex	Female	Male					
Education level	High School	Bachelors	Masters	Post-graduate	Doctorate		

Please add any additional comments about how managers deal with poor performers.

Creda P.J. Parham**PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE****Sep 90 – Present Central Intelligence Agency
Program Manager**

- Serve in a variety of managerial positions including:
 - Public Affairs Officer
 - Satellite Control Manager
 - Director, Executive Secretariat
 - Program Budget Manager
 - Career Development Manager

Sep 94 – Aug 95 American Political Science Association

Congressional Fellows Program/Foreign Affairs Fellowship

- Legislative Assistant in the office of Senator Carl Levin (D-MI). Principal staff support regarding healthcare, welfare, and education.
- Legislative Assistant in the office of congressman Edolphus Towns (D-NY). Researched, prepared legislation, and speechwriter on environmental issues.

**Jan 82 – Aug 90 Air Force Commissioned Officer
Space Systems Officer**

- Directed the facilities engineering activities for satellite development.
- Supervised military and contractor launch preparations and planned operational readiness activities for several spacecraft programs.
- Directed Mission control Team activities while sending commands to and processing electronic signals received from orbiting spacecraft.
- Provided first-hand missile attack warning and assessment information to North American Air Defense command (NORAD).

EDUCATION

May 2003, Ph.D. Adult Learning/Human Resource Development, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, Falls church, VA. Dissertation: The Construct of Substance Abuse Enabling Applied to Poor Performance Management: How Managers Deal With Poor Performing Employees.

May 1986, M.S. Human Resource Management & Development, Chapman University,
Orange, CA.

Dec 1981, B.S. Radio and Television, University of Arizona, Tucson, AZ