

Mindful Email: Strategies for Leaders

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Introduction

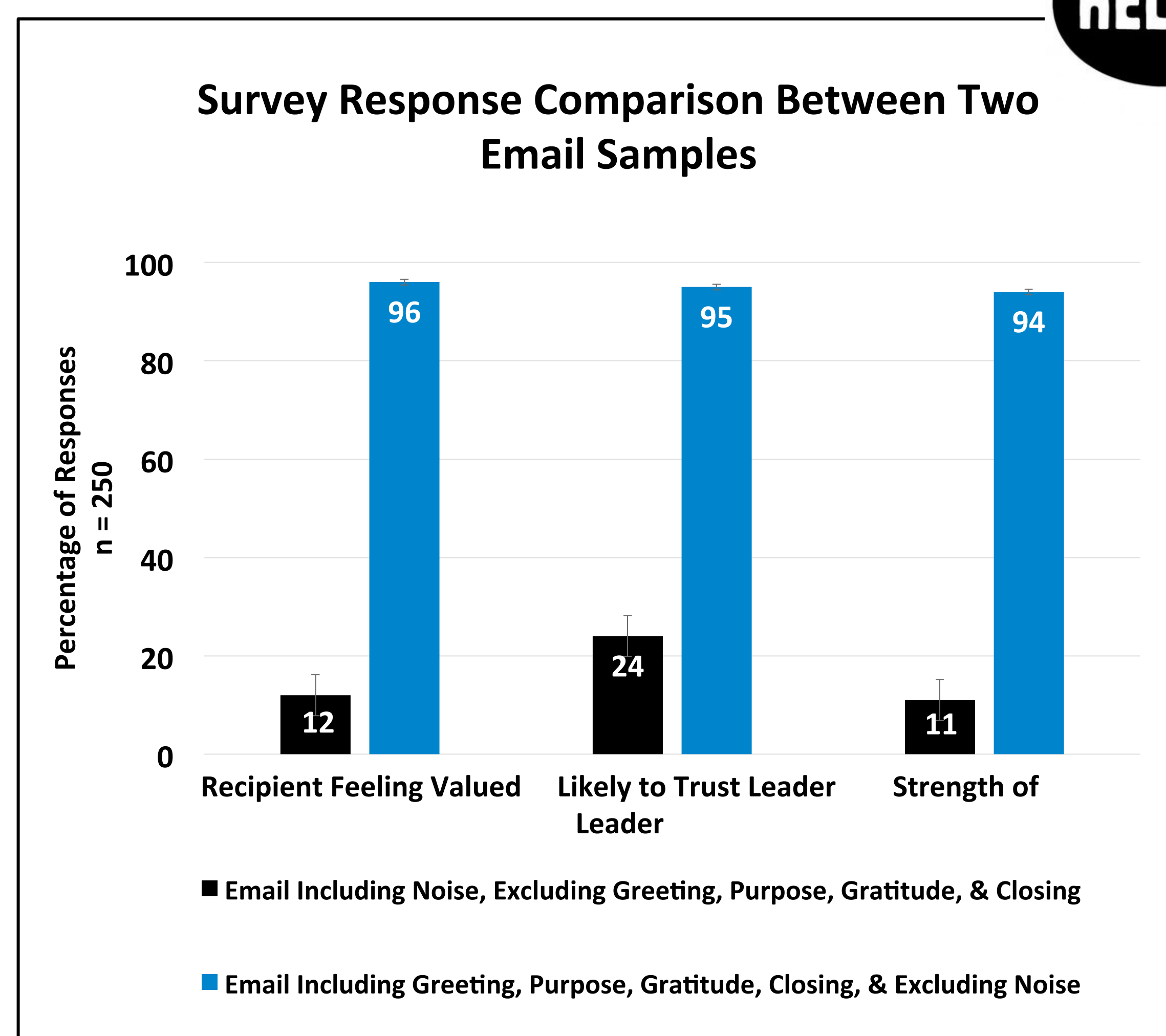
I aim to explore different ways to think about the concept of mindfulness and how it relates to professional email communication.

Goal: Identify mindful email practices for leaders that can be easily implemented and most impactful in the workplace.

Methods

- Literature Review** Academic, historical, and management texts
- One on One Interviews** 10 staff members at The University of Texas at Austin
- Online Survey** 250 anonymous U.S. residents through Mechanical Turk

Results



HELLO!

Greetings Matter

Survey participants reported feeling more valued, more likely to trust a leader, and more strength of leadership when a greeting was included in a leader's email.

Contradictions from Interviews

In emails from leaders:
BREVITY admired & detested
GRATITUDE necessary & superficial

Mindfulness is Effective

Interviews reported almost identical descriptions of effective and mindful email. Survey participants reported low confidence in a leader who sends emails with errors.

64%

Purpose Ranks #1

Most important element in a leader's email is purpose.

WHY?

"Being mindful is understanding that since email is an impersonal way to communicate a message, you reinsert the personal aspect and it connects people. It brings the human element back in."

Conclusions

More employers and organizations should recognize this important aspect of professional communication and provide resources, such as guidelines, trainings, and opportunities for honest conversations about email behavior.

Mindful Email: Strategies for Leaders

- Be clear with your intent - include expectations and relevance to recipient(s)
- Keep messages short – but long enough to include important information
- Provide clues for tone - demonstrate emotions related to intent and purpose of message
- Be precise – with message information and recipients chosen
- When possible, include the elements of a greeting, purpose, gratitude, a closing, and exclude errors
- Determine when another method of communication is more appropriate than email

Literature Cited

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Further Thoughts

Other topics to consider for mindful email: recipients, environment, timing, and style.
Extend mindful communication beyond email to practice mindfulness with every form of professional interaction.