

2017

Employee Lived Experiences and Initiative Success in Arkansas Quality Award Recipient Organizations

Carol Barton

Walden University, ca_barton@sbcglobal.net

Follow this and additional works at: <http://scholarworks.waldenu.edu/current>



Part of the [Leadership Studies Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Barton, Carol, "Employee Lived Experiences and Initiative Success in Arkansas Quality Award Recipient Organizations" (2017).
Current/Present Programs & Posters. 25.
<http://scholarworks.waldenu.edu/current/25>

This Book is brought to you for free and open access by the Research Symposium at ScholarWorks. It has been accepted for inclusion in Current/Present Programs & Posters by an authorized administrator of ScholarWorks. For more information, please contact ScholarWorks@waldenu.edu.

Employee Lived Experiences and Initiative Success in Arkansas Quality Award Recipient Organizations

Carol A. Barton, PhD

Abstract

Employee experiences and their stories about their experiences influence quality management and continuous improvement initiatives. Transcript analysis of semistructured interviews revealed the most meaningful experiences were those with people, then materials, feelings, time, and space. The study findings also showed that people transferred problem-solving methods from the workplace to their homes and communities.

Problem

Businesses use quality initiatives as a strategy to increase their competitiveness, sustainability, and profitability. Given these imperatives it is surprising to discover that the failure rate for implementing quality initiatives varied between 60% to 90% (Mosadeghrad, 2014).

General problem

Companies with failed initiatives **lose revenue, experience higher expenses, and have fewer market opportunities.**

Specific problem

The **impact** of employee **lived experiences** on quality initiative success **has not been explored.**

The Arkansas Governor's Quality Award is a state level business excellence award that uses the Baldrige Excellence Framework to increase Arkansas businesses' understanding of the requirements for performance excellence. Organizations that received an award have demonstrated an understanding of the importance of a successful quality management system.

Purpose

To examine the lived experiences of employees in companies that received an Arkansas Governor's Quality Award in order to discover if a relationship existed between their lived experiences and the implementation of successful quality initiatives.

Relevant Literature

Conceptual Frameworks

Offered inverse ways of looking at how people make sense of their environment.

- **System of profound knowledge** (Deming, 2013) and
- **Theory of sensemaking** (Weick, 1995)

Storytelling

- People are hardwired as story tellers and story listeners (AbdulSabur et al., 2014; Hasson and Frith, 2016).
- Therefore, just as organizations are groups of people, organizations are groups of stories (Boje, 2008).

Interpretive Phenomenology

- Lived experience can be classified into one or more existentials: (Van Manen, 2014).
 - Relationality – the experience of relationships
 - Materiality – the experience of things
 - Corporeality – the experience of the body
 - Spatiality – the experience of space
 - Temporality – the experience of time

Call for Studies

- Dahlgaard and Dahlgaard-Parks (2006) called for researchers to examine emotional competency as a contributing factor in successful quality initiatives.
- Gondo and Amis (2013) called for qualitative studies to explore the relationship between successful quality initiatives and organizational transformation.

Research Questions

What are the lived experiences of employees contributing to organizations receiving the Arkansas Governor's Quality Award?

- Subquestion 1: What stories are told in organizations recognized with an Arkansas Governor's Quality Award?
- Subquestion 2: How does storytelling influence quality management and continuous improvement choices and thereby influence organizational transformation?

Procedures

Design

- Interpretive phenomenological study
- Semistructured interviews

Sample

- 11 people in 8 organizations
 - Government, Education, Food Science, Health Care, Manufacturing
 - Non-profit, publicly traded, privately owned

Data Sources

- Demographic information
- Recorded interviews
- Pre- and post-interview researcher bracketing
- Field notes and reflective journal kept during project
- Member check of experience summary

Procedures

- Interviews recorded and transcribed word-for-word
- Participant experience summary created
- Emergent and descriptive coding
- Coding for van Manen's (2014) existentials

Data Analysis

The analysis included using the hermeneutic circle of whole, part, whole; descriptive coding, participant experience summaries, and a word cloud.

Findings

People changed themselves first and their organizations afterwards.

The most successful organizations had **internal champions.**

Adopting quality management success factors changes organizational **culture.**

Emotions affected participant experiences and the sense that they made out of those experiences. Frontline employees are more likely to change the way they work when **managers' actions matched managers' statements.**

Limitations

Study Design - Interpretive phenomenology relies on the researcher to act as the interpreter for the participant's experiences.

Sample Size & Composition - Arkansas is a right-to-work state

Data Collection Environment

- Face-to-face interviews in person or via Skype
- Telephone conference calls

Conclusions

The **outcome** of receiving an Arkansas Governor's Quality Award **arose** from the **experiences** of the participants. All participants said the effort of making the changes required to receive the award was worth it.

Confirmed the importance of human and social factors in the success or failure of a quality initiative and that these factors are not limited to a specific industry or size of organization.

Participants demonstrated the **problem-solving model** in Deming's **system of profound knowledge.**

Social Change Implications

Stories and storytelling have the power to **drive** workplace and community **change.** People's **stories** about their workplace experiences and how they solve problems **follow** people **home.**

People's **use** of the problem-solving tools from the workplace to solve problems **outside their workplaces** produce a **virtuous cycle of continuous improvement** within their **homes and communities.**

People's **self-identity changes** as they learn to solve problems in different ways. These changes **affect** how they **interact** with their **environment.**

Supervisory Committee: Dr. **Walter McCollum**, Chairperson, Dr. **Robert Levasseur**, Member, Dr. **Jean Gordon**, University Research Reviewer