2021

The Role of Leadership Communication Patterns on Organizational Effectiveness

Nidal Pascoe
Walden University

Walden University

College of Social and Behavioral Sciences

This is to certify that the doctoral study by

Nidal Pascoe

has been found to be complete and satisfactory in all respects,
and that any and all revisions required by
the review committee have been made.

Review Committee
Dr. Kristen Chesser, Committee Chairperson, Psychology Faculty
Dr. Nancy Bostain, Committee Member, Psychology Faculty
Dr. John Schmidt, University Reviewer, Psychology Faculty

Chief Academic Officer and Provost
Sue Subocz, Ph.D.

Walden University
2021

Abstract

The Role of Leadership Communication Patterns on Organizational Effectiveness

by

Nidal Pascoe

BA, The University of Mary Hardin Baylor, 2006

MA, The University of Mary Hardin Baylor, 2008

Doctoral Study Submitted in Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Psychology in Behavioral Health Leadership

Walden University

August 2021

Abstract

The communication patterns of leaders in the workplace are vital to ensuring productivity

and meeting organizational mission and goals. The quality of workplace communication

from the leaders impacts the perceptions of employees about the workplace and their

ability to fulfill organizational missions and goals. Communication can be delivered

through multiple technological means, in person, and in writing. Message delivery also

can convey the tone of the sender. The purpose of this case study was to identify the

communication patterns between the executive leaders and six of eight site leaders of a

nonprofit counseling center focused on serving children and families to determine if

increased communication from the leaders would improve the site leaders' perceptions of

the workplace. The Baldrige excellence framework was used to assess the

communication patterns between the executive leaders and the site leaders. Data

werecollected and analyzed from the organization's executive team and site leader

interviews, exit and stay interviews. The study results identified current workplace

patterns of communication. The results indicate improved work environments may create

greater levels of job satisfaction and less turnover for many organizations.

Recommendations to enhance communication among the leadership team in order to

decrease turnover intentions, increase employees' job satisfaction and improve service

delivery were provided. These recommendations could aid in advancing organizational

effectiveness which may lead to further quality improvements that will have a positive

social change impact at individual, organizational, and community levels.

The Role of Leadership Communication Patterns on Organizational Effectiveness

by

Nidal Pascoe

BA, The University of Mary Hardin Baylor, 2006

MA, The University of Mary Hardin Baylor, 2008

Doctoral Study Submitted in Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Psychology in Behavioral Health Leadership

Walden University

August 2021

Table of Contents

List of Tables

List of Figures

Section 1a: The Behavioral Health Organization

Communication is the process of sharing, transmitting, and mutually understanding information between or among individuals or groups (Bull & Brown, 2012). Organizations pursue methods of communication that best suit their needs (Bull & Brown, 2012). The executive leaders of Central Needs Counseling Center (CNCC), the pseudonym of a nonprofit counseling center focused on serving children and families that was the focus of the study, have expressed the need to define the organization's communication patterns, challenges, and barriers to improve its communications with six of the leaders of CNCC's eight satellite sites to increase its effectiveness in meeting the needs of clients.

The executive leaders are the president, chief program officer (CPO), director of program training, director of family and youth services, director of clinical services (DCS), and director of the new Fatherhood Program (CPO, personal communication, September 13, 2020). The executive team was created based on a third-party evaluation that the organizational structure caused confusion for staff that led to the organization continuing to fall short of meeting the number of clients required by grants and contracts (CPO, personal communication, October 13, 2020, & November 11, 2020). The process of restructuring has been in effect for the past 2 years and has led to CNCC terminating its relationship with an overseeing organization and transitioning to become an independent organization (CPO, personal communication, October 13, 2020). The organization was forced to assess its practices and make changes to continue to operate.

The new structure changed from a management team at each of the eight satellite sites to one executive leadership team. The DCS explained that each leader of the executive team would focus on one area of importance, such as clinical services or training, and that each satellite site would be overseen by a site leader (personal communication, July 11, 2020). This reconfiguration of the organizational structure was meant to streamline operations at the satellite sites. The concern is that there does not appear to be a cohesive communication process between the two leadership teams.

According to the DCS, CNCC is a nonprofit organization that serves children and their families in 31 counties in a southern U.S. state (personal communication, July 11, 2020). CNCC began offering services in 1991 by attending initially to the needs of individuals experiencing homelessness and then expanding into a hub offering mental health care to children and families (CPO, personal communication, October 13, 2020). CNCC has worked to establish programs to (a) deliver services to families providing foster care and adoption, and (b) educate and counsel children in all familial situations from birth to the age of 17 (CPO, personal communication, October 13, 2020).

CNCC has developed programs and services aligned with its mission to "nurture children, strengthen families, and restore hope through counseling, foster care, and adoption" (CPO, personal communication, 2020). Organizations use their mission statements to focus their service goals (Schefczyk & Peacock, 2010). According to the CPO, the foster care and adoption programs help to connect children with their families (personal communication, October 13, 2020). To achieve its mission of nourishing and strengthening families, CNCC has added a program offering counseling services to the

fathers of children ages 0 to 17 years (CPO, personal communication, October 13, 2020). The purpose of the additional program is for providers to gain access to other members of the children's support systems who may be able to help (CPO, personal communication, October 13, 2020).

The provision of counseling services is CNCC's most successful endeavor. The CPO reported that 85% of clients have used and continue to use these counseling services. CNCC's vision lies in "ensuring that every child has a healthy, forever family" (CPO, personal communication, October 13, 2020). To accomplish its mission and vision, CNCC maintains the values of respecting others, using others' strengths, and empowering others (Site Leader 1, personal communication, September 13, 2020). The values of CNCC expressed by the executive leaders and site leaders have acted as a guide for families by demonstrating what healthy environments entail while also determining the need for services and programs. The CPO shared that programs are developed based on the expressed needs of current and past clients (personal communication, November 11, 2020).

CNCC can accomplish its mission and work toward its vision by hiring and maintaining a staff of highly qualified individuals (CPO, personal communication, October 13, 2020). Historically, CNCC hired untrained students and individuals who showed an interest in working in the areas of counseling or community education (DCS, July 11, 2020). However, when CNCC transitioned to become a resource in the state through a state-funded contract, it was forced to reevaluate its hiring processes (CPO, personal communication, October 13, 2020). CNCC staff now include graduate-level

interns and postgraduate interns finalizing their required clinical hours for full licensure as licensed professional counselors (LPCs) and marriage and family therapists (MFTs; CPO, personal communication, October 13, 2020). CNCC's note-keeping system also prepares clinicians when they become licensed to work for health care agencies or in private practice (Site Leader 3, personal communication, December 7, 2020). CNCC's eight sites are set up with offices arranged to offer individual, family, group, and play therapy. The clinicians can work as full LPCs with the operational settings provided through therapy space and support staff (CPO, personal communication, September 13, 2020; Site Leader 1, September 13, 2020).

State contractual regulations require the hiring of qualified individuals, the setting of appropriate goals, and the establishment of metrics through work plans that are reported on and met to maintain funding (CPO, personal communication, November 1, 2020). Annual training provided to clinicians is not only a regulatory requirement but also an asset (CPO, personal communication, September 13, 2020). Continuing education is a benefit to clinicians and clients.

<div align="center">**Practice Problem**</div>

CNCC has matured into a resource that annually delivers services to more than 16,000 families and offers more than 25,000 hours of counseling as well as opportunities for community education in such topics as caregiver burnout, emergency preparedness, parenting skills, and anger management (CPO, personal communication, October 13, 2020). To maintain its current client base as well as expand its services to new clients, the organization is challenged by the need to address the poor communication patterns within

its ranks (DCS, personal communication, July 10, 2020). The leadership team's poor communication patterns for implementing value-driven programs and services has created discord at CNCC (DCS, personal communication, July 10, 2020). Watzlawick (2018) asserted that the communication patterns in successful organizations are clear and effective.

Although the mission of CNCC is to improve the lives of families and children, site leaders have described the internal culture of CNCC as unhealthy. The almost total absence of interpersonal communication has left their staff feeling "confused," "unsupported," and "anxious" (Site Leader 1, personal communication, June 18, 2020). One site leader and the CPO described communication as complicated (personal communication, June 12, 2020). Rahim and Cosby (2016) argued that employee turnover often is the result of the leaders' communication patterns. Varona (1996), supported by later research by Vandenberghe and Bentein (2009) and Wombacher and Felfe (2017), asserted that employee satisfaction with communication from leaders can lead to more organizational commitment and fewer turnover intentions. According to Vandenberghe and Bentein, the best predictor of turnover intentions is the lack of relationships with supervisors. Jarupathirun and De Gerraro (2018) viewed employee turnover as the costliest challenge facing organizations. Negative factors in the workplace such as stress and poor relationships with other workers may affect employees' job satisfaction (Waltz et al., 2019).

I focused on ways to improve the communication patterns between CNCC's executive leaders and site leaders. One research question guided the study: Will improved

communication patterns from the executive leaders affect site leaders' job satisfaction in the workplace?

Purpose

The purpose of this case study was to identify the communication patterns between the executive leaders and six of eight site leaders of a nonprofit counseling center focused on serving children and families to determine if increased communication from the leaders would improve the site leaders' perceptions of the workplace. Parker et al. (2012) considered clear communication a necessary component of job satisfaction. Two elements that Parker et al. found were workers' impressions of how supportive the leaders were and how meaningful staff felt their jobs to be. The responsibility of organizational leaders lies not in their particular leadership styles but in the consistency of the styles when communicating with staff (Pless et al., 2012). Each leadership style requires leaders to collaborate with staff to reach organizational goals.

I used the Baldrige excellence framework (National Institute of Standards and Technology [NIST], 2017) to assess the communication patterns between CNCC's executive leadership team and the site leaders. The framework was used to evaluate the responsibility of the leaders in terms of guiding staff and assessing their concerns about the breakdown in communication patterns and deteriorating engagement of site leaders leading to turnover intentions.

Data from the exit and stay interviews, along with interviews with three executive leaders and six site leaders, were collected to assess the ways that the communication patterns were managed and the perceptions of the site leaders about the influence of

communication from the executive leaders on workplace satisfaction. Exit interviews are conducted by the executive leaders with staff prior to employees leaving CNCC. It is an evaluation of the work experience to include the employees' satisfaction with leadership teams' communication (DCS, personal communication, July 10, 2020). The DCS defined a stay interview as being similar to asking, "How's my driving?" She explained that the stay interview is used to assess how employees feel about their employment to avoid dissatisfaction and reduce turnover intentions (personal communication, July 10, 2020). Data from the exit and stay interviews were provided by the executive leadership team for review, and interviews were conducted with three executive leaders and six site leaders. I developed the interview questions to obtain the participants' perspectives about communication patterns in CNCC. Only executive leaders and site leaders were interviewed.

The participants answered the interview questions to identify communication patterns between the executive leaders and the site leaders. According to Holzwarth et al. (2020), clear and effective communication patterns can increase employees' organizational commitment and decrease turnover intentions. Therefore, improvements in communication patterns between executive leaders and site leaders could decrease turnover intentions and the need to train new staff at CNCC. Improved communication patterns between executive and site leaders also could increase the time and resources available to invest in new services and programs for delivery to more clients. Workplace communication patterns, be they negative or positive, affect the physical and psychological health of employees (Kelly & MacDonald, 2019).

Significance

Improved communication patterns between the executive leaders and site leaders would help CNCC to retain staff and improve the delivery of services and programs. Chakravarti and Chakraborty (2015) concluded that listening is the best way to prevent employee turnover and increase job satisfaction. They maintained that organizational leaders who develop the appropriate listening skills create a workplace environment that allows employees to share any struggles that they are having. Listening will enhance the workplace experience for employees and reduce job dissatisfaction as well as turnover intentions (Chakravarti & Chakraborty, 2015). By retaining site leaders by improving their communication patterns, the executive leaders will be able to develop strong programs to meet the needs of communities more effectively and efficiently.

Effective communication from and among leaders can enhance the workplace climate and functionality of any behavioral health organization (BHO; Vermeir et al., 2018). More effective communication patterns could be practiced by CNCC and shared with other BHOs to create workplace environments with high levels of employee satisfaction and place more focus on the quality of services and programs provided. Clients would then reap the benefits of increased levels of communication, as evidenced in the quality of services and programs offered. A workplace that has more effective communication will have a positive influence on social change by giving staff the opportunity to provide services and programs more efficaciously and reducing staff turnover intentions (Heewon & Scott, 2019).

Summary and Transition

CNCC has a history of striving to improve the lives of clients and has expanded to provide multiple services to clients. The lack of clear and effective communication patterns in CNCC between executive leaders and site leaders has affected their relationship and has contributed to workplace dissatisfaction and staff attrition. Healthy workplace communication patterns provide benefits to both executive leaders and site leaders. By conducting interviews with executive leaders and site leaders, along with reviewing organizational documentation relevant to stay and exit interviews, I was able to determine how communication patterns between the executive leaders and the site leaders were failing at CNCC and what could be done to improve the communication patterns. The BHO's organizational profile and key factors are identified in Section 1b to better understand the current functioning and need for improved communication patterns between the executive leaders and the site leaders.

Section 1b: Organizational Profile

The primary problem facing CNCC is the lack of clear and effective communication patterns between the executive leaders and the site leaders. The focus of this study was to understand the current communication patterns of the executive leaders and site leaders to determine their effect on the workplace environment. I sought to identify ways to improve communication between executive leaders and site leaders to increase job satisfaction and decrease turnover intentions. Understanding the current workplace environment of the organization, along with its mission, vision, and values, helped me to identify areas where communication had broken down. Lysova et al. (2019) acknowledged that organizations that focus on their mission statements only develop tunnel vision, which hinders the growth of relationships between leaders and staff.

Organizational Profile and Key Factors

The hierarchical structure of the organization was developed 2 years ago and has been a learning process since then (CPO, personal communication, July 11, 2020; DCS, July 11, 2020). The former structure did not provide easy access to information or collaboration among the different satellite sites. The new structure has attempted to unify the organization, minimize miscommunication, and maximize adherence to policies and procedures. The former structure was under a governing organization that was responsible in name only (CPO, personal communication, July 11, 2020; DCS, personal communication, July 11, 2020). The CPO expressed that reports were given by CNCC as a matter of routine rather than for aid, because the governing organization was not a decision maker (personal communication, July 11, 2020). Instead, the board of directors

and the executive leadership team have assumed responsibility for making decisions and running CNCC. The governing organization and CNCC's board of directors, along with the executive leadership team, made a mutual decision to terminate their relationship so that CNCC could become a stand-alone organization (CPO, personal communication, September 13, 2020. All parties worked toward that goal because CNCC had developed a relationship with the [State] Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS) and other stakeholder groups (DCS, personal communication, July 11, 2020). With the end of one relationship and the genesis of a new one, CNCC noticed differences, challenges, and advantages that made the organization a prime candidate for a study focused on communication improvements.

CNCC offers counseling and educational services and programs to children and families in the state. Children or families, be they adoptive, fostering, or biological families, with children ages 0 to 17 years receive free services and counseling as needed (CPO, personal communication, October 13, 2020). A new program to individually counsel and educate the fathers of children from birth to age 17 was developed by CNCC to meet a need in the community (DCS, personal communication, July 10, 2020).

According to Site Leader 1 (personal communication, September 13, 2020), CNCC offers group counseling as well as education and support groups for children and families. The community learning events provide stakeholders and communities with resources for the populations served. CNCC has received significant funding from a state contract to provide quality services and programs at no cost to clients (Organizational website, 2021). The free services and programs make CNCC a marketable entity and a

referral resource to many schools and organizations in the counties where CNCC is located. CNCC delivers services in 31 counties from eight satellite sites in cities and populations of various sizes (Organizational website, 2021). With such a large service area, the mission of CNCC is to provide services and programs that focus on the development of children and families. The vision guides CNCC to develop new services and programs (CPO, personal communication, October 13, 2020).

The mission and vision of CNCC present opportunities as well as constraints for employees. The site leaders and their staff have the opportunity to be creative, counsel from their respective theoretical approaches, and use tools and techniques that can benefit clients clinically (CPO, personal communication, October 13, 2020). These elements of service are not limited to CNCC staff at one site; rather, they are encouraged across the organization (CPO, personal communication, October 13, 2020).

Personal communications with the CPO, DCS, and Site Leader 1 provided insight into the staffing structure of CNCC. CNCC has a board of directors; an executive leadership team; a site leadership team; and staff comprising counselors, family support specialists (FSSs), and support personnel (CPO, personal communication, October 13, 2020; DCS, July 10, 2020; Site Leader 1, personal communication, September 13, 2020). CNCC hires graduate and postgraduate interns and counselors, and it offers part-time and full-time positions. Counselors at CNCC must be students in graduate counseling programs at the practicum or internship level, or they must be LPC Associates (LPC-As) and MFT Associates (MFT-As) earning hours toward licensure. FSSs must have at least a bachelor's degree in psychology or social work or be attending graduate counseling

programs (CPO, personal communication, October 13, 2020; DCS, July 10, 2020; Site

Leader 1, personal communication, September 13, 2020).

For CNCC to comply with state licensing board and ethics guidelines, the

positions of counselors, interns, and FSSs are determined by education and license

requirements (CPO, personal communication, October 13, 2020). Alignment with the

state board ethics guidelines mirrors the mission and vision of CNCC. Because the focus

of CNCC is to provide counseling and other services and programs to children and

families, CNCC must adhere to the aforementioned guidelines to meet clients' needs

appropriately (CPO, personal communication, October 13, 2020).

The hiring of LPC-As, MFT-As, and graduate-level interns is considered an asset

for CNCC, according to the DCS (personal communication, July 10, 2020). Hiring LPCs

gives them the opportunity to gain experience and enhance their skills as clinicians while

increasing their knowledge of administrative responsibilities, a skill that can be learned

only through hands-on practice (DCS, personal communication, July 11, 2020). Hiring

interns and providing them with organizational practice from more experienced staff can

reduce burnout rates and turnover intentions (Koppel et al., 2017). The counseling interns

enable CNCC to offer no-cost services and programs in the communities where they

practice and help the interns to earn hours toward licensure.

CNCC has eight satellite sites primarily in rural areas that provide more clients

with access to education and care services (CPO, personal communication, October 13,

2020). Because of COVID-19 pandemic restrictions, CNCC has begun using telehealth as

an option to make it easier for clients to access treatment (CPO, personal communication,

October 13, 2020; Site Leader 1, personal communication, September 13, 2020). The

telehealth platform also ensures the use of social distancing and allows the site leaders to

continue to communicate with each other and the executive leadership.

As mentioned, CNCC has a hierarchical organizational structure (CPO, personal

communication, October 13, 2020). The board of directors is at the top. Members of the

executive leadership team meet with the board of directors (CPO, personal

communication, October 13, 2020). The site leadership team comprise the leaders of the

eight satellite sites. The site leaders oversee their offices and manage caseloads. Even

though the site leaders are supposed to be fully licensed clinicians, this past year, the

DCS reported that two of them were interns at the postgraduate level because of

employee turnover (personal communication, July 10, 2020). Other clinicians such as

FSSs and support staff comprise the fourth group. Members of the board of directors

work closely with a few executive team members, who then carry information back to the

site leadership team to disseminate it to the clinicians and support staff (CPO, personal

communication, October 13, 2020). The DCS oversees the site leaders, is on the

executive leadership team, and is responsible for sharing information with the site leaders

and acting as a liaison between the site leaders and the executive leadership team (CPO,

personal communication, October 13, 2020). The chart in Figure 1 outlines the

organizational structure of CNCC.

Figure 1

Organizational Structure of CNCC
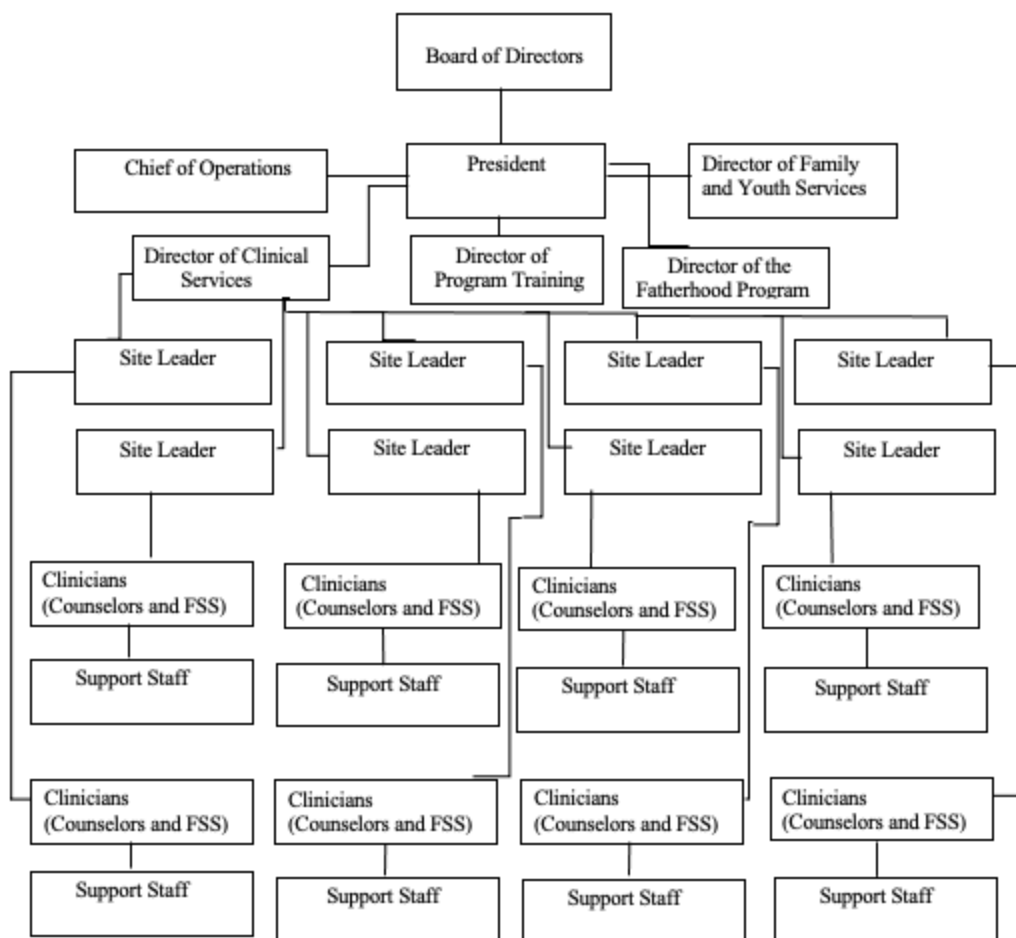
Organizational Background and Context

CNCC provided services and programs to more than 16,161 families and children in 2019 (CPO, personal communication, September 13, 2020). The organization is intent on transitioning away from the overseeing organization. Although that organization remains available for support, CNCC is working to become independent. Most of the recipients of services and programs are underserved children and families (DCS, personal communication, July 11, 2020). The foremost referral sources are DFPS and schools, but

with schools being closed because of COVID-19 restrictions, most cases have come from

DFPS (Site Leader 3, personal communication, June 25, 2020). These families are

seeking help, but they are unable to receive it. The families often are given resources and

support once children are removed from the home environment (DCS, personal

communication, July 11, 2020; Site Leader 3, personal communication, June 25, 2020). I

studied the communication patterns between executive leaders and site leaders to

determine what was needed to increase job satisfaction and retain clinicians to help these

families.

    Jia and Shoham (2012) stated that communication is an essential part of

emotional, informative, and instrumental support. Interns who are still learning their

profession are working with limited experience and skills. The ability to practice and

develop what clinicians call a "toolbox" is offered through CNCC. Waltz et al. (2019)

explained that working in an environment with perceived supportive relationships will

improve retention rates. As part of a growth-centered industry, the CPO stated that

CNCC wants to retain and expand its services and programs (personal communication,

July 11, 2020). By analyzing its current poor communication patterns and looking for

ways to improve communication patterns between executive and site leaders, CNCC as

an organization will benefit, and the site leaders will become more skilled in managing

their sites and providing services and programs.

    The CPO and site leaders stated that CNCC faces strategic challenges as well as

advantages specific to the health care services and programs that the organization

provides (personal communication, July 11, 2020). The CPO and DCS reported that

CNCC offers free counseling, foster and adoption services, and educational services and programs to families and the public (personal communication, July 11, 2020). The site leaders allow the clinicians to be creative in their therapeutic approaches within the limits of state licensure and CNCC policies. The clinicians also are offered training in areas of professional interest selected by CNCC. Some satellite sites even give clinicians the option of making their own training selections (DCS, personal communication, July 11, 2020). The clinicians, site leaders included, completed more than 25,000 hours of practice in 2019 (Site Leader 1, September 13, 2020). One challenge observed by Site Leader 1 was that the lack of cohesion regarding communication between and among the satellite sites was the result of the poor communication patterns of executive leaders.

Consideration should be given to developing an integrated understanding of the mission by both leadership teams (i.e., executive and site; Lysova et al., 2019). The goal of the newly formed structure is interdependency. The changes to organizational functioning since 2020 have placed some strain on the amount of attention to building healthy communication patterns between the executive leaders and the site leaders (DCS, personal communication, January 20, 2021).

With growth come the refocusing and rewriting of items such as mission statements. MacLeod (2016) stressed the importance of developing mission and vision statements that reflect the tone of the workplace environment. MacLeod asserted that the leaders' focus on preparing the mission and vision statements, along with communicating effectively with staff, will see organizational missions and visions come to fruition. Having consistency between the mission and vision statements was one area of

institutional context that needed to be addressed. Clarifying the vision and finding ways to achieve the vision strategically have been ongoing efforts for CNCC (CPO, personal communication, September 13, 2020).

According to multiple site leaders and the DCS, the restructuring of the organization has led to delays in the dissemination of information (Site Leader 1, personal communication, July 11, 2020; DCS, personal communication, June 25, 2020, and November 18, 2020). Details about the new structure and the sharing of communication between the executive leaders and the site leaders have not yet been sorted out. Eight satellite sites and none of the executives being located at any of the sites has meant disruptions in communication for the site leaders (Site Leader 1, personal communication, November 11, 2020). A process is being established with the new DCS to act as a communications liaison between the executive leaders and the site leaders.

The development of new processes revealed that employee turnover remains a concern for CNCC (DCS, personal communication, July 11, 2020). The standard procedure when employees from any level of the organization decide to leave is to conduct exit interviews (CPO, personal communication, September 13, 2020). It was brought to the attention of the site leaders during the interviews that they did not have the opportunity to address outstanding workplace issues that were precipitating employees' decisions to leave (Site Leader 2, July 11, 2020). The idea of conducting stay interviews was developed by the site leaders. This tool became a prompt for staff to discuss issues that they were struggling with and initiate communication between executive leaders and site leaders regarding staff who were leaving the organization. Jarupathirun and De

Gennaro (2018) found that satisfaction with organizational leaders had a direct correlation to turnover intentions.

As the satellite sites continue to make efforts to develop new processes to meet organizational goals and address clients' needs, they also must manage their fiscal resource planning and maintain proper ethical practices (CPO, personal communication, July 11, 2020; DCS, personal communication, July 11, 2020). CNCC is bound by rules and regulations for funding that were established by the state; therefore, it must follow developed work plans that define practice boundaries when delivering services and programs to clients (CPO, personal communication, September 13, 2020). CNCC must comply by completing many forms, gathering information from each client, and meeting an agreed-upon number of clients to receive funding to continue to offer services (CPO, personal communication, September 13, 2020). Most funding comes from the contract with DFPS, but CNCC also receives contributions from local churches, individuals, and various other local donors (CPO, personal communication, September 13, 2020).

The clinicians are required to follow their respective boards of licensure and ethics (DCS, personal communication, July 11, 2020). Each state has regulations on what and how clinicians are allowed to do in their practices depending on the licensure or education obtained. Following licensure requirements can be challenging because there is a level of interpretation regarding codes and ethics. CNCC hires graduate-level interns, so school requirements and regulations are to be followed, in addition to partially licensed clinicians' code of ethics and rules to include supervision (DCS, personal communication, October 13, 2020).

Summary and Transition

CNCC is in the process of expanding and has areas that need to be addressed if it wishes to continue practicing and maintaining its services and programs to communities in 31 counties in the state. The poor communication patterns between executive leaders and the leaders of the satellite sites have been recognized internally, and efforts are being made to address staff turnover rates. Small steps have been taken to create more open communication patterns. Although CNCC does not have much competition in the large rural area that it delivers services and programs to, and even though it sees clients at no cost, the organization depends on DFPS and local communities for funding. The desire of CNCC to maintain a growth mindset was observed through communication with the executive leaders and site leaders. Planning and execution are areas where CNCC has been successful because of recommendations made by third-party analysis and through the interviews conducted with staff. Section 2 presents details about the background of the organization, its expansion plans, and the importance of improving the communication patterns between the executive leaders and the site leaders.

Section 2: Background and Approach

The lack of clear and effective communication patterns between CNCC's executive leaders and the satellite site leaders was identified through observations and personal communications. Interviews with three executive leaders and six site leaders provided more details about the poor communication patterns between the executive leaders and the site leaders. The purpose of this case study was to identify the communication patterns between the executive leaders and six of eight site leaders of a nonprofit counseling center focused on serving children and families to determine if increased communication from the leaders would improve the site leaders' perceptions of the workplace.

The review of the literature supported the current study and the need for further evaluation of CNCC's executive leaders' communication patterns. This study is one of the first to examine communication challenges in the workplace by directly addressing the problem facing CNCC. The communication patterns between the executive leaders and the site leaders were investigated to identify where communication was failing. This section includes information about specific client populations served and how they are reached and engaged. Also explained is the data collection process. Included is the information obtained through the exit and stay surveys and interviews with three executive leaders and six satellite site leaders of CNCC.

Supporting Literature

Academic databases were used to search for information to support the problem of the lack of communication between the executive leadership team and the leaders of

the satellite sites. The databases and journals included ERIC, Business Source Complete, ProQuest, PubMed, Emerald Insight, and PsycINFO. Key search terms to identify relevant research were *leadership and communication, leader-staff relationship, job satisfaction, communication in the workplace, workplace communication, effective communication, importance of workplace communication, workplace strategies and communication, coworker satisfaction, professionalism in the workplace*, and *leadership styles*. More articles were obtained from the references cited in the reviewed articles.

The literature has a deep history dating back to the early 1900s. Barnard (1966), influenced by Kurt Lewin and other psychologists of that time, began to study workplace functioning and identified key elements needed for the workplace to thrive. Barnard identified the functions that executive leaders need to perform and maintain to be effective. One area that Barnard focused on was communication. Barnard stressed that organizational leaders must establish lines of communication that are clear, direct, and known to all, and that organizations should not distract or interrupt the function of communication by focusing only on reaching goals or metrics at any cost. More recent researchers have described the need for workplaces to have communication that is clear and supportive so that staff can focus on their jobs (Nordby, 2015; Varona, 1996; Waltz et al., 2019).

Studies conducted by Bull and Brown (2012) with a financial organization, Pincus et al. (1990) with bank supervisors, Waltz et al. (2019) with nurses, and Varona (1996) with three organizations in Guatemala shared similar results. Although the leaders mentioned in the studies seemed to function with the same communication patterns and

had the desire to improve their respective workplace environments, employee turnover and job dissatisfaction continued in apparently healthy organizations. Jia and Shoham (2012) found that higher reports of communication satisfaction correlated with higher levels of job satisfaction.

In a seminal study, Lull et al. (1955) found a link between productivity and communication. The lack of engagement by organizational leaders has been perceived as a lack of care and support that has led to dissatisfaction and lower levels of productivity (Lull et al., 1955). Surveys completed by the presidents of 100 corporations indicated that 96% of the respondents knew that there was a link between their communication styles and the productivity of their companies (Lull et al., 1955). A study that Clampitt and Downs (1993) reviewed concluded that lower rates of absenteeism and fewer complaints by staff occurred when communication was effective.

Pincus et al. (1990) stated that elements of communication can predict organizational effectiveness, meaning that communication must be perceived as positive to have a constructive influence on employees. Pincus et al. hypothesized that employees' perceptions of their leaders' communication patterns were linked directly to job satisfaction. Pincus et al. used a communication climate instrument to evaluate the communication relationship, and they developed a survey to measure job satisfaction in the workplace. Chakravarti and Chakraborty (2020) defined listening-centered communication within organizations as attentive and clear communication. The listening-centered communication practiced by leaders increased employees' commitment to the organizations and resulted in less employee turnover. Results confirmed that

communication was an influential factor in job satisfaction (Chakravarti & Chakraborty, 2020).

Waltz et al. (2019) developed and completed a qualitative study with 33 nurses to identify areas of engagement. Communication was found to hamper or enhance the engagement of staff, depending on staff perceptions of the quality of the communication. Communication that was perceived as convenient and considerate toward nurses was viewed as positive and enhanced their perceptions of the workplace (Waltz et al., 2019). The engagement that resulted from increased communication was shown throughout the study to enhance the workplace environment and improve the retention of staff (Waltz et al., 2019).

Cowin and Eager (2013) studied nursing teams in the acute care setting to identify factors that could result in harm to patients. They found that unclear or little communication from leaders affected the care teams and ultimately influenced patient care. Cowin and Eager concluded that breakdowns in communication from the leaders to the nurses were harmful to patients.

Coburn and Hall (2014) studied nurses' perceptions of job quality and found that when instruction was provided by leaders with clarity, the nurses felt more confident caring for patients. This renewed confidence in their work prevented the nurses from leaving their jobs. Van Dierman and Beltman (2016) reviewed a similar situation of managers communicating to their department staff to identify factors critical for positive workplace change. Results showed that the communication patterns of the managers led workers to feel inspired and confident in doing their jobs.

Choren (2015) shared a personal account of the need for communication in the field of engineering. Choren explained that communication from the leaders led to promotions and opportunities in the organization. Choren also acknowledged the need for communication to ensure the functioning of the workplace and that without it, personal growth within the work area would not exist. The communication led to job satisfaction and growth. Mitrofan and Bulborea (2013) sought to identify the influence of internal communication patterns on employees' perspectives of workplace satisfaction. They found that communication in the workplace from leaders to staff improved long-term employment because the employees felt valuable and loyal to the company.

De Nobile (2017) surveyed a sample of more than 350 school staff members to discover if communication from leaders had an influence on staff members' job satisfaction. The purpose of the study was to identify what the leaders were doing to reduce staff attrition in their schools. The survey results indicated a positive correlation between communication from their school principals and the job satisfaction of staff. De Nobile found that job satisfaction was linked to the type of communication from the school leaders, described by the respondents as supportive and encouraging.

Sources of Evidence

The articles and books that I reviewed were used in conjunction with personal interviews and discussions with leaders. The review of CNCC documents such as exit and stay interviews were included for reference. Previous studies have identified the importance of the perceived relationship between executive leaders and subordinates. For example, Nghe et al. (2020) evaluated the relationship between lead nurse managers and

midlevel nurse managers and found that when the lead nurse managers engaged staff

through such influencing behaviors as clear and positive communication, the midlevel

nurses were more confident in their work and content with their work environment.

Communication has been found helpful in creating a workplace environment that

increases job satisfaction. Pincus et al. (1990) used the term *communication climate* when

referring to communication. The study resulted in the 13 banking organizations in the

sample identifying a positive correlation between staff members' perceptions of the

leaders' communication styles and job satisfaction (Pincus et al., 1990).

The review of the literature indicated that communication patterns reflecting

encouragement and support increase employees' job satisfaction and decrease turnover

intentions. The information from CNCC mirrored the results of the reviewed studies in

the expression of lack of support and its influence on the workplace. Consequently, the

poor communication patterns between CNCC's executive leaders and site leaders needed

to be addressed.

Leadership Strategy and Assessment

The executive leaders communicate well with the board of directors and submit

the appropriate reporting that the board requires (CPO, personal communication,

September 25, 2020). The board is not involved in decision making; instead, board

members oversee primarily financial decisions made by CNCC (CPO, personal

communication, September 25, 2020). The CPO stated that the executive leaders help to

develop services and programs that have been identified as being needed in the

community setting and determine what the funding contracts require of CNCC (personal

communication, July 11, 2020). The communication patterns between the executive leaders and the site leaders do not appear to enforce any of the communication or procedural processes that CNCC has adopted. Because the executive leaders do not deliver the services and programs to clients, they do not know the specific issues that the leaders of the satellite sites face daily (Site Leader 1, personal communication, December 7, 2020). As a result, their developments are not always applicable.

The executive leaders established the position of DCS to follow up with the concerns and issues expressed by the leaders of the satellite sites (CPO, September 13, 2020). The DCS is responsible for the flow of communication between the site leaders and the executive leaders. Although the DCS also encourages direct contact with the executive leaders, there has been no follow-up communication with the site leaders to resolve concerns expressed by the site leaders (Site Leader 1, personal communication, December 7, 2020). According to the DCS (personal communication, November 11, 2020), the executive leaders are supportive of increasing communication with and independence of the satellite sites, but they do not desire to be closed off from others and continue to not follow established communication protocols with the site leaders. Noncompliance with protocols already in place has caused confusion and delayed attention to concerns raised by the site leaders related to understaffing because of staff turnover.

Changes either are not communicated by the executive leaders to the site leaders or are not explained clearly enough when they are communicated (CPO, personal communication, November 16, 2020; Site Leader 1, personal communication, December

7, 2020). The site leaders are forced to take their concerns to any executive leaders whom they can reach, but these executive leaders sometimes are not aware of or know how to address their concerns. As a result, Site Leader 1 expressed that the executive leaders are unable to offer support or helpful direction (personal communication, December 7, 2020). This example was raised multiple times during the interviews with the site leaders. The solution for the executive leaders appears to lie in placing site leaders at other satellite sites that are not experiencing problems rather than managing the issues by offering proper training or potentially terminating difficult staff (DCS, personal communication, November 11, 2020).

Strategies to address challenges are shared between executive leaders and site leaders through face-to-face discussions or emails (Site Leader 1, personal communication, September 13, 2020). However, some site leaders have already developed their own ways of addressing issues. There does not appear to be any uniformity in the sharing of information among the site leaders. The key strategic challenge is the lack of communicating through formal established channels, which has led to confusion and a lack of cohesion among the satellite sites. The lack of continuity and consistency in communication patterns from the executive leaders is generating a fractured and frustrated workplace environment (DCS, November 11, 2020).

Clients/Population Served

The clients served by CNCC have access to two programs: foster care and adoption services or referred counseling services (CPO, personal communication, July 11, 2020). The new Fatherhood Program is a counseling service specifically developed

for fathers who have children between 0 and 17 years of age (CPO, personal communication, July 11, 2020). I focused on the counseling programs offered by the site leaders and the executive leaders involved in the counseling programs. Counseling clients can be children, the siblings of identified clients, the parents, the children and parents, and even members of the extended families (CPO, personal communication, September 25, 2020). Short-term counseling is conducted through the clinicians' chosen theoretical perspectives. Each site leader ensures that the counselors have training in various approaches such as trust-based relational interventions and other trauma-informed treatment modalities (DCS, personal communication, July 11, 2020).

The CPO explained that CNCC gathers client information through intake forms and surveys given during and after the receipt of counseling services (personal communication, July 11, 2020). CNCC also has several forms, including an informed consent and a biopsychosocial assessment. Some are basic counseling forms, and others ask for information that is required for grants. More forms are collected prior to initial sessions during intake that are only for the grants (Director of training programs, personal communication, July 11, 2020). Completing these forms makes the process of gathering information a lengthy procedure (Site Leader 1, personal communication, September 13, 2020). Intake forms are being collected via a portal because of the lack of in-person meetings. The surveys that are collected via the portal or in person following treatment and termination are used to assess the services and programs provided to clients (Site Leader 1, personal communication, September 13, 2020).

CNCC develops relationships with clients by cultivating trust through community resources such as schools or churches, both of which become referral sources. The executive leaders participate in committees, coalitions, and professional trainings that focus on increasing awareness of therapeutic strategies (CPO, personal communication, September 25, 2020). Therapeutic relationships with clients begin with a welcoming, comfortable, and trusting atmosphere. Clinicians work quickly to engage clients and build the trust needed for the therapeutic relationship to develop. Clinicians provide educational opportunities in the community setting for others to learn about CNCC's services and programs (CPO, personal communication, September 25, 2020). Once in the counseling setting, clinicians try to connect quickly with clients by using a variety of techniques that match their therapeutic and personal styles. Because the counseling services are short-term endeavors, clinicians must build therapeutic alliances quickly by engaging clients with a foundation of unconditional positive regard inherent to therapeutic relationships.

Analytical Strategy

The information collected from interviews, historical data of stay and exit interviews, and observations were organized in Excel for record keeping and analysis. Themes were identified based on the analysis of the data. I gave feedback to the executive leaders and site leaders following the identification of themes that emerged from the analysis of the interview responses and the documented experiences. The information was presented to CNCC with recommendations for improvement.

CNCC's leaders continually expressed the desire to improve through my conversations with the executive leaders and site leaders. I obtained information from the executive leaders and site leaders regarding the organization and gave them the opportunity to explain the ways that they would like to improve the current communication patterns and strategies. Communication was shared through email, text messages, and phone conversations. My communication with the executive leaders and site leaders of CNCC was approved through the organization's human resources department. The appropriate (Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA) and background checks were conducted to ensure compliance with state and organizational guidelines.

Framework Utilization

The Baldrige excellence framework (NIST, 2017) is an assessment tool used to measure seven primary categories to detect deficits in organizations and strategies for improvement in the seven areas of focus. I used the Baldrige excellence framework as a guide to assess CNCC. The audit tool was used to measure a baseline of how and when the executive leaders communicate information to the site leaders according to the participants' responses to the interview questions (NIST, 2017). CNCC chose to focus on the categories of leadership and workforce, two areas that measured low on the last evaluation by the third-party evaluators (CPO, personal communication, November 24, 2020). The scope of the assessment was on the counseling services and programs provided by CNCC. The three executive leaders and the six site leaders were interviewed

and were asked questions similar to the leadership questions in the Baldrige framework (NIST, 2017).

I entered the collected data for review and the identification of themes. I also offered all participants access to any notes from the information collection process. The benchmarking of the categories of Leadership and Workforce were presented to CNCC through a virtual meeting. The information gathered was sent via email in a report following the meeting for the executive leadership team to use as reference as they matured in communication with the site leaders.

Archival and Operational Data

Data were obtained from the interviews with three executive leaders and six site leaders. I used the data to clarify the delivery of services and programs. Data from the organizational interviews, along with the stay and exit interviews, were used to identify themes regarding communication patterns between CNCC's executive leaders and site leaders. Following are the interview questions:

1. Describe your current culture.

2. What have you done to build it?

3. How would you describe your communication patterns with staff members?

   3a. What is the process for communicating/disseminating information?

4. How do you receive feedback from staff members?

5. What are areas you have improved communication?

   5a. How did you achieve that improvement?

6. What has worked well? What has not worked well?

7. What are some hindrances to bettering your communication?

8. How satisfied are you with where your communication and culture are?

9. Are you satisfied with your current culture?

10. What would you like to see different?

11. How do you ensure that your work is aligning with your mission?

12. How are employees challenged and recognized within your organization?

13. What is being done to connect with each staff member?

14. How are difficult situations navigated by leaders and by the team as a whole?

    14a. What is communicated, and how?

15. What is your goal for the organization with regard to growth in

    communication?

16. What have you done to grow your organization thus far?

Analysis of the interview responses and the review of the exit and stay interviews facilitated the identification of patterns of communication between the executive leaders and the site leaders. I categorized the participants' perceptions into themes specific to the communication patterns used by the executive leaders. I received information from the stay and exit interviews from CNCC directly.

The stay interviews are evaluations conducted by the executive leaders to measure how the organization in general or its executive leaders and site leaders can improve. Both the stay and exit interviews are an opportunity for candor regarding communication patterns. Exit interviews are conducted prior to the last day of employment of staff members who have decided to leave CNCC. These interviews give staff the opportunity

to explain why they are leaving and what they think the organization can to do improve or continue to excel.

The collected data had some limitations, one of which is that they were self-measures. The stay and exit interviews depend on the candor of the individuals being interviewed. They can choose to not speak honestly or not express accurate perceptions of their counseling experiences. I had to get a background check and be approved by the organization's human resources department to review documents protected by CNCC. The background check and application were completed prior to any interviews being scheduled or completed. I also had to receive approval from Walden University's Institutional Review Board to conduct this study (IRB approval #06-12-20-0976568).

Evidence Generated for the Doctoral Study

I interviewed three executive leaders and six site leaders. The participants were chosen based on their roles in CNCC, along with their availability and willingness to participate in the study. The CPO shared a list of email addresses with me, and I sent an email with the approved letter for participation to everyone on the list. The leaders who responded to the email request were scheduled for interview days and times. Each executive leader or site leader who was interviewed was affected by the current communication patterns. Interviews were completed with the aforementioned approved questions. Data from the written interviews were delayed because COVID-19 restrictions have closed CNCC's office and satellite sites.

Summary and Transition

CNCC offers counseling and other supportive services and programs to clients.

As the executive leaders continue to progress and meet set goals, they have taken steps to

express their support through communication patterns that have been unclear and have

led to confusion for some of the site leaders. From the data that I collected, I identified

areas where communication patterns could be improved between CNCC's executive

leaders and site leaders. A review of CNCC's workforce and organizational operations

was necessary to understand how CNCC functions. The services being offered and the

development of new programs are evaluated in Section 3 to gain further knowledge of

potential deficits in the executive leaders' communication patterns with site leaders.

Section 3: Workforce, Operations, Measurement, Analysis, and Knowledge Management

The purpose of this case study was to identify the communication patterns between the executive leaders and six of eight site leaders of a nonprofit counseling center focused on serving children and families to determine if increased communication from the leaders would improve the site leaders' perceptions of the workplace. I observed and assessed the communication patterns of the executive leaders through interviews to understand how the executive leaders' communication styles have affected the site leaders' perceptions of workplace. The communication styles of the executive leaders and the site leaders were identified through the interviews and the review of documentation provided by CNCC.

Analysis of the Organization

Workforce

The executive leaders have directed the leaders of the satellite sites to manage their offices as they see fit (DCS, personal communication, July 11, 2020). The executive leadership team members are the president, CPO, director of program training, director of family and youth services, DCS, and director of the Fatherhood Program. Each executive leader is responsible for a particular focus of services at each site (CPO, personal communication, September 25, 2020). Varona (1996) as well as Chakravarti and Chakraborty (2020) asserted that the relationship between top leaders and supervisors is the strongest relationship in organizations that can affect the workplace environment. Even though the leaders of the satellite sites must follow specific organizational regulations, they also have the freedom to design their sites and workplace environments

according to their own leadership styles (Site Leader 3, personal communication, June

25, 2020). Site Leader 1 expressed that clinicians also have autonomy in choosing how to

practice in their own counseling sessions with clients (personal communication,

December 7, 2020). The counselors and other staff are offered training and education that

meet their professional interests (DCS, personal communication, July 11, 2020; CPO,

personal communication, July 11, 2020).

All of CNCC's leaders are striving to operate under the Oz principle, and they

encourage that practice among all staff (DCS, personal communication, October 13,

2020). The Oz principle is a concept of responsibility and accountability in the workplace

(Conners et al., 1994). The current level of development at CNCC has not yet reached the

organizational maturity to employ this principle, but the desire to use it is a healthy long-

term goal based on the belief in supporting the clinicians' independent clinical practice.

CNCC studied this text and decided to follow the focus of "see it, own it, solve it, and do

it" (Conners et al., 1994, p. 14). The phrase guides everyone in the organization to take

responsibility for addressing processes or situations that require remediation.

The site leaders plan events to support and engage their clinicians and support

staff (Site Leader 1, personal communication, September 13, 2020). The events arranged

at each satellite site range from speaking to students to educating doctors about the

services and programs provided or how they can refer clients to CNCC (Site Leader 1,

personal communication, September 13, 2020). In addition, the site leaders celebrate the

birthdays and professional accomplishments of their teams. The executive leaders

ensured the availability of a budget to promote such events (Site Leader 1, personal

communication, September 13, 2020). Having the opportunity to engage in and promote more effective communication at the satellite sites, as well as increasing efforts to expand communication in the community setting, are important to the executive leaders (DCS, personal communication, July 11, 2020). Communicating with and educating community members could have a greater influence on social change than any counseling services and programs could. CNCC also gives the site leaders opportunities to participate in vendor events to enhance their communication skills outside of the organizational setting (Site Leader 1, personal communication, September 13, 2020). The site leaders are given the chance to make presentations in the community setting to make people more aware of CNCC's services and programs, open possibilities for expansion, and increase the site leaders' professional skills (Site Leader 1, personal communication, September 13, 2020).

Operations

The freedom to operate on their own has left some of the site leaders confused about some organizational processes (Site Leader 4, personal communication, June 25, 2020). The executive leaders have remained available to answer questions or concerns expressed by the site leaders, but a change in organizational structure has meant that some of the site leaders have not had clear or direct communication (Site Leader 4, personal communication, June 25, 2020). The restructuring has helped to streamline the functioning of the organization and the delivery of services and programs. The executive leaders have tried to improve their communication patterns with site leaders by offering

times when they would be available, but the lines of communication remain unclear, and the executive leaders continue to be unavailable when needed.

The executive leaders continue to use the feedback from the third-party evaluation involved in restructuring the organization to include the development of a youth and parent advisory committee to offer feedback from clients who have received services and programs from CNCC (CPO, personal communication, October 13, 2020). Improvements to services and programs are the result of this feedback as well as the surveys given to clients at their termination sessions. The feedback from clients and staff is reviewed and assessed. The site leaders then make plans to make changes at specific sites and share these changes with everyone in the organization.

CNCC uses client closing surveys to analyze and improve its processes. The satellite sites have weekly meetings that are led by the site leaders to discuss current and potentially new communication strategies. The ongoing communication from the site leaders gives focus to the implementation of the practices discussed (Site Leader 5, personal communication, July 10, 2020). Schwartz et al. (2011) stated that engaging staff and including them in the direction of development in organizations can make a difference in employees' level of job satisfaction.

Any ideas shared during the meetings at the satellite sites are carried to the executive team if approval to make changes is needed. Many changes are made internally at the satellite sites because the site leaders can make adjustments without receiving clearance from the executive leaders (Site Leader 3, personal communication, June 25, 2020). The site leaders can make changes to daily processes that do not interrupt the

overall functioning of the organization. If approval for a change at one of the satellite sites is needed, the site leader communicates with the DCS or the executive leader managing the area of change in question. If there is a financial concern that is greater than what the executive leaders can approve, it is presented to the board for approval or denial. Discussions through emails and phone calls between site leaders and their respective staff members happen on an ongoing basis. The site leaders, all of whom are absent from their sites because of COVID-19 restrictions, check in on a weekly basis to address any staff challenges that may have arisen.

CNCC uses surveys to obtain feedback from clients to improve the quality of operations (CPO, personal communication, September 24, 2020). The surveys are reviewed, and solutions to any issues are discussed by the site leaders. The site leaders review the completed surveys and use the responses to make any necessary improvements to the client-clinician relationships (CPO, personal communication, September 24, 2020). The weekly meetings at the satellite sites are an opportunity to address any concerns involving more than one staff member (DCS, personal communication, July 10, 2020). Staff are encouraged to communicate with each other and their site leaders if they encounter any issues with processes or clients. Although staff communicate with site leaders, the site leaders are not given the opportunity to communicate their concerns or issues to the executive leaders consistently. Any information communicated to the site leaders appears to be fragmented and confusing (Site Leader 1, personal communication, December 7, 2020). The poor communication patterns between the executive leaders and the site leaders were the focus of the study.

CNCC has attempted to improve its communication patterns by appointing a director of operations to assess the current level of operations. The executive leaders also are engaged in program improvement on an ongoing basis that includes ways to make communication patterns much clearer and more effective.

Knowledge Management

Record keeping is critical to CNCC (CPO, personal communication, September 25, 2020). Reports for quality improvement must be completed and kept on a regular basis. Stay interviews are conducted to obtain feedback about the workplace experiences of staff (CPO, personal communication, September 25, 2020). If and when employees decide to leave the organization or are terminated, they complete exit interviews, according to the CPO and the DCS (personal communication, July 11, 2020). Information provided by employees is kept in locked files in the appropriate offices in accordance with HIPAA regulations (CPO, personal communication, September 25, 2020). All completed interviews are sent to the DCS and the respective site leaders for review. If any concerns are expressed in the stay or exit interviews, they are brought up with and addressed by the executive leaders (CPO, personal communication, September 25, 2020).

Client information has routinely been kept in paper files behind two locked doors in the offices that they attended for treatment (CPO, personal communication, September 25, 2020). CNCC moved to an electronic medical record (EMR) system at the end of 2019, subsequently disposing of all paper files. The move to an EMR system has aided in the transition to telehealth during the COVID-19 pandemic. CNCC currently manages client files and feedback through the EMR system (Site Leader 1, December 7, 2020).

The EMR system has allowed CNCC to monitor and access client information, including schedules, progress notes, treatment plans, and release of information (Site Leader 1, December 7, 2020). The organization has continued to find ways to use the EMR system to enhance the performance and delivery of services and programs (Site Leader 1, December 7, 2020). By having more rapid turnaround times with treatment plans and the ability to share forms electronically with outside providers, clinicians are able to increase their efficiency and monitor communication. This process has decreased wait times for evaluations and the delivery of care (DCS, personal communication, July 11, 2020).

The availability and convenience of the patient portal in the EMR system has been helpful to clinicians, support staff, and clients. Obtaining completed paperwork was a challenge expressed by Site Leader 1 (personal communication, December 7, 2020). Most paperwork is extensive, so reviewing it with clients through the EMR system is challenging (Site Leader 1, December 7, 2020). There are many pieces of paperwork to review and sign because of the contract with the state and other grant requirements regarding the collection of data. The EMR system has provided easier access to recorded information (Site Leader 1, December 7, 2020).

Information is shared during meetings and through emails (Site Leader 1, personal communication, December 7, 2020). There are usually in-person meetings during the week, but the current closure of all sites because of COVID-19 restrictions has made phone calls and emails the more common modes of communication (CPO, personal communication, September 25, 2020). CNCC staff do not have a shared drive at this time

to disseminate information internally. However, this issue has been discussed by the executive leaders and site leaders (Site Leader 1, December 7, 2020). Information is easily shared at each satellite site because most clinicians are interns and LPC-As and MFT-As who are used to reviewing and sharing information during their academic experiences (Site Leader 1, December 7, 2020). Ideas are communicated directly during virtual or in-person meetings. Information regarding CNCC's history and proposed plans is kept on its website and in documents developed by the executive leaders and kept in their shared drive. The proposed changes or ideas are shared by the executive leaders with the leaders of the satellite sites as well as the board of directors (Site Leader 1, December 7, 2020).

Summary and Transition

The purpose of this case study was to identify the communication patterns between the executive team leaders and six of eight site leaders of a nonprofit counseling center focused on serving children and families to determine if increased communication from the leaders would improve the site leaders' perceptions of the workplace. Previous assessments have identified weak communication patterns as an ongoing concern at CNCC. The executive leaders have attempted to improve their communication patterns with the site leaders by giving the site leaders the opportunity to offer recommendations for improvement as well as to celebrate the achievements of staff at the satellite sites. CNCC also has begun to use an EMR system to make it easier for clients to complete paperwork and for clinicians to complete progress notes and prepare treatment plans. CNCC has begun to focus on making improvements to the delivery of services and

programs. It also has begun to plan improvements to the workplace environment by

increasing the level of internal communication and even benefits between the executive

leaders and the site leaders. Section 4 presents the findings of the study.

Section 4: Results - Analysis, Implications, and Preparation of Findings

The purpose of this case study was to identify the communication patterns between the executive leaders and six of eight site leaders of a nonprofit counseling center focused on serving children and families to determine if increased communication from the leaders would improve the site leaders' perceptions of the workplace. Erben et al. (2019) stated that workers' perceptions of the workplace environment are a critical element in identifying individual experiences of the workplace.

I received permission from Walden University's IRB as well as CNCC's human resources department via an encrypted email to conduct the interviews and review the stay and exit interviews. A preapproved letter of invitation from Walden University was sent out to all executive and site leaders to solicit their participation in this study. Interested executive and site leaders were given scheduled dates and times to be interviewed. I collected and analyzed the data from the nine interviews and stay and exit interviews.

The three executive leaders and six site leaders who agreed to be in the study signed the informed consent prior to being interviewed. I asked the participants the following prepared interview questions about communication patterns and the workplace culture from their role perspectives:

1. Describe your current culture.

2. What have you done to build it?

3. How would you describe your communication patterns with staff members?

    3a. What is the process of communicating information?

4. How do you receive feedback from staff members?

5. What are the areas you have improved communication?

   5a. How did you achieve that improvement?

6. What has worked well? What has not worked well?

7. What are some hindrances to bettering your communication?

8. Are you satisfied with your communication?

9. Are you satisfied with your current culture?

10. What would you like to see different?

11. How do you ensure that your work is aligning with your mission?

12. How are employees challenged and recognized within your organization?

13. What is being done to connect with each staff member?

14. How are difficult situations navigated by leaders and by the team as a whole?

    14a. What is communicated, and how?

15. What is your goal for the organization concerning growth in communication?

16. What have you done to grow thus far?

Results

The teleconference interviews were recorded using Microsoft Word's dictation program for later transcription and analysis. The data were fully transcribed to identify themes and coded through a Microsoft Excel document to notate the identified themes. No participants requested copies of their transcriptions. The three identified themes aligned with the practice problem of poor communication patterns between CNCC's executive leaders and site leaders (see Table 1).

Table 1

Themes Developed From Participant Responses

Theme	Interview questions	Participant responses
Communication	How would you describe your communication patterns with staff members?	"Nonexistent." "Complicated." "Done on a need-to-know basis." "I'm not sure if you can call it communication." "It doesn't happen as it should." "Information gets to me from random people, and so it can never be trusted."
Work environment	Are you satisfied with your current culture?	"The culture is comfortable." "The culture is set by us all, so it feels comfortable." "I feel appreciated and really acknowledged by my team." "We're sort of like a family. We celebrate each other and break bread together." "Mental health days are a wonderful benefit of working here."
Expertise	What have you done to grow thus far?	"We have made sure the hiring processes has improved. We hire only qualified individuals." "We ensure that staff, to include leaders, have trainings on a regular basis." "We stay up-to-date on current trends in the counseling world and encourage staff to take trainings or put together trainings for us to complete." "The licenses are vetted within our HR so not just a friend of a friend gets a job here." "We are working to protect our clients and the field."

Theme 1: Communication

All but one participant stated that communication from the executive leaders was inconsistent. This participant, who was a newly appointed site leader, did not have comments regarding communication because she was new to the position. P1, an executive leader, claimed that communication was "complicated." P2 labeled communication as "nonexistent at times." The overall view of communication was that it was challenging because of new structuring and roles. The theme identified the lack of communication, not any type of resistance to communicating. Norman et al. (2020) found

in their study of leaders and staff who were working virtually that communication and trust were correlated and necessary for leaders to be successful in the workplace.

The organizational stay and exit interviews were consistent with this theme. P5 mentioned "not knowing needed information until it was too late." Murray (2018) expressed the importance of speaking with staff about the important things. Leaders also need to consider the timeliness of communication. Communication was explained by P4 as not being given at helpful times or at all. According to P4, most information was inaccurate because it was spread by word of mouth and did not include a process for meeting new protocols. The executive leaders stated that they struggled to know what needed to be shared, and when.

Theme 2: Work Environment

Theme 2 referred to the supportive nature of the workplace environment. The respondents felt that they had the freedom to structure their sites as they chose, and the executive leaders encouraged site leaders and staff to develop their own workplace cultures. Celebrations were encouraged, and many sites had developed such monthly morale events as birthday celebrations for staff members and scheduled potlucks.

Bangwal and Tiwari's (2019) study of the hospitality industry found that a supportive and positive workplace environment increased employees' loyalty. Usadolo and Usadolo (2019) asserted that without supportive communication and actions from leaders, volunteers were willing to leave the organizations. Staff members expressed feeling important or being attended to by managers when given such opportunities as leading projects or advancing in the company. Jaskyte et al. (2020) conducted surveys in

the United States and another large country to identify factors influencing job satisfaction. The biggest factor was the workplace environment. The study results showed that staff felt satisfied in their jobs and more loyal to the organization when they were given the opportunity to be creative.

Theme 3: Expertise

All nine respondents were encouraged to take continuing education courses and learn to become experts in the field of counseling. Continuing education and professional growth were encouraged by the site leaders as well as the executive leaders. The organizational exit and stay interviews consistently indicated gratitude for providing financial support and encouragement as the employees sought certification or training.

Abuzour et al.'s (2018) study of expertise in the workplace stressed the importance of confidence and application of knowledge in the field of study. In the mental health field, the expertise of therapists and other care professionals may have a profound influence in improving the health of clients (Rosen et al., 2020). Rosen et al. (2020) identified cautionary practices for professionals working in the field of mental health without the proper expertise. Though skills can be obtained, the skills that are applied in practice need deeper training to be effective (Rosen et al., 2020).

<center>**Analysis, Results, and Implications**</center>

CNCC focuses on the delivery of services through two programs. The foster and adoption program were designed to facilitate the process of adoption and the unification of families from the perspectives of children and parents (CPO, personal communication, July 11, 2020). The mental health program offers short-term counseling and education for

children and families. The services are free to the communities where the satellite sites are based and are offered on a short-term basis of 3 months (DCS, personal communication, July 11, 2020). Clients have the option of returning after taking a minimum break of 1 month or 4 weeks.

Client Programs

CNCC has recently developed the Fatherhood Program, a counseling program that focuses exclusively on the fathers of children between the ages of 0 and 17 years (DCS, personal communication, July 11, 2020). Seidler et al. (2020) mentioned several barriers to men seeking mental health services, with the top two being societal attitude toward men in mental health services and men not knowing how or where to find services. The Fatherhood Program has tried to remove both of those barriers by directing the services directly to men and promoting the program throughout the communities. The provision of mental health services is the focus of the Fatherhood Program, which offers short-term counseling of 3 months (DCS, personal communication, July 11, 2020).

The organization is currently conducting a feasibility study to determine if CNCC could manage without the larger organization, which collaborates with CNCC on funding issues only (CPO, personal communication, October 13, 2020). CNCC and the larger organization believe that it is time for CNCC to move in a different direction because it has become self-sufficient. The level of funding has stayed the same because CNCC took over grants and contracts years ago. According to the CPO, CNCC used to submit annual reports of information requested by the larger organization, but CNCC has since stopped doing so and has restructured the organization so that it can function independently

(personal communication, October 13, 2020). The newly structured CNCC is still under a board of directors, but the internal structure of executive leaders and site leaders is new. Communication patterns continue to be a concern, but client surveys indicated that the new structure has improved the delivery of services (DCS, personal communication, July 11, 2020).

Client-Focused Results

The focus of the new structure is to reorganize counseling and education programs to improve the delivery of services, as requested by current and past clients (CPO, personal communication, July 11, 2020). CNCC has begun to focus on new initiatives such as a development program for African American youth in a central county in the state. Developing cultural competence or knowing what needs to be addressed in the area being served, is what CNCC is seeking to provide. Fraher et al. (2018) claimed that collaboration between clients and therapists enhances services because it helps to target the needs of clients. By completing a community strengths and needs assessment, CNCC will be able to identify what is needed in its service areas and address those needs with the help of an advisory committee.

The CPO stated that the executive leaders will work with the advisory committee to develop new services and programs for clients (personal communication, October 13, 2020). The site leaders will not be involved in this process. By including the site leaders, the services and programs possibly could fit more easily into the workplace cultures and already established protocols of the satellite sites (DCS, personal communication, July

11, 2020). The site leaders responded in their interviews that programs that have been initiated are helpful but could be more productive with better front-end planning.

Workforce-Focused Results

The interview responses from the site leaders indicated that the workforce of CNCC is supportive and encouraging, despite the poor communication patterns of the executive leaders. Park et al. (2020) found that with support in the workplace such as personal and professional support enabled staff to fulfill their roles in a more productive manner. The site leaders expressed satisfaction with their workplace roles but dismay at the lack of knowledge shared by the executive leaders. One research question (i.e., What is your process for communicating?) could not be answered clearly by either the executive or site leaders. The site leaders explained their individual processes for communicating at their particular satellite sites and delivering information to staff (e.g., email, weekly meeting, texts, group chatting apps). One site leader stated that because the office had a small complement of staff and one staff member was a neighbor, they talked daily in the office. COVID-19 restrictions have closed all of the sites, so all communication goes through weekly emails and phone calls. The executive leaders indicated that they shared information as needed and communicated with all levels of staff. The site leaders wanted the executive leaders to communicate with them prior to communicating with staff members to help to navigate what was assigned or verbalized to staff members. Feeling unequipped to handle issues because information was not shared with them by the executive leaders was a common statement expressed by the site leaders.

Leadership and Governance Results

According to the Baldrige excellence framework, leaders should consider the mood of the workplace environment as a contributing factor to the workplace culture (NIST, 2017). Each satellite site had a unique culture and specific methods of communicating with staff (Site Leader 4, personal communication, June 25, 2020). All positions in the organization were filled appropriately, and employees were trained or educated to do specific jobs.

CNCC's workforce current comprises clerks, FSSs, clinicians, site leaders, and executive leaders (CPO, personal communication, July 11, 2020). Requirements for the clerk position include having an associate level of education and adhering to HIPAA requirements. The FSS can complete intakes and a minimal amount of brief counseling for clients who do not have identified trauma or severe diagnoses (DCS, personal communication, July 11, 2020). The required education level is a bachelor's degree in social work or counseling and a master's degree in clinical social work or counseling. Counselors are practicum- or internship-level master's students, partially licensed LPC-Associates (licensed professional counselor-associates), or fully licensed LPCs. All of the site leaders and executive leaders are LPCs or LPC-S (licensed professional counselor-supervisors; DCS, personal communication, July 11, 2020).

CNCC has maintained appropriate recruitment and hiring practices over the past couple of years through the use of rigorous application and interview processes (CPO, personal communication, July 11, 2020). CNCC has a history of hiring from within or through referrals. This process has been unsuccessful, according to P3, and it was

identified as a concern and addressed by the newly formed executive team. This information provided insight into the willingness of the leaders to address issues identified by the CPO.

The three executive leaders provided me with three different mission and vision statements. The site leaders also gave various statements in their interviews. Although all mission and vision statements were similar, none of them was identical to the others, thus supporting the practice problem that communication patterns in CNCC remain a concern at the foundational level. Rosenbaum (2017) asserted that modeling behavior is still used for gathering information. If information is not correct at the executive leader level and is not communicated effectively, the information could cause confusion or even harm to clients (Rosenbaum, 2017; Schad, 2019).

Members of the executive leadership team are the president, CPO, director of operations, DCS, director of youth and family services, and director of the Fatherhood Program (DCS, personal communication, July 11, 2020). These six executive leaders are responsible for developing processes to better serve clients and the communities in response to strengths and needs assessments. The executive leaders act as the "think tank," according to P1, and do not help to deploy processes or programs. The site leaders are responsible for putting the executive leaders' ideas into action. The identified concern and practice problem is reflected in the poor communication patterns between executive leaders and site leaders. Emails and conversations do happen, but not in a consistently productive manner, according to the site leaders.

Financial and Marketplace Performance Results

The executive leaders promote the well-being of the site leaders and their staff through educational opportunities and new experiences, such as presenting at workshops and participating as vendors at community events, according to P4. The mental health days offered as paid time off and education that includes clinical supervision and conferences are other ways that the executive leaders manifest their care of and concerns about staff (DCS, personal communication, July 11, 2020). All site leaders and executive leaders had an open-door policy for staff members; however, as explained by P3, rather than directing staff to see their site leaders, the executive leaders allowed staff to come to them directly. This open-door policy created confusion. P3, stated that the leaders' commitment to staff was evident in their actions, but the lack of proper procedures caused frustration for site leaders and staff alike.

The executive leaders' increased responsibility to the organization that was mentioned in the feasibility study urging them to find creative ways of functioning because neither they nor CNCC would be operating under the umbrella of the larger organization. The CPO stated that the executive leaders have continued to manage their contracts and grants, and they have increased donations from stakeholders. According to the CPO, CNCC's executive leaders also have developed a 3-year strategic plan to expand the impact and presence of the organization in the communities being served; enhance data tracking and measurement processes; and increase potential funding, leadership accountability, and budgetary knowledge by all employees. They also want to increase program services and access to clients while "cultivating exemplary client

experiences," as stated by the CPO. Quarterly reports monitor some key performance

indicators to compare marketplace performance, according to the director of clinical

services. The areas used for tracking and evaluating are the number of sessions for

individual counseling sessions per counselor and per location, the number of group and

family session provided, and the number of surveys completed by clients.

Implications

Naz et al. (2020) asserted that in a supportive workplace environment that

includes clear communication from the leaders, staff are more likely to manifest

heightened interest in their jobs that can lead to improved job performance and job

satisfaction. The purpose of this case study was to identify the communication patterns

between the executive leaders and six of eight site leaders of a nonprofit counseling

center focused on serving children and families to determine if increased communication

from the leaders would improve the site leaders' perceptions of the workplace. The

implications of the study are that better communication patterns between the executive

leaders and the site leaders would improve the workplace environment, increase job

satisfaction, and reduce turnover intentions and rates (Naz et al., 2020). Satisfaction in

the workplace has a cascading effect on the morale of employees and their productivity,

both of which can enhance the sustainability of the organization (Ziegler et al., 2012).

A lower rate of employee turnover may have a positive financial impact on

CNCC because less funding will have to be directed to advertising for and training new

staff. Gallagher et al. (2009) and Roth (1999) encouraged organizations to look further

than providing financial means to retain employees. They explained that by considering

needs such as education, organizations could incur less financial strain by not having to hire or train new staff. Retaining staff would be a financial benefit to CNCC. Retaining clinicians also would have a positive impact on the community regarding the continuity of care. CNCC provides short-term services to clients, but these same clients may return after taking a 1-month or 4-week break. The greatest responsibility of counselors is to do no harm. Clinicians who leave can ethically be considered abandoning their clients and even causing harm to the field of counseling (Yonan et al., 2011). Not having to find and work with new counselors means that clients will be encouraged to seek the treatment that they need.

These implications also influence social change. When the executive leaders of CNCC model more practical and clear patterns of communication, clinicians may have greater impact on the communities because they will not have to spend time identifying what their role is while meeting the needs of clients. Instead, they will be able to focus on their tasks and responsibilities. Improved communication patterns may give the organization more opportunities to offer workshops and presentations in the community setting to disseminate knowledge and awareness of mental health and the skills necessary to improve personal well-being.

Strengths and Limitations of the Study

Pratt et al. (2020) stated that trustworthy research should be replicable. The information collected and the process used to collect the data should be made available to future researchers to ease replicability. The current study could be replicated by other

researchers who might be interested in helping other organizations to identify their own communication weaknesses.

I was given clearance by CNCC to speak to the executive leaders and site leaders. In addition to conducting interviews, I communicated with executive leaders multiple times throughout the study to gain an understanding of the information provided by the BHO. The interview responses and stay and exit interview documentation that I collected were clarified and approved by the executive leaders and site leaders. These actions supported the trustfulness of the data and ensured that the conclusions were free of bias.

Limitations of the study were potential researcher bias, the exit and stay interviews, and the participants' personal perspectives. Wadams and Park (2018) discussed the biases of qualitative researchers that may affect their results. For example, they suggested that researchers may engage in bias based on their own perspectives and views of the participants, thus influencing the findings. Because I am a therapist myself, I could have had biases about the counseling services at CNCC.

One limitation of the exit and stay interviews was the delivery of the information from CNCC. Specific information from the interviews could have been redacted to reflect the organization's best employee responses, subsequently skewing the data. Personally collecting the data could have eliminated this limitation of the study. Future researchers might consider developing surveys directly soliciting employees' responses rather than relying on the organizations to provide information.

Another limitation involved the biases of the participants and their willingness, or lack thereof, to give candid responses to the interview questions. Although I stressed the

importance of anonymity, the trust that the participants had toward me could have

factored into the responses given. To prevent this potential impediment to the outcomes, I

maintained contact and allowed the participants to ask me questions about the study and

to member check their own interview transcriptions for errors or omissions.

Summary and Transition

The data that I collected helped me to understand CNCC and its purpose in

providing counseling services and programs. Knowing how CNCC served communities

and how the leaders focused on managing and organizing the work to be as efficient as

possible was helpful in gaining a deep understanding of CNCC and its communication

problems. Recommendations for CNCC were offered based on the interviews with the

participants, the preliminary discussions with executive and site leaders, and the review

of documentation relevant to the stay and exit interviews. Section 5 details the

recommendations and highlights CNCC's current functioning.

Section 5: Recommendations and Conclusion

Results of the analysis of the interview responses identified poor communication

patterns between the executive leaders and the site leaders of CNCC. Although the

interviews with the site leaders and the executive leaders identified a workplace

environment that focused on client care and the professional development of clinicians,

the responses from the site leaders and the review of other data indicated that the poor

communication patterns caused confusion and increased turnover intentions among staff.

This finding is consistent with previous research found in the literature. Seminal studies

such as those conducted by Lull et al. (1955) and Barnard (1966) have set a foundation

for further studies such as the one by Chakravarti and Chakraborty (2020). These studies

have focused on the necessity of leaders' communication and how the intentional focus

on improvement can create an environment that more positively perceived by employees.

CNCC internal Exit and Stay interviews revealed that the employees desired a change in

the communication from their leaders. The employees continually shared how they

enjoyed their work and the atmosphere but were constantly questioning their given tasks

due to the lack of communication provided.

CNCC showed to have many strength areas. When I assessed the organization, it

was clear they met the majority of the areas presented by the Baldrige framework. The

recent structural change has created a focus on and transparency of the operating of the

organization. The level of governance and societal responsibility is high for CNCC. They

have their board, their teams of leaders, and various committees to oversee operations

and hold them accountable. The nature of the work provides built-in ethical care through licensing boards and continual clinical supervision.

CNCC's intentional attention to the communities they serve ranked them high in the customer area of Baldrige. The executive leaders communicated they have and will continue to look to working for the clients. They do this by including their clients in identifying current needs and future planning.

The six site leaders acknowledged during their interviews that communication has caused concerns within the organization. P5 conveyed that even though the new structural changes had improved communication, it was still inconsistent. P1 indicated that the executive team members were responsible for ensuring communication was and that guidance would be appreciated. P3 and P4 continued to point out throughout their interviews that they felt "left out" or "lost" when they were required to implement something new. They did not feel guided through a process and found out "later in the game" that a change had been made.

Recommendations

Recommendation 1: Hire a Liaison

One recommendation is to make one employee of CNCC responsible for communicating and explaining policy changes and other pertinent information from the executive leaders to the site leaders. Establishing this role of liaison would ensure consistent communication patterns between the executive leaders and the site leaders. Murray (2018) suggested having one person responsible for communicating information to ease the access to it for staff and avoid opportunities for misinformation.

Recommendation 2: Host Annual Retreats

Another recommendation is that CNCC host annual retreats to bring the executive leaders and the site leaders together to focus on and understand the steps that the organization is taking to improve communication patterns. McNamara (2005) explained that groups and teams need regular communication to ensure organizational development, reduce resistance to change, and increases trust. The retreats could make it easier for the site leaders to pursue opportunities for ongoing dialogue and improve camaraderie during challenging times at the sites. The support that would be developed could result in deeper trust between the executive leaders and the site leaders, minimize employee burnout, and decrease turnover intentions.

Recommendation 3: Amend the Role of Director of Clinical Services

CNCC's position of director of clinical services was filled by a person who was given little information and was instructed to share information inconsistently. Prior to becoming the DCS, this director also was a site leader responsible for a small caseload. She transferred her clients and took on duties to improve communication patterns between the executive and site leaders. This director was not included in meetings that involved changes or ideas for improvement.

It is recommended that the DCS officially become part of the executive leadership team and take responsibility for improving the lines of communication (Murray, 2018). Lipworth et al. (2021) and Rands et al. (2009) expressed the need for organizations to hire liaisons to improve communication among groups. Lipworth et al. identified increased vision and focus, better patient care, more support within organizations,

confidence, and collaboration when liaisons entered the workplace environment. An amended job description would see this director attending meetings and communicating with the site leaders.

This role is a new one. I would recommend future study on roles like the DCS to determine how making one person responsible for improving communication patterns between the executive leaders and the site leaders could be helpful or hurtful in terms of organizational growth and if the liaison position would require specific training.

Recommendation 4: Increase Sample Size

Future studies also could consider widening the sample of participants to include all staff. This study focused on the communication patterns between one level of leadership and another in CNCC. Most staff at CNCC were not included in the study. Having a broader sample of participants could result in more suggestions about ways to improve communication patterns in CNCC.

Dissemination of the Results

Due to the ongoing closure of offices for precautionary purposes of COVID-19, I will share the results of the study with the executive and site leaders via videoconferencing. I shared information with CNCC leaders throughout the study. They may consider using that information to adjust current communication patterns to decrease the rate of turnover intentions and increase employee satisfaction. The executive leaders were my primary points of contact, and they have been receptive to my recommended changes. They have made the director of clinical services the communications liaison with the site leaders. The purpose of this case study was to identify the communication

patterns between the executive leaders and six of eight site leaders of a nonprofit counseling center focused on serving children and families to determine if increased communication from the leaders would improve the site leaders' perceptions of the workplace.

CNCC is an NPO in a southern state of the United States that offers counseling services to children and families from the time the child is born until they reach age 17. The organization began as a small agency serving people experiencing homelessness and grew into a foster and adoption educational site with counseling services. The organization now has eight satellite sites offering individual counseling, group and family counseling, and educational classes to the community. CNCC serves more than 16,000 families and provides more than 25,000 hours of counseling at no cost to clients (CPO, personal communication, July 2020).

Literature was reviewed to understand how communication patterns can affect the workplace. The literature confirmed that the poor communication patterns of the executive leaders to the site leaders had a negative influence on the workplace environment. Improving communication patterns in the workplace can lead to feelings of support and decrease the turnover intentions of employees (Holzwarth et al., 2020). The data were collected from interviews with three executive leaders and six site leaders of CNCC, along with a review of data from surveys and exit and stay interviews. The three themes that emerged revolved around communication, work environment, and expertise.

Summary

Four recommendations to improve communication patterns between the executive leaders and the site leaders were offered. One recommendation was to create of the position of communications liaison between the executive leaders and the site leaders. Another recommendation was to plan annual retreats to focus on ways to improve communication patterns. The last recommendation was to have larger samples. The sample of nine participants in this study was small and did not include all staff members, who might have been able to present diverse perspectives and creative ideas to improve communication patterns. A similar study might involve identifying generational needs for improvements to communication patterns in the workplace. Coburn and Hall (2014), for example, found differences in the ways that older versus younger generations of workers require communication to be delivered to consider themselves successful.

Conclusion

The purpose of this case study was to identify the communication patterns between the executive leaders and six of eight site leaders of a nonprofit counseling center focused on serving children and families to determine if increased communication from the leaders would improve the site leaders' perceptions of the workplace. The organization wants to improve the lives of its clients and the workplace conditions of staff. The problem has been the poor communication patterns between executive leaders and site leaders. As a result of these ineffective communication patterns, CNCC has experienced employee turnover and costly changes. CNCC has continued to amend its communication patterns so that it can carry out its mission and vision of improving the lives of the people in the communities that the organization serves.

References

Abuzour, A. S., Lewis, P. J., & Tully, M. P. (2018). Practice makes perfect: A systematic review of the expertise development of pharmacist and nurse independent prescribers in the United Kingdom. *Research in Social and Administrative Pharmacy*, *14*(1), 6–17.

Bangwal, D., & Tiwari, P. (2019). Workplace environment, employee satisfaction and intent to stay. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, *31*(1), 268–284.

Barnard, C. (1966). *The functions of the executive*. Harvard University Press.

Bull, M., & Brown, T. (2012). Change communication: The impact on satisfaction with alternative workplace strategies. *Facilities*, *30*(3), 135–151.

Chakravarti, S., & Chakraborty, S. (2020). Employee retention through listening-centered communication. *IUP Journal of Soft Skills*, *14*(1), 67–74.

Choren, A. (2015). The importance of communication in the workplace. *IEEE Potentials*, *34*(3), 10–11.

Clampitt, P. G., & Downs, C. L. (1993). Employee perceptions of the relationship between communication and productivity: A field study. *Journal of Business Communication*, *30*(1), 5–28.

Coburn, A. S., & Hall, S. J. (2014). Generational differences in nurses' characteristics, job satisfaction, quality of work life, and psychological empowerment. *Journal of Hospital Administration*, *3*(5), 124–134.

Conners, R., Smith, T., & Hickman, C. (1994). *The Oz principle: Getting results through individual and organizational accountability.* Prentice Hall Press.

Cowin, L. S., & Eagar, S. C. (2013). Collegial relationship breakdown: A qualitative exploration of nurses in acute care settings. *Collegian, 20*(2), 115–121.

De Nobile, J. (2017). Organisational communication and its relationships with job satisfaction and organisational commitment of primary school staff in Western Australia. *Educational Psychology, 37*(3), 380–398.

Erben, J., Schneider, F. M., & Maier, M. (2019). In the ear of the beholder: Self-other agreement in leadership communication and its relationship with subordinates' job satisfaction. *International Journal of Business Communication, 56*(4), 505–529.

Fraher, E. P., Richman, E. L., Zerden, L. de S., & Lombardi, B. (2018). Social work student and practitioner roles in integrated care settings. *American Journal of Preventive Medicine, 54*(6), 281–289.

Gallagher, S., Griffiths, C., & Stancliffe, H. (2009). Hiring and retaining staff in the economic storm. *People Management, 15*(4), 36–38.

Heewon, K., & Scott, C. (2019). Change communication and the use of anonymous social media at work: Implications for employee engagement. *Corporate Communications: An International Journal, 24*(3), 410–424.

Holzwarth, S., Gunnesch-Luca, G., Soucek, R., & Moser, K. (2020). How communication in organizations is related to foci of commitment and turnover intentions. *Journal of Personnel Psychology, 20*(1), 1–12.

Jarupathirun, S., & De Gennaro, M. (2018). Factors of work satisfaction and their

    influence on employee turnover in Bangkok, Thailand. *International Journal of*

    Technology, *9*(7), 1460–1468.

Jaskyte, K., Butkevičienė, R., Danusevičienė, L., & Jurkuvienė, R. (2020). Employees'

    attitudes and values toward creativity, work environment, and job satisfaction in

    human service employees. *Creativity Research Journal*, *32*(4), 394–402.

Jia, M., & Shoham, M. (2012). Communication motives, satisfaction, and social support

    in the workplace: Are supervisors effective support sources in employee

    networks? *2012 45th Hawaii International Conference on System Sciences*, 4407–

    4416.

Kelly, S., & MacDonald, P. (2019). A look at leadership styles and workplace solidarity

    communication. *International Journal of Business Communication*, *56*(3), 432–

    448.

Koppel, J., Deline, M., & Virkstis, K. (2017). The case for focusing on millennial

    retention. *Journal of Nursing Administration*, *47*(7–8), 361–363.

Lipworth, A. D., Collins, E. J., Keitz, S. A., Hesketh, P. J., Resnic, F. S., Wozniak, J. M.,

    & Mosenthal, A. C. (2021). Development of a novel communication liaison

    program to support COVID-19 patients and their families. *Journal of Pain &*

    Symptom Management, *61*(1), e1–e10.

Lull, P., Frank, R., & Piersol, D. (1955). What communication means to the corporation

    president. *Advanced Management*, *20*, 17–20.

Lysova, E. I., Allan, B. A., Dik, B. J., Duffy, R. D., & Steger, M. F. (2019). Fostering meaningful work in organizations: A multi-level review and integration. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, *110*, 374–389.

MacLeod, L. (2016). Mission, vision and values statements: The physician leader's role. *Physician Leadership Journal*, *3*(5), 18–25.

McNamara, C. (2005). *Field guide to consulting and organizational development: A collaborative and systems approach to performance, change and learning*. Authenticity Consulting.

Mitrofan, N., & Bulborea, A. (2013). Professional satisfaction and interpersonal relationships in the bank organizational environment. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*, *78*, 130–134.

Murray, R. (2018). Workplace communications: Five ways for leaders to make it better. *NZ Business + Management*, *32*(7), M16.

National Institute of Standards and Technology. (2017). *The Baldrige framework: Driving organizational excellence*. U.S. Department of Commerce. http://www.nist.gov/sites/default/files/documents/ 2017/05/09/The-Baldridge-Framework.pdf

Naz, S., Li, C., Nisar Q. A., Khan, M. A. S., Ahmad, N., & Anwar, F. (2020). A study in the relationship between supportive work environment and employee retention: Role of organizational commitment and person–organization fit as mediators. *Sage Open*, *10*, 1–20. https://doi.org/10.1177%2F2158244020924694

Nghe, M., Hart, J., Ferry, S., Hutchins, L., & Lebet, R. (2020). Developing leadership competencies in midlevel nurse leaders: An innovative approach. *Journal of Nursing Administration*, *50*(9), 481–488.

Nordby, H. (2015). Manager-employee interaction in ambulance services: an exploratory study of employee perspectives on management communication. *Health Care Manager*, *2*, 113–122.

Norman, S. M., Avey, J., Larson, M., & Hughes, L. (2020). The development of trust in virtual leader-follower relationships. *Qualitative Research in Organizations & Management*, *15*(3), 279–295.

Park, N.-S., Song, S.-M., & Kim, J. E. (2020). The mediating effect of childcare teachers' resilience on the relationship between social support in the workplace and their self-care. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, *17*(22), 1–15.

Parker, V., Giles, M., Lantry, G., & McMillian, M. (2012). New graduate nurses' experiences in their first year of practice. *Nurse Education Today*, *34*, 150–156.

Pincus, J. D., Knipp, J. E., & Rayfield, R. E. (1990). Internal communication and job satisfaction revisited: The impact of organizational trust and influence on commercial bank supervisors. *Public Relations Research Annual*, *2*, 173–191.

Pless, N. M., Maak, T., & Waldman, D. A. (2012). Different approaches toward doing the right thing: Mapping the responsibility orientations of leaders. *Academy of Management Perspectives*, *26*(4), 51–65.

Pratt, M. G., Kaplan, S., & Whittington, R. (2020). Editorial essay: The tumult over

transparency: Decoupling transparency from replication in establishing

trustworthy qualitative research. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, *65*(1), 1–19.

Rahim, A., & Cosby, D. M. (2016). A model of workplace incivility, job burnout,

turnover intentions, and job performance. *Journal of Management*

Development, *35*(10), 1255–1265.

Rands, G., Ford, M., Okeowo, A., Matthew-Bernard, C., Kapfumvuti, J., & Skinner, A.

(2009). How consultation liaison meetings improved staff knowledge,

communication and care. *Nursing Times*, *105*(2), 18–20.

Rosen, G. M., Washburn, J. J., & Lilienfeld, S. O. (2020). Specialty certifications for

mental health practitioners: A cautionary case study. *Professional Psychology:*

Research and Practice, *51*(6), 545–549.

Rosenbaum, M. E. (2017). Dis-integration of communication in healthcare education:

Workplace learning challenges and opportunities. *Patient Education and*

Counseling, *100*(11), 2054–2061.

Roth, R. T. (1999). Retaining financial staff not just matter of pay. *Crain's Cleveland*

Business, *20*(47), 24–26.

Schad, I. (2019). No time to talk! Teachers' perceptions of organizational

communication: Context and climate. *Educational Management Administration &*

Leadership, *47*(3), 421–442.

Schefczyk, M., & Peacock, M. (2010). Altruism as a thick concept. *Economics and*

Philosophy, *26*, 165–187.

Schwartz, D. B., Spencer, T., Wilson, B., & Wood, K. (2011). Transformational

    leadership: Implications for nursing leaders in facilities seeking magnet

    designation: The official voice of perioperative nursing. *AORN Journal*, *93*(6),

    737–748.

Seidler, Z. E., Rice, S. M., Kealy, D., Oliffe, J. L., & Ogrodniczuk, J. S. (2020). What

    gets in the way? Men's perspectives of barriers to mental health services.

    International Journal of Social Psychiatry, *66*(2), 105–110.

Usadolo, S. E., & Usadolo, Q. E. (2019). The impact of lower level management on

    volunteers' workplace outcomes in South African non-profit organisations: The

    mediating role of supportive supervisor communication. *Voluntas: International*

    Journal of Voluntary & Nonprofit Organizations, *30*(1), 244–258.

Vandenberghe, C., & Bentein, K. (2009). A closer look at the relationship between

    affective commitment to supervisors and organizations and turnover. *Journal of*

    Occupational and Organizational Psychology, *82*(2), 331–348.

van Diermen, O. G., & Beltman, S. (2016). Managing working behaviour towards new

    ways of working: A case study. *Journal of Corporate Real Estate*, *18*(4), 270–

    286.

Varona, F. (1996). Relationship between communication satisfaction and organizational

    commitment in three Guatemalan organizations. *Journal of Business*

    Communication, *33*(2), 111–140.

Vermeir, P., Blot, S., Degroote, S., Vandijck, D., Mariman, A., Vanacker, T., Peleman,

    R., Verhaeghe, R., & Vogelaers, D. (2018). Communication satisfaction and job

satisfaction among critical care nurses and their impact on burnout and intention to leave: A questionnaire study. *Intensive & Critical Care Nursing*, *48*, 21–27.

Wadams, M., & Park, T. (2018). Qualitative research in correctional settings: Researcher bias, western ideological influences, and social justice. *Journal of Forensic Nursing*, *14*(2), 72–79.

Waltz, L. A., Munoz, L., Johnson, H. W., & Rodriguez, T. (2019). Exploring job satisfaction and workplace engagement in millennial nurses. *Nursing Managers*, *28*, 673–681.

Watzlawick, P. (2011). Communication and process safety. *Loss of Prevention Bulletin*, *218*, 2–3.

Wombacher, J. C., & Felfe, J. (2017). Dual commitment in the organization: Effects of the interplay of team and organizational commitment on employee citizenship behavior, efficacy beliefs, and turnover intentions. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, *102*, 1–14.

Yonan, J., Bardick, A. D., & Willment, J.-A. H. (2011). Ethical decision making, therapeutic boundaries, and communicating using online technology and cellular phones. *Canadian Journal of Counselling*, *45*(4), 307–326.

Ziegler, R., Schlett, C., Casel, K., & Diegl, M. (2012). The role of job satisfaction, job ambilence, and emotions at work in predicting organizational citizenship behavior. *Journal of Personnel Psychology*, *11*(4), 176–190.