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Junior Managers' Perceptions of Executives Leadership Styles and Communication Practices

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Walden University

College of Social and Behavioral Sciences

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Kaprina Townsend

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Walden University
2021

Abstract

Junior Managers' Perceptions of Executives Leadership Styles and Communication
Practices

by

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MA, University of Phoenix, 2009

BS, University of Phoenix, 2008

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree of
Doctor of Philosophy
Organizational Psychology

Walden University

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Abstract

Ineffective communication and leadership practices continue to be an ongoing problem within organizations due to executives' inability to effectively lead and communicate. The primary concern in this study was how junior managers perceive the effectiveness of executives' communication practices as well as how executives' leadership styles influence the junior managers. The purpose of this phenomenological study was to explore the lived experiences of junior managers. The leader-member exchange theory provides the framework for this study on exploring junior managers lived experiences and their perceptions on how executives' leadership styles influence them and their perception of executive's ability to disseminate top owned information. A qualitative methodology and phenomenological research design were used with a sample size of 10 participants. Participants must have been over 18 years of age, live in the United States, work for company a minimum of 1 year, and have at least 2 years of experience with being a junior manager, and must be a direct report to an executive for at least 1 year. The data were coded and analyzed by using NVivo software to look for themes and commonalities. The key results were that junior managers were highly influenced by executive's leadership styles and were flexible and willing to adjust to the executive's communication practices. Executives can benefit from this contribution to positive social change because they will have a better understanding of effective and ineffective leadership styles based on the perceptions and experiences of junior managers.

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Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

Leadership styles and communication practices are important skill sets that executives need when leading and communicating with employees. Effective leadership styles and improved communication practices can have a significant impact on how executives influence junior managers. Research shows that an individual's leadership style can have an influence on a person's communication practices (Men, 2014). According to Ward et al. (2016), having a good leader-member relationship can facilitate shared understanding of organizational goals in addition to promoting information and knowledge sharing. Executives use different leadership strategies and communication methods when interacting with junior managers. According to Wallick (2014), new and effective ways are needed to lead subordinates; therefore, establishing better leadership practices could improve communication between leader and subordinates. It is hard for effective leadership to exist without effective communication; therefore, it is imperative that leaders and subordinates develop shared meaning so barriers can be eliminated, and information and knowledge can be shared (Terek et al., 2015). Using the most appropriate leadership style and communication method when guiding junior managers might have a positive impact on how junior managers are influenced by executives.

Background

In an increasingly competitive world, workplace communication and leadership styles are changing due to technology advancements. In assessing communication methods and leadership styles of executives in organizations, the gap in the literature is that no information was found on how junior managers are influenced when executives

communicate and display their preferred leadership styles. Brotheridge et al. (2015) explored whether computer-mediated communications affect how individuals communicate with one another. Brotheridge et al. (2015) also addressed how technology influences the relationship between managers and employees. Research conducted by Baxter (2017) focused on leadership styles and how it could affect communication with subordinates. The research conducted by Men (2014) investigated managements current and preferred communication methods with subordinates in the workplace. Men also evaluated whether a person's leadership style influenced the preferred communication method of management. Communication issues remain prevalent in the workplace; therefore, it is essential to efficiently manage communication methods and effectively evaluate leadership styles to contribute to a positive leader-subordinate relationship. While Brotheridge et al. (2015) focused on how technology influenced the relationship between managers and employees, Baxter (2017) focused on how leadership styles affected communication. This study correlates with Brotheridge et al. (2015) and Baxter (2017) because in the study, participants used different technology to communicate in the workplace and were more flexible with the chosen communication method of leaders whereas the partipants of the study were not flexible with some leadership styles of executives due to the negative impact it had on them which hinder positive communication or no communication at all. In addition, Men (2014) study focused on management's current and preferred communication as well as evaluated if managements leadership styles influenced how mangers communicated with employees. Although Men (2014) study focused on a transformational leadership style, the study I conducted

focused on transformational and other leadership styles. The findings of my study showed that the participants of the study were very specific about the type of leadership styles that supports positive communication.

There are many different definitions and meanings for the term leadership. The literature revealed that there is no consensus on the definition of leadership and is a phenomenon that is not truly understood by scholars (Gandolfi & Stone, 2016). For this study, leadership is defined as an individual's ability to guide, direct, and influence subordinates to achieving organizational goals (Afshari et al., 2017). Vann et al. (2014) believed leadership is tied to an individual's well-being in the workplace. Furthermore, in this study, the participants believed certain types of leadership (i.e. avoidant & dictator) can affect a person negatively and other types of leadership (charismatic, transformation, & transactional) can have a positive effect on your well-being. Mikkelsen et al. (2015) conducted a study on how leadership styles and leadership behaviors can affect communication in organizations. Transactional leadership and transformational leadership are the leadership styles that encompass task and relationship behaviors (Mikkelsen et al., 2015). Zhang et al. (2014) conducted a study on how organizational leadership influence employee engagement. A study conducted by Nazarian et al. (2017) focused on passive/avoidant, transactional and transformational leadership styles and how these styles influenced the perceptions of others in an organizational setting. Based on the study I conducted, avoidant leadership style was perceived as negative while transactional and transformational leadership styles were perceived to be positive by most of the participants. Effective leadership and communication styles are both important

skills to have to demonstrate attributes that are conducive to being a highly effective leader.

Problem Statement

Ineffective communication in the workplace can be detrimental to organizations because it contributes to poor leader-employee relationships, unmet organizational goals, and poor performance satisfaction (Voinea et al., 2015). Communication issues between executives and their subordinates are increasing due to lack of training needed to facilitate internal communication (Men, 2014). The specific problem of interest is that executives' communication and leadership styles contribute to the lack of information sharing with junior managers. The lack of information sharing affects junior managers and their ability to be effective leading and communicating with their subordinates. Mishra et al. (2014) found that positive internal communication between managers and employees is essential to having a successful organization; however, management continue to focus on external communication which leads to poor employee engagement.

Braun et al. (2015) showed managers should use different communication methods when interacting with employees instead of using one communication method for all employees. Braun et al. also investigated leadership styles which focused on whether certain leadership styles were effective when communicating information to subordinates. While a great deal of research exists on executive's leadership styles and communication methods (see Men, 2014; Mikkelson et al., 2015) little information is known about the perceptions of junior managers on executive's leadership styles and communication methods as it relates to information flow and how they are influenced.

I explored how the communication style and leadership style of executives affect how information is communicated to junior managers. The impact of not studying this specific problem will lead to continued communication issues as it relates to information sharing. If communication issues and information sharing continue to be prevalent in organizations, it can lead to bigger problems such as employee turnover and poor leader-member relationship.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to explore and understand the lived experiences of junior managers and their perceptions of how they are influenced by the leadership styles and communication methods of executives when it comes to information sharing. Executives' styles of leadership and communication affect junior managers' perceptions of organizational information sharing and communication styles. In this study, leadership styles are defined as a method in which leaders in positions of authority influence subordinates within the organization to achieve organizational goals (see Gandolfi & Stone, 2016). Also, communication styles/competences are defined as "an individual's knowledge of appropriate communication practices as well as effectiveness at adapting to the surroundings in a communication situation" (Steele & Plenty, 2015, p. 297). The final concept to be defined is information sharing/flow which is the gathering and exchanging of knowledge by individuals within an organization (Canan & Sousa-Poza, 2016). The study was conducted by interviewing ten junior managers from different professional associations. I created the interview questions.

Thematic coding was used to analyze the data from the interviews to identify commonalities and differences in themes.

Research Questions

RQ1: What are the lived experiences of junior managers and their perceptions on how executives' leadership styles influence their behavior?

RQ2: How do junior managers perceive the role of top owned information flow in their ability to do their own jobs?

Theoretical Framework

In the 1970s the leader-member exchange (LMX) theory was initially developed and was the most talked about and prominent model among researchers and is still widely used today (Fisher et al., 2016). The LMX theory provides a theoretical framework for a qualitative phenomenological study focused on exploring the leadership and communication styles of executives and how it affects junior managers in the organization. The LMX theory is a leading relational model that was chosen because its focus is on leader-member relationship (Ronald, 2014). According to Ronald (2014) "Dansereau, Graen, and Haga developed the vertical dyad linkage (VDL) model which is the basis for the LMX theory" (p. 59). The basis of the LMX theory is to try and find the high-quality and low-quality relationships between leaders and subordinates (Geertshuis et al., 2015). Subordinates in high LMX relationships tend to communicate and share information whereas subordinates in low LMX relationships tend to not communicate and share information (Geertshuis et al., 2015). According to Yahaya and Ebrahim (2016), a study was conducted in Singapore that concluded that leaders who

demonstrated a transformational or transactional leadership style had a positive effect on the leader-member exchange.

The LMX theory is the theoretical framework used to guide this research. The foundation of the LMX theory is based on leaders and subordinates establishing high quality relationships or low-quality relationships. Because the LMX theory is the foundation for this study, which thoroughly addressed how executive's leadership styles and communication methods influences junior managers.

The main concepts that I studied were leadership styles, communication styles/competence, and information sharing/flow. The first concept to be discussed is leadership styles. Over the years, a great deal of research has been conducted on leadership and leadership styles (Yahaya & Ebrahim, 2016). All the published works of researchers come to the consensus that leadership is important (see Gandolfi & Stone, 2016). There is a great deal of theories that exist today to address the different leadership styles. The theories that exist today are based on different aspects or traits (Gandolfi & Stone, 2016). For instance, the trait theory is based on an individual's personality; situational theory is based on a specific situation; transactional theory is based on establishing expectations and repercussions; transformational theory is focused on the leader connecting with followers; and the servant theory is focused on the leader being a servant to the followers first (Gandolfi & Stone, 2016). Therefore, by focusing on the above-mentioned main concepts throughout this study, the perceptions and experiences of the junior managers on the different leadership styles, communication styles, and information sharing process were explored. This allowed the underrepresented group

(junior managers) share their experiences on how executives influenced them while expanding upon the leadership, communication, and information sharing literature.

Communication competence within an organization is very important and is situational depending on the individual one is communicating with (Steele & Plenty, 2015). Organizations should implement effective communication practices to ensure knowledge is shared and information flows at all levels. Because communication is a learned skill (Steele & Plenty, 2015), it is imperative that leaders find a way to develop the skill to improve communication in organizations. Communication competence can be learned; therefore, finding ways through training or observation can be conducive to improving communication in organizations (Steele & Plenty, 2015).

Information sharing is a way for individuals to share knowledge so informative decisions can be made (Comes & Adrot, 2016). Previous research identified “various attitudinal variables that influence information sharing are related to power” (Comes & Adrot, 2016, p. 2). When leaders in organizations allow their power or authority to hinder them from sharing information, it can be detrimental to the organization (Comes & Adrot, 2016). When information is not shared, it can put unnecessary constraints, which can have a negative impact, on an organization (Canan & Sousa-Poza, 2016). Add summary and synthesis throughout the paragraph to balance out the use of information from the literature with your own analysis.

The phenomenological study may contribute to the theoretical framework because the data gathered on the lived experiences on how junior managers are influenced by the communication and leadership styles of executives will be added to the literature so other

researchers are able to build upon the findings. Also, there is little information on the above-mentioned topic; therefore, conducting this study using the LMX theory will assist with determining what characteristics or traits of executives are having a negative or positive impact on junior managers when communicating and leading their subordinates. Using the LMX theory as the foundation for the study will help identify factors or characteristics that could promote or hinder effective communication and leadership.

Nature of the Study

The nature of this phenomenological study is to address the information flow from executives to junior managers in addition to understanding how junior managers perceive the influence of executives' leadership styles on their organizational behavior. The qualitative approach was the best approach to explore and investigate leadership styles and communication practices as well as understanding junior managers' perceptions of executive's management and communication techniques within organizations. According to Moustakas (1994), phenomenological research focuses on the lived experiences of individuals. Using a qualitative phenomenological approach is the most beneficial in investigating and exploring the lived experiences and perceptions of junior managers. The qualitative nature of this phenomenological study me to gather data on the lived experiences and perceptions of junior managers regarding the effectiveness of executives' leadership styles and communication practices as it relates to information sharing. Phenomenological research is conducted when the intent is to explore and investigate a phenomenon and develop a description of the phenomenon that describes what individuals experienced and how they experienced it (Moustakas, 1994). I

used Moustakas's version of Husserl's approach to alleviating bias through epoche, to ensure honesty and accurate reporting.

To conduct this research, the interviews were compared and analyzed to find common themes. The themes were analyzed from primary research consisting of interviews that was conducted with the participants of the study. The preferred data collection method for this study was through interviews. An interview guide was created to extract information from the participants of the study and an in-depth analysis of the interviews was conducted. Once the analysis was completed, thematic coding was used to analyze the data obtained from the interview transcripts. Coding is done to help the researcher identify themes and patterns (Cho & Lee, 2014).

Definitions

Communication Practices/Competences: Communication practices/competences refers to a person's ability to adapt in any given situation to effectively pass along information or knowledge (Steele & Plenty, 2015).

Information Sharing/Flow: Information sharing/flow refers to an individual's ability to gather and exchange or share knowledge within an organization (Canan & Sousa-Poza, 2016).

Junior Managers: Junior managers are individuals who are front-line managers that focus on the day-to-day operations in a supervisory capacity (Harvey, Loan-Clarke, Suhomlinova, & Teasdale, 2014).

Leadership Styles: Leadership styles is a method in which leaders in positions of authority influence subordinates within the organization to achieve organizational goals (Gandolfi & Stone, 2016).

Leader-Member Exchange Theory (LMX): Leader-Member Exchange is a theory that takes a dyadic approach to exploring relationships between leaders and their subordinates (Fisher et al., 2016).

Transformational leadership: Transformational leadership is a style of leadership that motivates and inspires leaders and subordinates through organizational engagement while promoting empowerment to produce organizational change (Yahaya & Ebrahim, 2016).

Transactional leadership: Transactional leadership is a style of leadership that connects like-minded people to achieve organizational goals in a structured environment (Yahaya & Ebrahim, 2016).

Assumptions

One assumption I made during the research process was that the participants would be open and honest during the process of collecting data. Another assumption was that the participants in the target population would deem the study relevant and trustworthy. Another assumption was that the participants were interested in the research and would respond to the interview questions truthfully. Furthermore, I assumed that the information the participants provide would contribute to establishing and maintaining effective communication and leadership practices within their organizations.

By using interviews in this research, an assumption was made that the study was a representation of the target population. Another assumption was that the participants would be available and set aside some time to be interviewed. Also, I assumed that the interview questions would not cause participants to provide false answers. In addition, there was an assumption that communication practices and leadership styles influence an individual's perception and behavior. Finally, I assumed that the participants gave their input and perceptions based on their own experiences, not the experiences of other individuals.

Scope and Delimitations

The scope of my study was limited to executives' communication practices and leadership styles as well as the impact of executives influence on junior managers. Although many communication practices and leadership styles exist, I measured communication practices as they relate to information flow in addition to how junior managers are influenced by their superiors' leadership style. There are many ways to communicate and share information; therefore, finding and eliminating the ineffective communication practices that limit information sharing can bring forth communication transparency within organizations (Canan & Sousa-Poza, 2016). Transformational, transactional, and situational are just a few leadership styles that have been identified over the years and extensive research has been conducted (Gandolfi & Stone, 2016). The focus on leadership styles was on junior managers perceptions of how executives' leadership styles influence them in the workplace.

The delimitations of the study included culture and time and resources.

Organizational culture could be a factor that might influence junior managers but that is outside the scope of study. Also, a study can become time and resource intensive. Therefore, I focused on interviewing participants from two different professional associations.

Limitations

There are limitations that are specifically innate in qualitative studies. One limitation to this study is the small sample size used for this study. I focused on conducting research with professional associations. Therefore, a small sample size means the study cannot be replicated. Furthermore, I focused on interviewing junior managers from professional organizations which means the findings in this study may not be applicable in another industry. Because qualitative studies are subjective, the study can also be viewed as more unreliable than quantitative studies. However, a plethora of information can be derived from qualitative studies which can provide the researcher with a more in-depth and better understanding of the data obtained.

Limitations can also occur during the interview process. One limitation can be the use of open-ended questions. Open-ended questions should be used sparingly. Although open-ended questions are good to gain insight about the topic, it could also lead to the interview getting off topic. Staying on topic is essential to getting through the interview process. Another limitation that could occur during the interview process is that the participants may not respond honestly because they want to be viewed in a positive way

by the interviewer. If the participants do not respond honestly and truthfully bias will occur.

Significance of the Study

The study can add to the existing research on management styles and communication practices in the workplace. Afshari et al. (2017) found that certain leadership styles can contribute to the success of executives and promotes effective leadership. A study conducted by Van Engen and Willemsen (2004) showed the leadership styles of managers varied and not one leadership style was preferred over others. Boyd and Jensen (1972) showed ineffective communication in the workplace to be a huge problem, and this problem persists. This dissertation will fill the gap in scholarly literature regarding junior managers' perception of the management styles and communication practices of executives and how these traits contribute to information sharing from the top down. Also, the research will assist with understanding how junior managers perceptions influence their behaviors as it relates to their management styles and communication practices. This phenomenological study will provide an explanation to help explore and investigate management styles and communication practices. This research may impact social change through the improved understanding of characteristics associated with management styles and communication practices. Additionally, through understanding and implementation of effective management styles and communication practices executives can improve communication with junior managers.

Significance to Practice

A great deal of attention is being focused on organizations regarding internal communication issues between leaders and subordinates (Steele & Plenty, 2015). Effective communication and information sharing can build trust and respect between leaders and subordinates (Al Saifi et al., 2016). This research could support information sharing from the top down so junior managers are able to gain knowledge and share information with their subordinates. When executives are willing to share information, junior managers can gain knowledge, which provides both parties with a better understanding of the role of LMX.

Significance to Theory

The findings of this study may be significant because it will contribute to the body knowledge on LMX, communication practices, leadership styles, and the perceptions of junior managers. The examination of these variables will provide information and knowledge on how executive's communication and leadership styles impact and influence junior managers. The LMX theory can be enhanced by the exploration of the perceptions of junior managers of executives since little information is known.

Significance to Social Change

The social change benefits that will result from the study may include more effective communication practices and information flow within organizations. Organizational leaders will have a better understanding of what leadership styles are more effective to ensure a better leader-member relationship. According to Yahaya and Ebrahim (2016) effective leadership is essential in influencing others and sustaining

productivity. This study may contribute to positive social change at every organizational level because communication practices are essential for all employees to execute their job responsibilities and make decisions to achieve organizational goals. According to Al Saifi et al. (2016), organizational communication barriers need to be removed so information can be shared. Information sharing with subordinates promotes trust which helps build a good leader-member relationship. The findings in this study can contribute tremendously to positive social change because best communication practices and information sharing procedures can be established. Also, executives can establish practices that focus on developing leadership skills, so they are able to adjust their leadership style according to the individual's needs.

Summary and Transition

My aim with the study was to explore the different leadership styles and communication practices of executives and how both impact junior managers perceptions. The contributions of previous literature show how leadership styles and communication practices are factors that can contribute to effective or ineffective communication. However, limited information is available on how the above-mentioned variables impact junior managers perception of executives' leadership style and communication practices.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Introduction to Literature Review

The purpose of this literature review is to examine previous research on leadership styles and communication practices and identify a gap in existing research while providing an in-depth understanding of the perceptions of junior managers of executives' leadership styles and communication practices. This literature review demonstrates the importance of studying and understanding leadership styles and communication practices that will have a positive impact on junior managers within organizations. While researching, a great deal of information was found on leadership styles and communication methods. However, there was limited literature found that focused on junior managers' perceptions of executives' leadership styles and communication practices. The lack of information on junior managers perceptions of executives' leadership styles and communication practices accentuates a need for further research to contribute to positive social change. The research study can assist with establishing a foundation for examining and exploring the perceptions of junior managers regarding executives' leadership styles and communication practices.

In this section, the development of leadership theories will be discussed. Furthermore, different leadership styles such as transformational and transactional leadership styles will be discussed. Communication practices will be addressed as well as information sharing. The literature on communication practices will focus on the different methods used to communicate such as face-to-face, phone, or e-mail. The literature on information sharing will focus on the methods used to gather and share information.

Also, the section on diversity, inclusion, and cultural competence will explain how diversity and culture influences communication and leadership. Before the previous topics are discussed, an overview of the literature search strategy will be addressed as well as the strategies and key words used to search for relevant literature.

Literature Search Strategy

After narrowing down the topic, the focal point of the research was based on literature regarding different leadership styles such as transformational, transactional, charismatic, and task oriented as well as communication methods such as face-to-face, phone, email, and video conferencing. I also reviewed literature related to gender to explore whether the gender of executives impacted or influences the perceptions of junior managers. However, gender will not be included in this study. Next, I focused on attributes such as culture, attitude, beliefs, and experiences of junior managers to explore if certain attributes influence junior managers perceptions of executives' leadership style and communication methods. After researching the above-mentioned attributes, relevant literature was found that will support the use of a phenomenological study while addressing the research questions and building upon the existing research.

I found most peer-reviewed journal articles reviewed in this study by conducting thorough searches using the following databases: Psychology, Business and Management, PsycINFO, PsycARTICLES, ProQuest Central, Business Source Complete, ABI/INFORM Collection, and SAGE Journals (formerly SAGE Premier). I also reviewed online articles and located hard copies of books using Google Scholar. References that were cited in articles were reviewed used to assist me with expanding my search for

relevant literature. I also purchased books that were relevant to leadership styles, communication practices, culture, diversity, and phenomenological research.

When I began my initial search for literature, the key words I used to search for appropriate literature included *executives, managers, supervisor, leadership, leaders, transformational, transactional, charismatic, communication, attitude, diversity, inclusion, and culture*. As I progressed in my literature search, I used a combination of words and phrases such as *junior managers, communication practices, communication in organizations, charismatic leadership, transactional leadership, transformational leadership, task-oriented leadership, male leaders, and female leaders*. As I found additional information that I wanted to include in my study, I searched for words such as *tacit, explicit, institutional practices, diversity and communication, and diversity and leadership*. Finally, based on some of the references found in articles I did a search by the author's name (i.e., Richard Scott and Geert Hofstede).

Theoretical Framework

LMX is the theoretical foundation for this phenomenological study. The LMX theory was developed in the 1970s and focused on how leaders and subordinates could establish high quality relationships (Geertshuis et. al, 2015). Furthermore, the LMX theory addresses the differences in the level of exchange that exists between the leader and each of the subordinates because the leader tends to interact with each subordinate differently. Leaders interact with subordinates differently based on the relationship that was formed. Subordinates that have high quality relationships with leaders are in the in-group and subordinates that have low quality relationships with leaders are in the out-

group. The primary purpose of the LMX theory is to focus on the relationship between leaders and their subordinates (Ronald, 2014). The LMX theory suggests that leaders and subordinates have a relationship based on both parties establishing trust, respect, and an open line of communication between one another (Bauer & Erdogan, 2016). A leader that displays an LMX leadership style is more apt to build employee trust and loyalty to the organization while connecting with subordinates and establishing a foundation for a positive leader-member relationship. Leaders can positively influence subordinates if they use the LMX approach when interacting with subordinates. Over the years, research on the LMX theory has shown leadership styles can affect how or if contribute to the organization's success (Nishii & Mayer, 2009). The LMX theory explores the dynamics between a leader and subordinate. The LMX theory can be used to explore the perceptions of the leader or the subordinate (Gerstner & Day, 1997). Because I focused on the experiences and perceptions of junior managers and how they are influenced by executives' leadership styles and communication practices the use of the LMX theory was appropriate for this study.

Literature Review Related to Key Variables and/or Concepts

The central concepts of this phenomenological study are based on the experiences and perceptions of junior managers. The junior managers experiences, and perceptions are in relation to how they perceive and are influenced by executives' leadership styles and communication practices when it comes to information sharing. There are many definitions to define leadership styles. However, for the purpose of this study leadership styles is defined as a method in which leaders in positions of authority influence

subordinates within the organization to achieve organizational goals (Gandolfi & Stone, 2016) as mentioned in the previous chapter. One of the main focuses of the study is to explore and understand the experiences and perceptions of junior managers based on how they are influenced by executives.

Another central concept of the study is how junior managers perceive the communication practices of executives as it relates to information sharing. There is an abundance of information available on communication practices and information sharing. However, limited information is available on the perceptions of junior managers on executives' communication practices and information sharing methods which makes this study an important and relevant topic to explore. Communication and information sharing is important, therefore, exploring the experiences and perceptions of junior managers will add to existing research and a contribution to positive social change.

Existing research focuses on how leadership can affect job performance as well as how leadership can influence communication. Men's (2014) research indicated certain leadership styles can promote effective communication. Also, previous research focuses on middle management and their subordinates in addition to skill sets. Therefore, conducting this study, which will focus on upper management (i.e., junior managers and executives), will provide knowledge and insight based on junior managers experiences and perceptions and how they are influenced by executives.

Introduction to Leadership Styles

Leaders within organizations are put in positions of authority to oversee their subordinates and communicate pertinent information to them to ensure organizational

goals and day-to-day tasks are completed. Effective leaders can motivate, encourage, and empower their subordinates to assist with achieving organizational objectives. According to Pless and Maak (2004), leaders should involve subordinates when initiating projects and tasks that benefit the organization, so they feel they are contributing to the success of the company. Leaders encompass different values, beliefs, and leadership styles. However, the organizational values and beliefs should be shared by all parties in addition to leaders displaying a leadership style that has a positive impact on their subordinates. In a study conducted by Afshari et. al (2017), a descriptive-causal and comparative methodology approach was used to test their hypothesis that when managers apply their leadership style, the applied leadership style is affected by their traits. They found no significant differences in the leadership styles (directive, persuasive, participative, and delegate) of male and female managers. These findings support the findings of Al-Asfour & Lettau (2014) as indicated in the study. Furthermore, findings did show a significant difference to leadership style of managers based on their work experience and educational level. In another study, conceptual research on leadership was conducted by Gandolfi and Stone (2016). In the study, certain attributes believed to contribute to leaders being effective in their positions were explained. Also, servant leadership was discussed, and it was found that this leadership style was not a popular or chosen leadership style among business leaders as transformational or transactional leadership. Servant leadership considers others, includes everyone in the decision-making process, and allows them to grow within the organization. Based on the research of the study,

leaders are displaying more of a self-serving leadership style rather than serving others. Therefore, leaders need to take an approach that results in positively influencing others.

Holloway and Schaefer (2014) conducted a phenomenological study to explore and understand leadership practices in small businesses. The study focused on the skill set and practices that leaders need to encompass to be successful and to maintain organizational sustainability. The findings of the study brought forth themes based on the perspectives the participants shared in this qualitative study. The themes collaboration and communication, mentoring, and people skills emerged from the study. If the above-mentioned themes are applied and practiced, it can lead to more effective leadership practices in small business. Furthermore, Mikkelsen et al. (2015) conducted a study on the leadership styles and behaviors that affect communication in the workplace. They identified transactional and transformational leadership as the leadership styles that encompass task and relationship behaviors. They noted that leaders who have a combination of transactional and transformational leadership styles are more effective. Research conducted by Braun et al. (2015) noted transformational leadership qualities through face-to-face communication with employees improves the manager-employee relationship. In addition, a quantitative study conducted by Men (2014) investigated how leadership can influence communication. The study focused on the transformational leadership style as well as communication methods (face-to-face, newsletter, email, phone, instant messenger, etc.). A quantitative online survey was used to test the hypotheses on how transformational leadership affects communication in the workplace. The results of the study showed that transformational leadership has a positive impact on

internal communication within organizations. The findings of the study also show that transformational leadership can develop leader's communication skills. Based on my study, the participants that did share their experiences and perceptions on leadership styles believed transformational leadership displayed by executives was most effective when engaging with junior managers. The findings of this study support the studies conducted by Mikkelsen et al. (2015), Braun et al. (2015), and Men (2014). Overall, the participants of this study believed that their behavior is influenced by the chosen leadership style of executives.

Nazarian et. al (2017) conducted a quantitative study to investigate the impact that transformational, transactional, and passive/avoidant leadership styles have on organizational performance. A questionnaire that was based on the Multifactor Leadership questionnaire was provided to the participants and was used to collect information from the participants to test the hypotheses. The findings of the study showed transformational and transactional leadership styles has a positive influence on performance whereas passive/avoidant leadership style impacts performance negatively. Furthermore, the findings also suggest that transformational leadership has more of a positive impact than transactional leadership. Based on the study I conducted, the findings align with the findings of Nazarian et. Al (2017). Transformational and transactional leadership were found to be positive leadership styles. Whereas the avoidant leadership style was viewed negatively. The participants of the study were very specific regarding the leadership styles believed to be positive and leadership styles viewed as negative. For the most part, transformational, charismatic, and transactional leadership

styles were considered positive by many of the participants. However, there were some participants that viewed charismatic and transactional leadership negatively.

Wallick, (2014) conducted a literature review study on leadership. The review explored the different leadership models that are used. The examination of the different leadership models can help to determine what leadership style is more widely used. Also, the review of the literature suggested that as times and technology changes, the examination of the leadership models will help determine whether the focus needs to shift from leader-focused models to team-focused models. Another literature review study was conducted by Yahaya and Ebrahim (2016) in order to examine transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire leadership as it relates to leadership effectiveness, employee satisfaction, and organizational commitment. Based on the literature reviewed, the need for effective leaders and employees are needed to handle the growing demands and needs of organizations.

Although, this study did not focus on leadership models such as Wallick, (2014) research did but on the LMX theory, the findings support the need to focus on leadership styles displayed by executives. Regardless, if leadership models are used or the study is based on the LMX theory, findings support the need for executives to be more cognizant of their chosen leadership style in order to positively influence junior managers. Also, the findings of this study do support the study conducted by Yahaya and Ebrahim (2016) as it relates to leadership effectiveness, employee satisfaction, and organizational commitment based on transformational and transactional leadership. The participants believed that if executives displayed positive leadership styles such as transformation and transactional

leadership styles, it would promote effective leadership and employee satisfaction and commitment to achieving organizational goals which will alleviate the problem with executives' communication and leadership styles contributing to the lack of information sharing with junior managers.

Effective leaders that display and promote a positive leadership style are needed to ensure organizational success Yahaya and Ebrahim (2016). Leaders are needed to empower subordinates, manage organizational change, as well as communicate and share knowledge with subordinates. If leaders are ineffective and display leadership styles that are not conducive to the organizational environment, the subordinates will not be successful in their positions, nor will the leader have a good leader-subordinate relationship.

Introduction to Communication Methods

Communication sustains organizations through established beliefs, practices, and day-to-day routines (Lammers & Barbour, 2006). Organizations should establish open communication practices that is understood and has a shared meaning amongst all employees. Effectively communicating with others is essential to ensure organizational goals are achieved (Steele & Plenty, 2015). However, if individuals are not effective communicators, it can create internal problem, which is why the study on leadership and communication was conducted to explore the relationship (De Vries et al., 2010). People communicate in different ways. There are times when formal communication is needed as well as informal communication. Organizations typically communicate through formal communication due to their organizational beliefs which is reflected through their

behavior and communication practices (Lammers & Barbour, 2006). However, there are times when informal communication is used. Therefore, it is essential to ensure the preferred communication method is effective to ensure the information being communicated is not taken out of context or misunderstood. De Vries et al.'s (2010) research found that the communication styles of leaders have a strong correlation to behaviors related to knowledge sharing. Therefore, effective communication involves sharing and receiving information.

As mentioned above by Lammers and Barbour (2006) communication can be based on organizational practices and beliefs which some of the participants in the study believed as well. Whilst De Vries et al. (2010) research showed that individuals communicate in different ways which is supported by this study as the participants shared their experiences and perceptions regarding the communication practices within the workplace by executives. Overall, this study shows participants prefer communication to take place face-to-face mainly use e-mail to communicate and share information. The study showed the disconnect between executives and junior managers when it comes to the most effective and preferred communication methods.

There are many ways to communicate such as via telephone, email, instant messenger, Skype, and face-to-face. A study was conducted by Braun et al. (2015) to explore communication channels between leaders and subordinates. The findings of the study by Braun et al. (2015) found the preferred communication method was face-to-face. Research was conducted at two long term care facilities on verbal and nonverbal communication and the researchers proposed that nonverbal behaviors such as eye

gazing, head nodding, pointing, and facial gestures were the preferred communication methods of the staff and patients that did not have English as a shared language (Small et al., 2015). There are many ways to communicate and receive information. The chosen method to communicate can depend on the importance of the information being shared. For example, if one is sharing informal and nonurgent information, the chosen communication method could be email or instant messenger. However, urgent, or confidential information could be shared via face-to-face or communicating over the telephone. Regardless of the communication method, it is imperative that the information is communicated in a clear manner, so it is easily understood by the individual receiving the information.

When executives communicate with junior managers, the goal should be to achieve communication satisfaction among both parties. Previous research has shown a strong correlation between leader's communication competence, job satisfaction, and communication satisfaction (Steele & Plenty, 2015). Additionally, research by Terek et al. (2015) found that leadership can influence whether communication satisfaction is achieved. Although, communication satisfaction is important, it is not always achieved. Research has shown if communication satisfaction is not achieved it can lead to low morale and organizational commitment (Steele & Plenty, 2015). Furthermore, when communication satisfaction is not achieved, junior managers may perceive executives to be ineffective communicators which can have a negative influence on them. According to Voinea et al. (2015), communication issues arises when ineffective leadership styles are displayed by leaders. Subordinates need to achieve communication satisfaction to ensure

their goals and needs are being met (Steele & Plenty, 2015). Based on this study, communication satisfaction is achieved if the preferred communication method of junior managers, which is face-to-face is used. Face-to-face communication is preferred when sharing information to ensure miscommunication or misunderstandings do not occur. The participants of the study believed when face-to-face interaction occurs questions can be asked, and information clarified, and no information is lost in translation. Furthermore, this study supports Voinea et al. (2015) study as the participants perceived that leadership and communication work together. Therefore, negative leadership styles contribute to ineffective communication as some junior managers were not receptive to executives that displayed a negative leadership style when communicating. When junior managers are not receptive to what executives are communicating it continues the cycle of ineffective information sharing.

The importance of communication is predicated on individuals sharing information as well as providing feedback. Providing feedback is an essential part of communicating because it is one way to keep the lines of communication open. Information sharing, and communication go hand-in-hand. Information sharing cannot happen if communication does not exist. Therefore, knowing and understanding junior managers preferred communication style can minimize the communication gap. Junior managers perceptions regarding how they perceive and are influenced by executives is information that should be studied as it will add to the existing research and contribute to social change.

Introduction to Information Sharing/Knowledge Sharing

Institutional practices can determine how organizations communicate and share information. Most executives within organizations are not concerned with the specific communication and information sharing practices that are preferred by their subordinates. Therefore, implementing well-defined institutional practices that encourages effective communication and information sharing can contribute to creating positive corporate values (Wang et al., 2014). To obtain the benefits of implementing well-defined institutional practices, a solid foundation based on the institutional theory should be established. Institutional theory can be used in any environment and is based on established organizational processes and rules in which all employees accept and follow regardless of their own beliefs (Scott, 1987). The institutional theory is a theory that focuses on goal achievement as well as other attributes such as organizational behavior, culture, and social norms (Wang et al., 2014). Furthermore, based on the institutional theory approach, organizational beliefs and systems can influence the structure of an organization (Scott, 1987). Organizational changes can affect the structure, processes, and belief systems resulting in organizational roles being reshaped and policies and procedures being revamped (Scott, 2008). Institutional practices can influence behavior and trust within organizations. Moreover, positive institutional practices can promote information and knowledge sharing in addition to trust (Wang et al., 2014). Executives in organizations should encourage positive communication amongst one another which will promote information and knowledge sharing. The findings of Wang et al. (2014) study

shows that trust plays a significant role in institutional practices in addition to influencing information and knowledge sharing.

Applying the institutional theory in the workplace can help executives understand how communication takes place within the organization. Organizational communication can be established through organizational practices and day-to-day routines (Lammers & Barbour, 2006). Organizational communication is significant and useful especially when it is put into action. Furthermore, when organizational communication is aligned with institutional practices, individuals are more apt to accept the rules of the organization which will promote positive communication as well as the sharing of tacit and explicit knowledge (Lammers & Barbour, 2006). Although, this study did not focus on institutional theory and organizational practices the findings based on the participants experiences do show that established communication practices and information sharing procedures support effective leadership and communication.

Communication breakdowns occur when leaders and subordinates fail to share information. The importance of effective information sharing is increasing; therefore, it is essential that executives share information with junior managers to ensure miscommunication does not occur. Shared knowledge is important between leaders and subordinates. Therefore, leaders need to make information sharing a priority and not hoard or keep information from others. A study conducted by Comes & Adrot (2016) investigated how power impacted information sharing. According to Comes & Adrot (2016) organizational power can influence information sharing in the workplace. Some leaders refuse to share information because they believe it is a form of job security in

addition to having a sense of control over who the information is shared with. When a person hinders the flow of information within an organization, it can have a negative impact on others and it limits everyone for having shared knowledge (Canan & Sousa-Poza, 2016). Like Comes & Adrot (2016) some participants of this study believed control and power influenced whether executives communicated or shared information. Based on the junior managers experiences and perceptions, they believed executives did not share information because they were not secure in their job. Also, some of the junior managers believed that some executives have an “old school” mentality and would not share information because that is what they learned whereas the new generation of executives had no problem sharing information.

Sharing information can be done in different ways depending on the needs of all parties. As mentioned previously, most subordinates prefer face-to-face interaction with leaders when communicating and sharing information. Al Saifi et al. (2016) conducted a study to explore the correlation between face-to-face networks and knowledge sharing. The findings of the study discovered face-to-face interactions with leaders promotes knowledge sharing (Al Saifi et al., 2016). The findings in this study showed that communication methods differed when it came to the junior managers preferred method to communicate versus the executives preferred method. The junior managers preferred to communicate with executives through face-to-face interactions such as in the study conducted by Al Saifi et al. (2016). In addition, the executives preferred to communicate with junior managers through e-mail. Although, the chosen communication methods of junior managers and executives were different, the junior managers were flexible with

how executives communicated information because most junior managers felt that the information being shared via the chosen communication method of executives was timely and up to date.

Information and knowledge sharing is needed to ensure individuals can effectively perform their duties within organizations. Furthermore, if leaders put forth the effort to understand whether subordinates learn and gain knowledge through tacit or explicit means then knowledge management practices can significantly improve within organizations (Chilton & Bloodgood, 2008). Therefore, through the accurate exchange of information and knowledge, individuals are able to achieve organizational goals. Lindblom and Tikkanen (2010) believed that implementing a strategy to manage knowledge and information can have a positive affect and would promote sharing information amongst one another in organizations. When implementing a strategy to effectively share information and knowledge, one has to understand the tacit and explicit implications. In the workplace, tacit and explicit knowledge is used daily. Tacit knowledge is informal knowledge that is based on individual's perceptions and experiences (Smith, 2001). Whereas explicit knowledge is formal knowledge that is found in organizations standard operating procedures (SOP), or knowledge obtained through academia (Smith, 2001). Tacit knowledge is knowledge that is gained by individuals based on their perceptions, beliefs, skills, and experiences over time (Smith, 2001). For example, within organizations the more experienced employees are tasked with training the less experienced employees. Therefore, the more experienced employees are sharing their knowledge and experiences with the less experienced

employees to ensure they have all the informal information and knowledge needed to perform their job responsibilities and be successful. Tacit knowledge should be shared with others because previous research has shown tacit knowledge can help others interpret and understand explicit knowledge when used in the workplace (Kothari, Rudman, Dobbins, Rouse, Sibbald, & Edwards, 2012). Explicit knowledge is not always understood this is why it is important to use tacit knowledge in conjunction with explicit knowledge to ensure employees that may not have a technical background have a thorough foundation in which they can use to acquire and apply knowledge. An exploratory study on knowledge sharing was conducted on information technology (IT) workers to gain insight of their perceptions and whether they rely on tacit or explicit knowledge when performing their job responsibilities (Chilton & Bloodgood, 2008). When Chilton & Bloodgood (2008) conducted the study, there was not an established scale available to measure attributes of knowledge; therefore, they created a scale specifically for this study. Based on the findings, if leaders can identify tacit knowledge in their experienced IT workers the information can be converted into explicit knowledge to ensure new IT workers have all pertinent information to perform their job responsibilities (Chilton & Bloodgood, 2008).

Diversity, Inclusion, and Cultural Competence

As the organizational culture changes, leaders have to find ways to value and manage diversity. Over the years, diversity has evolved and has been defined in various ways. In a study conducted by Johnston & Packer (1987), diversity was viewed based on employee configuration such as the number of minorities, immigrants, women, and

elderly workers. Whereas Kim (2006) viewed diversity as a way to determine the differences of employees such as race, values, and experiences. In an environment of increasing competition and the need to produce a high level of productivity while maintaining a competitive edge, organizations need to focus on the culture and diversity within its organization as it relates to communication and leadership. A study conducted by Marquis, Lim, Scott, Harrell, & Kavanagh (2008) on 14 companies regarding their diversity practices found that only 10 companies believed having a diverse organization helped with maintaining a competitive advantage in their industry. Statistics gathered by the Bureau of Labor Statistics (2019) projected job employment will grow to 169.4 million between 2018-2028. Therefore, a diverse group of individuals will be joining the workforce which should prompt leaders to find effective ways to promote a culture of diversity and inclusion that will have a positive impact on communication and leadership within organizations. A diverse workforce means promoting an environment of inclusion for all employees. However, if an organizations culture and environment does not promote inclusion then organizational communication and leadership can be affected. The results from the study on healthcare management that was conducted by Dreachslin, Sprainer, & Jimpson (2002) found that a diverse organization is needed to ensure inclusion and cultural competence. Furthermore, Dreachslin et al. (2002) found that lack of interest by white healthcare executives and recruitment issues with finding qualified African American managers contributes to the lack of diversity within the organization. Culture can influence communication and leadership. Therefore, effectively managing diversity within organizations can have a positive impact on diversity while promoting a

cultural environment of inclusion. A cultural environment of inclusion will allow all employees from different backgrounds to effectively work together while communicating, sharing knowledge, and promoting meaningful interaction among individuals with different experiences to achieve organizational goals (Pless & Maak, 2004). Having a culture of inclusion also means that the organizational culture as well as the subcultures within the organization are respected in addition to ensuring that the subcultures feel they make a positive contribution in shaping the organizational culture (Pless & Maak, 2004). Leaders need to take the time to understand culture to ensure misunderstanding do not occur. Although leaders are aware of the importance of establishing a culture of inclusion in the workplace, little attention is given due to the challenges and complexity of the topic. Culture is a broad topic and over time researchers have provided their own definition of what culture means. Hofstede (1980) defined culture as mental programming of like-minded individuals with the same background, values, and experiences. To better understand culture and cultural differences, Hofstede (1980) developed a model that consisted of four primary dimensions. The model was developed based on Hofstede's project that required him to analyze data obtained from different cultures over a span of six years. Based on Hofstede's research, four dimensions were identified and labeled as follows:

1. Power Distance Index (PDI)-This dimension explains how subordinates within organizations accept the inequality of power. Furthermore, the inequality of power between leaders and subordinates are endorsed by both parties. (Hofstede,

1980). Leaders should take the time to understand PDI especially when interacting with a diverse group from different cultures and backgrounds.

2. Individualism (IDV)-This dimension explains the level in which individuals integrate themselves into groups. However, IDV is focused on the individual as he/she are apt to make achieving a goal or task a priority over a relationship as this group does not maintain strong ties with others. In addition, this dimension explains collectivism, which this group maintains strong group ties with others. The collectivism group is loyal and will make relationships a priority of achieving a goal or task (Hofstede, 1980).
3. Masculinity (MAS)-This dimension along with femininity explains how roles are distributed based on gender. Masculinity is based on the societal values as it relates to assertiveness and competitiveness. Also, femininity refers to the modest and caring values of women. In this dimension, MAS refers to the culture of the men and women and not the attributes that he/she may possess (Hofstede, 1980).
4. Uncertainty Avoidance (UAI)-This dimension explains the level of societal tolerance for uncertain and ambiguous situations. Furthermore, UAI indicates to what extent an organizational culture has prepared subordinates to handle difficult situations in an unstructured environment. A culture that avoids uncertainty have established strict rules and policies in order to keep conflict to a minimum (Hofstede, 1980).

Research has shown that culture and communication are linked. According to Ayoko, Hartel, Fisher, & Fujimoto (2004) how an individual communicates is directly

influenced by their culture and their culture is impacted by how they communicate.

Communication is essential in the workplace especially when communicating with a diverse group. Effective internal communication is vital to leaders and their ability to engage employees to achieve organizational goals (Welch & Jackson, 2007). The lack of effective communication within organizations creates issues in the workplace.

Furthermore, when communication barriers exist, it can be difficult to communicate effectively. Therefore, communication barriers can affect job performance, knowledge sharing, trust as well as achieving organizational goals when interacting with a diverse group. To understand organizational culture, subcultures, and diversity, leaders have to establish trust with their subordinates. Establishing trust is essential to understanding culture in addition to understanding how trust influences culture (Hofstede, 2001). In a study conducted by Hofhuis, Rijt, & Vlug (2016) the research found that openness and trust are positive attributes that enhances diversity climate which promotes effective communication and knowledge sharing in a diverse workgroup. A diverse an inclusive organization should have established communication practices that are beneficial to all employees. Because organizations have a diverse group of people from different cultures and backgrounds, establishing effective communication strategies for all employees will assist them with being effective communicators when interacting with others (Ayoko et al., 2004). When effective communication practices are in place, leaders are able to build trust and a positive working relationship with subordinates (Mishra et al, 2014). A study conducted by Welch & Jackson (2007) on internal communication based on stakeholder's perspectives proposed that an internal communication matrix should be used to assist

stakeholders with implementing communication strategies to keep employees engaged. Furthermore, Welch & Jackson (2007) believed using an internal communication matrix could also be beneficial to improving established communication practices within organizations. Communication between leaders and subordinates should be an exchange of information between both parties (Mishra et al., 2014). When communicating, leaders should know their audience and communicate information in a manner that a diverse workforce can understand (Calloway-Thomas & Garner, 2000). When leaders share information with their subordinates a dialogue begins between both parties and trust is established. When leaders share information, their subordinates can gain knowledge as well as provide feedback and share their knowledge with leaders. Furthermore, effective communication between leaders and subordinates establishes a foundation that promotes open communication which is conducive to building a strong leader-subordinate relationship (Mishra et al., 2014).

As organizations focus on improving diversity, leaders are faced with the challenge of adjusting and improving their leadership styles. A great deal of research has been conducted on leadership, however, there is no definitive answer on the most effective leadership style (Gandolfi & Stone, 2016). Leadership has been researched by many theorists such as Niccolo Machiavelli, Douglas McGregor, Rensis Likert, and Robert R. Blake (Hofstede, 1980). Leadership research conducted by Machiavelli proposed by using certain manipulation techniques could help leaders stay in power (Hofstede, 1980). Whereas, research conducted by Douglas McGregor, Rensis Likert, and Robert R. Blake all came to the same conclusion that subordinates should have an

active role with participating in managerial decisions (Hofstede, 1980). Leaders are obligated to maintain awareness of the organizational demographics as it relates to culture and diversity. Culturally competent leaders are needed within organizations. However, research conducted by Chin & Trimble (2014) proposed that leadership theories and practices should be diverse, and more research should be done to explain how diversity influences leadership. To be an effective leader in a culturally diverse organization, one has to promote and display a leadership style that fits the dynamics of the organization (Chin, Desormeaux, & Sawyer, 2016). Although, there are many leadership styles such as transformational, task, and collaborative that are successful, information is limited on how these approaches promote inclusiveness (Chin et al., 2016). Individuals in leadership positions, decide how they will lead and manage their subordinates. However, if the method chosen is not conducive to the organizational culture it can be ineffective which can have profound effects to the subordinates and the organization as a whole (Gandolfi & Stone, 2016). Hofstede (1980) believed that leaders are not able to choose their leadership style because the leadership style used should be based on the cultural conditioning of subordinates within the organization. A leadership diversity summit was conducted by Chin et al. (2016) with leaders of diverse organizations from different industries and the majority of leaders at the summit believed to be an effective and successful leader one had to be flexible and demonstrate cultural competence when interacting with a diverse workforce. Leaders have to be committed to displaying and promoting a leadership style that transforms and has a positive impact on subordinates and the organizational culture. Based on Hofstede (1980) Power Distance

Index (PDI) approach, he believed that subordinates of all cultures should be valued instead of valuing leaders.

Although, this study did not focus on diversity and inclusion, some junior managers in the study believed those attributes were contributing factors to executive's inability to effectively communicate and share information. Some participants believed established organizational cultures were hindering communication and information sharing. This was due in part to executives being unwilling to evaluate and improve the existing culture to improve the communication and information sharing process.

Summary and Conclusions

The aim of the study is to explore the experiences and perceptions of junior managers on the different leadership styles and communication practices of executives, and they are influenced. The contributions of previous literature show how leadership styles, communication practices, and cultural diversity as it relates to information sharing, are factors that can contribute to effective or ineffective communication. The literature showed how some leadership styles were more effective over others. Based on some of the peer-reviewed literature, it was found that certain leadership styles can have a positive impact on subordinates. However, limited information is available on how junior managers perceive and are influenced by executives' leadership styles and communication practices.

In chapter 3, a detailed account of how the study will be conducted will be discussed. Information regarding the research design, role of the researcher, and methodology addressed. Furthermore, how the participants of the study will be selected,

the instrumentation to be used, as well as the process for recruiting participants will be provided. Finally, a data analysis plan will be provided will addressing trustworthiness and ethical procedures to follow.

Chapter 3: Research Method

Introduction

The purpose of this qualitative phenomenological study was to explore how the leadership styles and communication methods of executives affect junior managers' perceptions and how they are influenced when it comes to information sharing. The data gathered from the study can contribute to new knowledge on how communication methods and leadership styles can influence junior managers. The findings of this study can contribute to social change because it can help executives understand how junior managers are impacted and influenced by their communication and leadership practices.

Throughout the chapter, the qualitative research design, the role of the researcher, methodology, and participant selection will be described. Furthermore, the instrumentation, procedures for recruitment, participation, data collection, and data analysis plan will be presented. Finally, the research questions and ethical considerations of the study will be presented.

Research Design and Rationale

The design for this qualitative phenomenological study of junior managers' perceptions of executives' leadership styles and communication practices was guided by the following research questions:

RQ1: What are the lived experiences of junior managers and their perceptions on how executives' leadership styles influence their behavior?

RQ2: How do junior managers perceive the role of top owned information flow in their ability to do their own jobs?

The nature of the study was the qualitative phenomenological study method. Qualitative research can show how junior managers are influenced by executives based on individuals lived experiences and perceptions. Using a qualitative method allows the researcher to obtain an in depth and detailed understanding of the issue (Patton, 2002).

For this qualitative phenomenological study, I conducted interviews with the participants of the study. Interviews are appropriate for the phenomenological study approach because knowledge and in-depth understanding was gained through junior manager's lived experiences and perceptions. The phenomenological study approach is appropriate because of the interest in the lived experiences of the individuals participating in the study and the ability to make a real connection with the participants to obtain the deep and rich data that is needed for this study. According to Moustakas (1994), the starting point for a study is having a topic that can be explored and investigated for a phenomenon. A qualitative phenomenological study is appropriate for using interviews because of the importance of trying to understand the depth of the participants experiences. A phenomenological study is also appropriate because of the rich and deep data that can be collected through the interview process. Analyzing across interviews and looking at individuals rich and deep experiences is important when conducting a phenomenological study that is why this study is appropriate.

Role of the Researcher

In a phenomenological study, the researcher is not only the facilitator of the study but an instrument of the study as well (citation). As the facilitator and instrument of the phenomenological study, the researcher must minimize bias and conflicts. Therefore,

implementing a bracketing technique such as memoing or reflexive journaling can help a researcher monitor and reflect on their personal beliefs, preconceptions, and experiences so that it is not incorporated into the study (Tufford & Newman, 2012). I conducted interviews for this phenomenological study. The interviews are also an instrument for this study. The success of this phenomenological study depended on how well I connected with the participants of the study. Therefore, it is imperative that I built trust with the participants to ensure they would be open and honest during the data collection process.

Another aspect of my role as the researcher was to establish contact with a professional association to recruit participants. The participants did not have any professional or personal ties or interactions that could impact the researcher/participant relationship. I did not know the participants or have any personal or professional connection to them. In this qualitative study, the primary research instrument was interviews. I was responsible for conducting the interviews with the participants. A semi structured interview guide was created and used when conducting the interviews. According to Patton (2002), obtaining data through interviews is the most common collection method in a qualitative study. I was also responsible for making sure all the participants read, understood, and signed all the appropriate forms necessary for them to participate in the study while maintaining confidential. Also, the researcher must ensure personal bias does not threaten the credibility of the study (Tufford, 2012).

Methodology

A qualitative methodology and phenomenological research design were chosen to understand junior managers lived experiences and perceptions of executives'

communication and leadership practices. The chosen methodology and design allow for the discovery of commonality among junior managers by gathering information on their perceptions of executives' communication and leadership practices by conducting in-depth semi structured and conversational phone interviews. Specifically, I examined how executives' communication and leadership practices influence junior managers and their behaviors within the organization.

Conducting this phenomenological study required the recruitment of junior managers that are direct reports to executives from a professional association. The data was obtained from in-depth semi structured interviews with 10 participants. According to Creswell (2013), a sample size of 10-15 is sufficient for a phenomenological study; therefore, conducting 10 interviews was appropriate for this study. The interviews conducted took less than 30 minutes to complete with each participant answering 14 interview questions. Some interviews were shorter than others because of the participants views and perceptions on each question. I recorded and transcribed the interviews. Once the interviews are conducted, the data was analyzed to investigate similarities and characteristics of the participants' real-life experiences. Thematic coding was used to analyze the participants' responses to the interview questions.

Participant Selection Logic

The participants were selected from two different professional associations, which are Society of Industrial and Organizational Psychology (SIOP) and Society of Human Resource Management (SHRM) as well as Walden's Participation Pool to identify potential research participants. Both SIOP and SHRM have over 1,000 active members.

Therefore, the participation pool used was diverse. I received permission to broadcast my study on SIOP webpage. I was also able to tag my study on SIOP Facebook page.

However, with SHRM I spoke with the president of the local chapter, and she was able to send out an e-mail blast on two different occasions to all registered members on the membership list. In addition, I was allowed to post the study on SHRM's LinkedIn and Facebook page. The first 10 people that met the selection criteria was chosen to participate in the study. The participants must meet the necessary criteria to participate in the study. The criteria to participate is listed below:

- Must be over 18 years of age.
- Located in the United States.
- Worked for the company for a minimum of 1 year.
- Has at least 2 years of experience with being a junior manager.
- Must be a junior manager that has been a direct report to an executive for at least 1 year.

The participants of the study were junior managers. The junior manager participated in a phone interview. By conducting a phone interview, it will not limit the study geographically. Interviewing junior managers from SIOP and SHRM helped with understanding the various lived experiences and perceptions they have regarding executives. According to Patton (2002), in qualitative research there is not a set sample size. However, for the purpose of this phenomenological study a sample size of 10 will be used. Conducting a phenomenological study with a sample size of 10-12 is sufficient because the information gained is more reliable and can be replicated (Yin, 2018). The

sample size of a study can be based on what the researcher wants to know (Braun & Clarke, 2013). Therefore, for the purpose of this study, the sample size is appropriate. Furthermore, a sample size of 10 is sufficient to achieve data saturation. Data saturation is achieved when no new information is obtained during the collection process (Braun & Clarke, 2013). Data saturation ensures the researcher yields an in-depth understanding of the information obtained based on the participants experiences (Patton, 2002).

Instrumentation

Interview questions were used to collect data for this study. The interviews were conducted to get responses to questions about junior managers' perceptions of executives' leadership styles and communication practices and how they are influenced in the workplace. I developed a 14-item interview guide (see Appendix A) to gather information from junior managers regarding their perceptions and experiences of executives they report to. The interview guide consists of open-ended questions as well as some close-ended questions. Interview Questions 1-7 are communication questions. The communication questions were established to gather information from junior managers on executives' communication and information sharing practices. Interview Questions 8-13 are leadership questions. The leadership questions were established to gather information from junior managers on executives' leadership styles and how they are influenced. I developed the communication interview questions. The leadership interview questions, as well as question 14, were guided by Holloway and Schaefer's (2014) work and modified for the purpose of this study. The interview guide guided the direction of

the interviews and the researcher gained knowledge of junior managers perceptions and how they are influenced.

Procedures for Recruitment, Participation, and Data Collection

Participation recruitment was conducted through SIOP and SHRM. One requirement that both associations had in order to recruit participants was to be an active member of the associations. The associations were chosen because of their emphasis on leadership and communication practices in the workplace. The participants were recruited by posting information about the study on the association's website, Facebook, and LinkedIn page. When recruiting for participants, information about the study was provided as well as my contact information. Participants that were interested in the study contacted me via telephone or e-mail.

Once the participants reached out to me expressing interest in taking part in the study, I made contact with the potential participants and screened the participants to ensure they met the participation study qualifications. I also made sure all the participants' questions were addressed. Once it was determined the participants were qualified to take part in the study, an interview time was scheduled. However, before the participants could take part in the interview, I e-mailed a consent form to the participants to review. If the participants agreed to take part in the study after reviewing the consent form, they had to respond in email saying they agree to take part in the study before they could be interviewed. Also, information regarding confidentiality, privacy, and potential risks (if any) were provided. The first 10 qualified participants were chosen to be part of the study.

The data was collected by conducting phone interviews with the participants. Before the interviews begin, the participants were reminded about the consent form they signed and returned. The participants were asked to verbally acknowledge their agreement to have the phone interview recorded. The participants were also asked if they have any questions before the phone interview begins. If there were any questions to address, I answered them and promptly began the interview. The data was collected from recorded semi structured phone interviews that lasted no more than 30 minutes. Collecting data through interviews allowed the interviewees to provide insight regarding their views and perceptions on the specific topic (Yin, 2018). The data collected was transcribed and analyzed for themes and concepts that relate to the research questions. Thematic coding and NVivo was used to identify themes in the individual interviews as well as identify and analyze themes across interviews.

Data Analysis Plan

Once the data was collected, the I began the process of analyzing data while maintaining focus on noticing patterns or themes that bring forth insight to the study (Braun & Clarke, 2013). In this study, I transcribed the interviews. It is important that the researcher analyze and transcribe the data as it is an opportunity to familiarize yourself with the data (Gibbs, 2007). The transcription of the phone interview was initially going to be done by a process known as orthographic. Orthographic allows the researcher to transcribe words from data that is recorded (Braun & Clarke, 2013). However, orthographic was not used to transcribe the data instead NVivo was used. Throughout the transcription process for each phone interview it was imperative that all information

provided by the participants was transcribed as it was said so information was not misrepresented in the study. The information obtained was organized in a manner that was conducive to conducting a thorough analysis. Organizing the data required implementing a coding technique. Using a coding technique to organize the transcribed data can help with identifying themes that are related to the research questions. The coding technique used was thematic coding/analysis. Thematic coding will help with identifying key words or phrases in order to capture the in-depth experiences of the participants. When thematic analysis was conducted, codes were generated in order to begin searching for themes from the data collected. Thematic analysis was conducted with each individual interview. Once the analysis was completed with each interview, I analyzed across interviews as well. Analyzing across interviews will allowed me to look for commonalities, similarities, and themes across interviews. Thematic analysis was used for this study because of its flexibility and researchers can use this approach to analyze almost all data (see Braun & Clarke, 2013). Another option that was used to help with coding during the data analysis process was the NVivo software program. NVivo is a software program that can assist with organizing and coding common themes. NVivo is one of many computer programs that can allow the researcher to code an extensive amount of data that was collected by conducting interviews (Yin, 2018).

Issues of Trustworthiness

The goal of this study is to ensure trustworthiness is maintained. Therefore, the study focused on ensuring the participants understand the purpose and focus of the study. However, it is also important that the participants know the study will be conducted with

the utmost respect while maintaining confidentiality. I established trust with the participants during the screening and data collection phase of the study so the participants would be confident that I would protect the data I received from them during the data analysis phases of the study. By maintaining a professional, respectful, and trustworthy relationship with the participants I was able to obtain data regarding the participants rich experiences.

Credibility

Establishing credibility is essential in this study. One way that credibility was established was by ensuring I did not include personal biases in the study. By controlling personal biases, I will not influence the participants during the data collection process. By putting aside personal beliefs and experiences, I can ensure the information obtained from the participants is an accurate account of their experiences, beliefs, and perceptions.

One way to maintain the credibility of the study is through bracketing. Bracketing is a process used by researchers where they put aside their beliefs and perceptions and take on a new outlook while investigating the topic of the study (see Creswell, 2013). Bracketing is important because it helps to eliminate any personal bias or preconceptions that I may have. Bracketing will help me put aside my personal beliefs, values, and experiences throughout the study. Bracketing can be done by writing memos or through reflexive journaling. For this study, bracketing was done in the form of memos throughout the data collection process to ensure credibility. Memos can assist with clarifying thoughts and provide direction during the coding and analysis process (Gibbs,

2007). Memoing is a way to explore one's feelings about the research and reflect on important insights will alleviating bias (Tufford & Newman, 2012).

Conducting various interviews with individuals on their lived experiences and perceptions from the associations I will be recruiting from helped with establishing credibility for this study. Because interviews were conducted with a diverse group of participants with different backgrounds and experiences, it helped strengthen the research during the data analysis process.

Transferability

Transferability in this study is important because it will help establish external validity. Validity was established by looking across interviews in this phenomenological study as well as by forming appropriate research questions for the study. The lived experiences and perceptions of junior managers, affiliated with different associations, on executives' communication practices and leadership styles was the focus of the study. Therefore, to ensure transferability in another company or association, I had to provide detailed information about the study in order for other researchers to replicate or transfer the study to junior managers in another setting. Transferability is achievable when the outcome of a study can be applied to a wider and more diverse population (Braun & Clarke, 2013). As the researcher of the study, transferability was established by providing evidence from the study that the information could be applicable in other settings or situations.

Dependability

The dependability of the study will determine whether the research is reliable and repeatable. If a study is dependable, mistakes and bias are minimized (Yin, 2018). The transcribed recordings and looking across interviews for themes will ensure the study is reliable. Dependability was also achieved by keeping detailed records.

Confirmability

Confirmability is an integral part of this phenomenological study because as the researcher I was deeply involved in the data collection process. My role as the researcher in this phenomenological study is significantly different from other studies because the researcher is considered an instrument of the study. As an instrument of the study, I am able to ensure confirmability. Throughout the research process, it was my responsibility to ensure the results of the study can be confirmed.

Different techniques can be used to ensure confirmability in research. One way to ensure confirmability is through bracketing. Bracketing can be achieved by writing memos, engaging in interviews with other sources, and through reflexive journaling (Tufford & Newman, 2012). Being engaged and deeply involved in the research is important; therefore, memoing can help the researcher to determine the depth of engagement and bring forth insight on any preconceptions (Tufford & Newman, 2012). Engaging in interviews with an outside source can also help with ensuring confirmability. In this study, I will maintain continuous engagement and communication with the University Chairperson to ensure confirmability is achieved. Finally, keeping a reflexive journal is another way to guarantee confirmability. Reflexive journaling can help the

researcher understand why the research is being conducted and helps with identifying any potential conflicts (Tufford & Newman, 2012). Furthermore, to guarantee confirmability memoing and staying engaged with the university chairperson was the techniques used in this study. Confirmability was established by keeping detailed and thorough records during the entire process. By tracking each step of the research process, I was able to ensure confirmability was established in the study.

Ethical Procedures

Implementing and following ethical procedures is the responsibility of the researcher. Being an ethical researcher means maintaining professional ethics and making ethical decisions at all times (Braun & Clarke, 2013). While conducting the study, ethical guidelines were established to ensure the research goals were achieved and participants of the study were not harmed or traumatized. By establishing ethical guidelines as well as always acting professionally and ethically, I was able to build trust between the myself and the participants of the study.

Before the study was conducted, approval from the Instructional Review Board (IRB) of Walden University was needed. The IRB's approval was necessary before the research could be conducted to make certain the researcher protected and respected the rights of the participants (Fisher, 2013). Once approval was received, an informed consent form was sent to all qualifying participants. The informed consent form includes information about the study such as the process, purpose of study, estimated timeframe of the study, nature of study, procedure to follow to withdraw from the study, as well as discuss the risks and benefits of the study. As a result of providing the participants with

an informed consent form, they knew the study had minimal risks. Consequently, I did not foresee the participants being harmed or traumatized in this study. It was imperative that I made certain the rights and privacy of the participants were protected. Therefore, by providing the participants with the informed consent form to review ensured the researcher had the participants' best interest in mind while protecting their privacy and rights. Confidentiality is essential in research. Essentially, participants want to be reassured that the information provided as well as their identity will remain confidential. When participants know the researcher will be the only one that knows their identity, he/she is more apt to be open and forthright when responding to the interview questions. The participants' privacy was protected because their names were changed during the transcribing, coding, and analysis process to maintain confidentiality. Also, the participants of the study were given a copy of the informed consent form as well as provided information about their interview and an explanation of the findings.

All information collected from the participants is kept confidential and stored in a place where only the researcher has access. The hard copies of the participants information were stored in a locked file cabinet. The electronic files were stored in a password protected folder on my laptop that only I have access to. Furthermore, the recorded phone interviews are also stored on my laptop in a password protected folder. All the confidential documents with the participants information will be destroyed after 5 years.

Summary

In this chapter, the research method was discussed as well as the design and rationale for the study. An explanation is provided regarding the role of the researcher and addressed any concerns about research bias. Next, Methodology was discussed and addressed the participation selection, instrumentation, procedures for recruitment, data collection, and data analysis process. Information was provided that addressed that data would be collected by conducting interviews with participants that were recruited from the associations. Finally, issues regarding trustworthiness and ethical procedures were discussed.

In chapter 4, the results of the study will be analyzed. Information on how the data was collected, transcribed, and coded will be provided. Also, the chapter will explore how the results of the study will impact positive social change.

Chapter 4: Results

Introduction

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to explore the lived experiences and perceptions of junior managers on how they are influenced by executives.

Furthermore, I also explored if the information flow process of executives affects junior managers abilities to do their job. I conducted semi structured phone interviews with 10 participants. The participants of the study answered open-ended and close-ended interview questions. The interview questions were design to obtain information that would answer the research questions. I used the data obtained from the phone interviews with the 10 participants to answer my research questions. In Chapter 3, a description of the recruitment process, potential participants, data collection, and data analysis method was explained in-depth. I explored the following research questions:

RQ1: What are the lived experiences of junior managers and their perceptions on how executives' leadership styles influence their behavior.

RQ2: How do junior managers perceive the role of top owned information flow in their ability to do their own jobs.

In this chapter, I will present the results of the analyzed data after I discuss the process and methods used when collecting, transcribing, coding, and analyzing the data. Once the data collection and analysis process has been explained, any variations throughout the process will be discussed. Furthermore, I will explain the steps taken to address the variations in the process.

Data Collection

The data collection process began after Walden University's IRB granted approval (06-26-20-034699) to conduct the research. The research approval expires on June 25, 2021. I followed the established research guidelines and protocol to make certain the validity of the study was sound in addition to being compliant with the ethical procedures.

I collected data from participants in the form of phone interviews. I initially transcribed the phone interviews in NVivo. Once I had the phone interviews transcribed in NVivo, I went back and listened to each of the phone interviews and adjusted NVivo's transcriptions as needed. Out of the 13 participants that expressed interest in taking part in the study, three participants never responded back saying "I consent" in taking part in the study. After making multiple attempts to the potential participants, they were nonresponsive; therefore, no further attempts to contact them were made. The 10 participants that took part in the study all met the criteria. I conducted phone interviews from September 15, 2020, through November 13, 2020 (See Appendix B for interview details) and recorded the phone interviews with the participants permission using Rev Call Recorder version 2.3. The interviews ranged from 11 to 28 minutes.

Recruiting Participants

Participants for the study were recruited via SHRM and SIOP. SHRM sent an email blast to all their members to contact me should they want to participate in the study. SHRM also allowed me to tag the post of their Facebook page as well as their LinkedIn page. SIOP allowed me to post information about my study on their website

under the “Calls and Announcements” section in addition to allowing me to tag (#SIOP) them on posts about the study on Facebook. The study was also posted on Walden Participant Pool webpage. Once anyone reached out to me showing interest in my study, I responded back to them and attached a copy of the IRB approved consent form for their review. I advised them to read the consent form and if they meet the qualifications of the research study and understood the study well enough to decide about the study to respond to my email with the words “I consent” then I would move forward with scheduling a date and time to conduct the phone interview. There were some participants I communicated with via e-mail multiple times before the interview to change interview times and dates due to scheduling conflicts. Any questions or concerns the participants had about the study were addressed prior to the phone interview or before the phone interview began.

Participants

Ten participants took part in the interviews. All the participants met the below criteria to participate in the study.

- Must be over 18 years of age.
- Located in the United States.
- Worked for the company for a minimum of 1 year.
- Has at least 2 years of experience with being a junior manager.
- Must be a junior manager that has been a direct report to an executive for at least 1 year.

The interviews were conducted over the phone. There was a total of 14 questions, which are highlighted in Appendix A. The time range to complete the interviews was between 11 minutes to 28 minutes.

The phone interviews were recorded using Rev Call Recorder version 2.3, which was an iPhone application on my phone. The recorded interviews were transferred to my computer under a password protected folder. The recordings on my phone were deleted. Next, the recorded phone interviews were transcribed via NVivo and then I did a manual transcription to ensure the NVivo transcriptions were accurate. Once the recordings were transcribed, the transcriptions were saved in a password protected folder and the participants identity was protected by using pseudonyms. Once, the transcription process was completed I coded the data using NVivo. Coding the data helped with keeping the information organized and allowed some concepts or themes to be seen. Furthermore, coding the data in NVivo contributes to a smooth and successful data analysis process.

Variations in Data Collection

There were a couple of variations in the data collection process. One variation is that during the interview process with participant P5JPM the interview failed to record. Although, we were prompted that the call was being recorded, it did not. Therefore, the call was not recorded due to an equipment malfunction. Although, I did take some notes, I reached out to participant P5JPM to determine if it was possible to conduct the interview a second time. The participant initially conducted the phone interview that did not record on October 23, 2020. Since the participant was willing to redo the interview, I threw out all my notes from the October 23, 2020, interview and used the phone

interview and notes from the second interview recording which took place on November 15, 2020.

The second variation during the interview process occurred with participant P7MMF. As I was conducting the phone interview and made it through the first interview question, the call dropped. Every attempt I made to get participant P7MMF back on the phone failed as I was sent straight to voicemail. However, after waiting a few minutes to reach out to the participant, I was able to establish contact and complete the interview.

Data Analysis

Coding Procedures

Coding the data was done based on the open coding process. Coding is not precise; therefore, the researcher's goal when coding is to find patterns or themes in the data obtained (Saldaña, 2009). Open coding was the first phase of the process where I focused on examining each line or phrase to determine an appropriate code for phenomenon being explored. To begin coding, I listened to the phone interviews as well as reviewed the transcripts to ensure I had a clear understanding of what the participants were saying to determine the codes that emerged from the interview data. Also, there were child codes that determine so I organized those codes into the appropriate hierarchy. The coding was done with the assistance of using NVivo software. NVivo is a qualitative software program used to assist with organizing, coding, and analyzing information.

Qualitative Data Analysis Software

NVivo is a multifunctional qualitative software program that helps with organizing, coding and analyzing your research. I also used NVivo for data storage. The

qualitative software program helped with data organization that helped me conduct a thorough data analysis process. Because the data was organized in NVivo, I was able to review and analyze the most frequent codes and pull the most relevant participant quotes for analysis. As I was analyzing the data, I was able to make notable observations as well as possible themes.

Codes, Categories, & Emergent Themes

During the analysis of the data, common themes identified by the participants emerged. Overall, there were 10 themes that emerged from the data. Statements made by the participants for each theme addressing the research questions and describing the lived experiences and perceptions of leadership styles and communication practices will be reviewed in depth in the results section. The following is a list of themes that emerged from the data.

- Leadership Style Influence
- Positive Leadership Experience
- Negative Leadership Experience
- Non-effective Leadership Styles
- Effective Leadership Styles
- Flow of Information
- Timeframe: Information Sharing
- Non-effective Communication Approach
- Most Effective Communication Approach
- Executive versus Junior Managers Communication Style

Evidence of Trustworthiness

Credibility

To ensure credibility of the study, I used bracketing. Bracketing was used to alleviate any bias or preconceptions in this study. Bracketing is a process used by researchers to set aside their assumptions when exploring or trying to understand a phenomenon through the objective analysis of the research participants experiences (Gearing, 2004). To ensure my personal bias was not included in the study, I listened to each phone interview to make certain the participants were quoted accurately during the transcription process. In addition, as I listened to the phone interviews, I made notes about what the participants said as well as my thoughts. Writing my thoughts down or memoing my thoughts allowed me to conduct a thorough examination of my thoughts.

Transferability

External validity determines if the research can be applied to a broader population. The detailed information provided on the methodology and tools used tremendously improved transferability for this study. Furthermore, because of the high transferability of this study, researchers will be able to replicate the research. The data collected through phone interviews, by asking open-ended and closed-ended questions, provided detailed insight on the participants shared experiences and perceptions.

Dependability

In phenomenological studies, there can be a level of difficulty in demonstrating dependability. To demonstrate dependability, repetition of the research and results must be achieved. I achieved dependability in this study through the transcriptions of the phone

interviews and looking across interviews for themes or patterns. As I transcribed the interviews, I also took notes of what the participants said about their experiences and perceptions.

Confirmability

The ability to confirm the results of the study is the researcher's responsibility. My responsibility of conducting this research was to accept the thoughts, experiences, and perceptions of the participants. Furthermore, I also had to trust that the data provided by the participants was honest and truthful to the best of their knowledge. For me to remain objective, be aware of any personal biases, and not make any assumptions about the phenomenon being studied, I implemented the use of bracketing. Bracketing can be achieved through memos and engaging in interviews (Tufford & Newman, 2012). Although bracketing was used to establish confirmability, I also established confirmability by staying engaged with the university chairperson.

Study Results

I conducted phone interviews with participants to obtain the data needed for this study. The data collected answered the following research questions.

RQ1: What are the lived experiences of junior managers and their perceptions on how executives' leadership styles influence their behavior?

RQ2: How do junior managers perceive the role of top owned information flow in their ability to do their own jobs?

A 14-question interview guide expanded on the research questions and provided a clear and concise picture on the experiences and perceptions of junior managers.

Supported by the in-depth, thorough, and detailed statements of the participants, the data revealed the true perceptions and lived experiences of junior managers of executive's leadership styles and communication practices. The codes were analyzed and each relevant quote for each of the codes were used in these findings. From each code, a theme or an observation emerged from the data.

Due to some of the questions being open-ended questions, the participants were able to provide detailed responses, which provided in-depth insight regarding their personal experiences and how things are perceived. I was able to break the findings down into 10 themes with the participants responses. The responses from participants showed their experiences and what they had in common.

RQ1 can be answered by Themes 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5. As reference below in these themes, participants had positive and negative experiences with different leadership styles in addition to being influenced positively and negatively. Participants also expressed their views on non-effective and effective leadership styles. Aligned with the theoretical framework of LMX, the data emphasized the positive and negative implications of leadership styles based on the experiences and perceptions of junior managers.

RQ2 can be answered by Themes 6, 7, 8, 9, and 10. As referenced below in these themes, data supported ways in which communication impacted the communication flow from executives. Participants shared their thoughts on how information is shared within their organization in addition to how often information was shared. Participants also expressed their views on noneffective and effective communication approaches to share

information in addition to sharing if their communication approach differs from the executive they report to.

Below is a map of leadership and communication themes that were prevalent throughout the study. Figure 1 is a list of leadership themes. Figure 2 is a list of communication themes. Both leadership and communication themes were consistently mentioned by participants in the study.

Figure 1

Leadership Themes



Figure 2*Communication Themes*

Theme 1: Leadership Style Influences

After interviewing the participants on whether their leadership style has been influenced by the executive they report to, I found that some of the participants are influenced in a positive way. Participant P2LHF, P4WRF, P5JPM, P6ABM P7MMF, P8SSF, P9KRF, P10TBF are all influenced positively even if they report to an executive that displays what they perceive as a negative leadership style. Executives that show negative leadership styles it shows the managers the type of leader they do not want to become so they shy away from that leadership style. Below are excerpts from the participants phone interviews.

P2LHF “I would say yes. Prior to the conversation related to H.R., the department in general was very transactional for the organization. I am like no that is not going to work for me. My boss is better at being transformational than I am that is what I'm working on being less transactional and pulling more of allowing my staff to be more, if there is change, transformational.”

P4WRF “Oh, for sure! I try not to be that way. For me, I try to be more personable and available and flexible for the employees.”

P5JPM “So with the charismatic leaders or the motivation leaders, like if there's concern about stuff that's going on, I've voiced concerns to them if we're headed in one direction and we need to kind of slightly go to the right, I've brought that to their attention, and we have made course corrections with stuff like that and to help get the job done more

efficiently or get something done the correct way. Like safety issues, they have made changes and I have helped implement those changes.

Yes. So like I said, I've been doing my job, I've been working for about 20 to 30 years and I've taken influences from like even the negative or the dictator type leaders like you always find something that maybe you don't want to use from them, or maybe there's something that they do that is just unique and it does help when you're leading people and you kind of pull what you can from all these different leaders, whether they were negative leader or they were a good leader. Like maybe I just, you know, want to look at the dictator type leader and I just I do not want to be like that at all so I kind of shy away from some of their techniques that they use. But there is always good and bad that you can learn from people. So, I kind of think of myself as a charismatic leader, like a motivational type of person. I use most of those good qualities from those leaders and I used like there's good qualities that bad leaders can help you with also so I kind of pull from everything.”

P6ABM “Yeah, so I started with the company when I was 22 years old. I am now 45 and they have basically groomed me to be who they want me to be, which is a good thing, right. They have taught me a lot. They have given me a lot. They have moved me from the shipping department all the way through my career with the company up to the senior product management role. I have been over people, and I have been responsible for

millions of dollars' worth of inventory and things like that. So as far as what the company has done for me, they have done a lot for me, and I would not be there for the time that I have been if it wasn't. The culture of the company is for everyone to grow especially if they are showing initiative. Well, I can say not to toot my own horn, but I could say that I did want to be more in the company as I was growing up and noticing how the company was run. Now, I am one of the only ones that doesn't have a college degree in a position that I am in, but again, I had worked really hard to get to that position and due to them, that is how I made it there and they believed in me. I have 100 percent respect for that across the board. They are willing to do that with others that show the initiative as well.”

P7MMF “Yes. I would say I have. I am a problem solver. I have a tendency to want to if somebody brings a concern to me or an issue to me or ask me a question, I am in resolve the issue mode immediately. I forget that those people are also capable of finding solutions, also capable of making their own decisions and they can resolve that themselves. They are just reaching out to me because they want assurance that they're going the right route. The way my manager handles things is anytime I ask him something or I say I am having an issue here what do you think? His question to me is what do you think or how would you solve this. He definitely changed my mindset a lot. If you do not empower people, people will never grow. They are always going to come to you for

everything. They are never going to trust their own judgment because you are always resolving everything for them. That's definitely has influenced me on how I lead my team today.”

P8SSF “I would say yes. I am more of transactional. However, I am not big on the announce to everybody the recognition type thing because I know for me that is one thing I do not like. But however, I still go to my employees and tell them hey, you did a great job, or you did great on this or even let my upper management know they did a great job on it. Another thing I do not like to do because I do not like people doing to me is I do not like micromanaging because I do not want to micromanage. So if you give me an assignment to do something, I am going to do it and I am going to let you know when it is done. I do not like somebody hovering over me, 24/7 to find out the status of it and constantly giving status updates and pretty much nothing going on so that is something I don't like people doing it to me, so I don't do that to the employees I manage. I am a transactional type of person and have always been that way.”

P9KRF “There was never anything positive, which kind of helped me develop the style that I have because when you're trying to discipline somebody or get your point across, you should start with the positive. Then you should tell them the constructive criticism they should work and finish with a positive, so they retain it and that is not what I got from those guys. They taught me what not to do as a manager.

P10TBF “Of course, of course. If I had to pick a leadership style that has influenced me I would the transactional leadership style.”

After analyzing the data, I found that participant P3CSF and P6ABM both do not let bad leaders keep them from doing their job. As stated by participant P3CSF “my personality won’t allow it. I have integrity and I’m going to show it”. Another observation is that participants P4WRF, P5JPM, and P9KRF try not to be a dictator type or authoritative leader because they have experienced that leadership style and it was not empowering. An observation was made regarding participants P8SSF and P10TBF as both said they were more influenced by transactional leadership. The final observation I found was that participant P8SSF reported being a transactional leader but does not like to be rewarded or shown any kind of recognition for doing her job. However, the participant does reward direct reports.

Theme 2: Positive Leadership Experiences

In this section, 9 out of 10 research participants in this study shared positives experiences with leadership styles. Participant P2LHF had a positive experience with transformational leadership. Participant P3CSF, P4WRF, and P5JPM all had positive experiences with charismatic leadership. It is worth noting that the positive experience P3CSF had was with a previous employer and not the current employer. Participant P6ABM believed that all positive leadership is good leadership. Participant P7MMF and P9KRF indicated they have had positive leadership but does not specify what leadership style was being displayed when they experienced positive leadership. Participants P8SSF

and P10TBF has had a positive experience with transactional leadership. Below are some of the participants responses to positive leadership.

P2LHF “A transformational leadership style is the type of leadership that is displayed within the company. The executives want you to be included in the decision-making process and want you to share your ideas to empower you and your team. We have a once-a-month luncheon where everyone can come into the office and share ideas or concerns.”

P3CSF “In a former organization, I have seen excellent leadership and charisma by people not only taking accountability and ownership, but taking a genuine interest in you, meeting your goals or helping you set your goals to be better.”

P4WRF “I mean, sometimes like the encouragements, I guess that the third leadership style you mentioned (charismatic). Sometimes it could be that way. You know, they are very encouraging, and you are just like, you know, we're going to push through, we're gonna get it done kind of thing. Sometimes that does translate, but not all the time. Not when you're overworked and understaffed.”

P5JPM “Yes, I had a bunch of great leaders and most of them were charismatic. Most of them were motivational type leaders. And it impacts everyone great. Whereas like negative leadership permeates down and people feel that and they kind of do not want to come to work. The charismatic and the motivational leader, they make you feel good about

doing your job and they make you feel wanted like everyone needed to do a job. Like we are all cogs in a wheel without one cog the gears do not work right. So, once everything is oiled and greased up, you kind of get everybody working and that charismatic type of leader, you know, they kind of the bravado or, you know, how they make everyone feel and want to be at work. You come in and you do not have to try to put a smile on your face. You are happy to be there, and you want a great job done.”

P6ABM “I think all positive leadership is being able to be one on one with somebody. For instance, if someone does something wrong, you just chalk that up the first or second time as being wrong maybe it is a training issue of something of that sort. I am not really over a lot of people now, but through my history with the company I have been, and I think when I was either like disciplining people or things like that, I never tried to make them feel like they were in the wrong, I always tried to make them feel like we could do better and here is how we are going to help you do better. I think that that is kind of misconstrued in a lot of management skills. But it has always been that same type of, at least with the folks I deal with that are above me, it has always been hey, let's sit down and talk about it we are going to work through it. Again, I have got a lot of history with the company that I am with, so they tend to be a little bit more forgiving, at least for me, and you know I can take the blame, I don't blame other people.”

P7MMF “The leadership approach that is currently being used works for me and works very well. I think that right now with my current manager, which I’ve had since I started in this company, I would say he's wonderful. He is very supportive. He is very cooperative. He is always, you know, willing to do what I ask. He is very willing to listen. He is willing to go the extra mile to see, you know, could this work and if it he thinks it's not a good thing, he is very open to explaining why. So, I mean, it impacts my job greatly because it gives me flexibility. I know I can reach out to him if I need his assistance. I know I have his support. He is very hands off he trusts his people. He entrusts people and lets his people do what they think is best and he always has their back. So, it helps to feel confident in your role, it helps you feel that I can do this. I can try new things and if it does not work, we go back to square one and we try again, and I know I'm not going get in trouble for it. I'm not going to get my hand slapped and I'm not going to get fired or whatever.”

P8SSF “My current manager, the one that's transactional, yeah, He has an open-door policy, and you can come to about anything. I think that's been really positive, especially for me and my different roles that I've had with this current company so much so that I have been promoted a couple of times.”

P9KRF “They know their employees; they know their managers and they know what's going on. They are hands on and if something breaks, one of

the two of them, the one with ADD the hands-on guy, he like fixes things and tinkering with stuff. My other one is the personnel. He knows everybody. He comes in and talks to all the employees, including the night shift people know who he is. If there is something going on, and they cannot get with the managers they can come and get with me and if we still can't get it figured out, they can go to the employee. There is an open-door policy, like there is no oh, you cannot go talk to him you are going to get in trouble. It is a very enjoyable atmosphere to be around. Well, I can tell you where I am at right now, I am extremely happy. I live 46 miles from my job. It takes me no traffic, 50 minutes flat to get in from my house to my job and I do it five days a week. I show up happy I do everything that needs to be done. The owners that I have now are by far the best people that I think I have ever worked for in my entire life. They set good examples. They are willing to sit down and talk if you do not understand to get you on a level to help you understand. Even when you do something wrong, they are not coming at you with the book they're coming at you with let's try to make this better. Maybe when something like this happens, let's try to make this a little bit different or let's not assess the situation right away let's step back from it.”

P10TBF “I would say transactional leadership, it helps to drive compliance and that it's a method that can be used, you know, in applying

a policy and conduct. With that moving forward, it makes my job a better place, if you know what I mean.”

Theme 3: Negative Leadership Experiences

Research participants in this study shared their different negative experiences with a leadership style. The negative experiences came from leaders displaying a transactional, charismatic, and a dictator type leadership style. It is worth noting that one participant (P3CSF) noted that leaders within the organization display an avoidance type leadership style as they avoid answering questions or providing information unless it is necessary. The participant’s response is below.

P2LHF “We do not want to be a transactional employer with our employees. We do not want to just be OK you are all remote you do stuff for us, and we give you a paycheck. We know that change is the number one constant and that is the thing we tell any new hires. If you do not like change or you cannot change, we are all working towards adaptability, this is not the company for you. The one thing I will say to anybody is if you can deal with change, you will be fine.”

P4WRF “I mean, I guess, yeah, I would say. I find I do not know if this helps at all the leadership style. It is more like they care about quantity versus quality. It’s just that the push for that is not OK, just because, you know, it's not missions oriented. If you are caring for people, it should not be that way in the medical field.”

P5JPM “Oh, definitely. I have had negative experience with a leadership style. I have had negative impacts with the dictator type leadership style. Like I said, one of our executives or leaders who was in a position of power, who were set in their ways and unwilling to listen, and it had to be their way, or no way and it had to be done exactly how they say it needs to get done.”

P7MMF “: In my current role, I have had you know, I cannot complain. The best company I have ever worked for, the best leadership I have ever had. I mean, I have had issues in previous companies before where you know, that the leadership was not engaged, was not supportive, was not receptive to feedback and that really hinders anything that you can do in your job. Right. Sometimes your power can only go so far and if you don't have buy in from the executives above you then you are going to have problems. I've had issues in the past, but at my current company I have not had any issues.”

P9KRF “I have. The negative leadership style that I did not like was the very strict and there's just no explanation needed.”

P10TBF “Yeah, the charismatic one. To me, I think that that is more of the leader's persuasiveness trying to get his own views across. You know, having charisma and trying to persuade people to move his way and it has caused some problems inter-departmental, you know what I mean with one executive to another executive over different departments.”

Theme 4: Non-effective versus Effective Leadership Styles

The research participants expressed their thoughts on what they felt were non-effective and effective leadership styles. Participant P2LHF believed the transactional leadership style was non-effective. However, participant P3CSF and P9KRF believed the non-existent leadership style was ineffective. Participants P4WRF, P5JPM, and P7MMF all believed the dictator or authoritative type leader was non-effective. The charismatic leadership style was thought to be non-effective from participants P8SSF and P10TBF.

There were not many participants that discussed what they felt were the most effective leadership styles when asked what leadership styles were least effective and the leadership styles that were most effective. After collecting, transcribing, and analyzing the data, one observation I made was that four out of the ten participants expressed what leadership styles they believed to be most effective. Participant P2LHF and P7MMF indicated that the transformational leadership style was most effective. Charismatic leadership style was found to be most effective by participant P5JPM whereas the transactional leadership style was most effective for participant P8SSF.

P2LHF “Least effective is transactional because it does not empower.

Most effective transformational because employees are empowered.”

P3CSF “At my current organization, all of their leadership being non-existent is not effective.”

P4WRF “The authoritative leadership style is the least effective as this is more of leaders being demanding and barking orders at you like they are doctors and lawyers.”

P5JPM “The least effective type of leadership is like the dictator type leader. The most effective, I think is the charismatic leadership style. You don't always have to know everything to be able to motivate everyone to work for you or do something for you. You do not have to know exactly what needs to be done. You just know that you know, you need people with you. You cannot do it all by yourself.”

P6ABM “Least effective is someone that always takes credit for the work that you put in front of them. Effective is those leaders that are willing to put your name out there and say hey, you had a part in this, and we made it work well and that's why we're moving forward with whatever it may be.”

P7MMF “I think least effective is the one where, I tell you to do this, and you do it. It is the one that has no cooperation, is the one that is not open to feedback, even if sometimes you are still going to have to do what they say they are not willing to listen, which I believe is the authoritative leadership style. It takes away your motivation you will never be heard, and it is pointless. I think the one that is most effective is the one that I have now. Right. The collaborative one. The one that you know, hey, I need to make a change. I am thinking about doing this. What do you think? Do you have suggestions? How can we make this happen? Hey, I seen this challenge in your team. How do you think you can fix it? Right. The one that empowers the people.”

P8SSF “Again, the least effective, I would think is the charismatic leadership style, which they are trying to use personality kind of sugarcoat things. The most effective I'm more the type I want you to be straight forward and tell me what's needed.”

P9KRF “He had like non-existent leadership role. The least effective is probably the hands off you figure it out, I will send you an email, I'll answer it back to you in a few days and hope you figured it out and made the right decision. The hands-off approach just really didn't work for me.”

P10TBF “Non-effective the charismatic leadership style.”

Theme 5: Flow of Information

The participants shared the process of the flow of information within their company. Also, the participants shared their process of sharing information. After analyzing the transcripts, I found that participant P10TBF company utilizes many different methods to share information. Seven out of the 10 participants said that their company uses e-mail to share information. Participants P2LHF, P4WRF, P5JPM, P6ABM, P7MMF, P8SSF, and P10TBF all said their company uses e-mail to share information. P5JPM, P9KRF, and P10TBF also utilizes face-to-face interaction to share information. P5JPM is the only participant whose organization uses radios to share information. Participant P8SSF and P10TBF uses instant messaging/slack (a form of instant messaging) to share information. P9KRF is the only participant whose organization that mainly uses the phone to share information. Finally, P10TBF is the only

participant whose organization uses message boards, newsletters, and bulletin boards to share information.

Although most of the organizations the participants are employed at share information via e-mail, the data obtained from some of the participants showed their information sharing process differed at times. Participant P3CSF shares information via e-mail, team huddle, and meetings. Participant P5JPM shares information via e-mail but follows the e-mail up with a face-to-face conversation. Face-to-face is the preferred information sharing process for P6ABM. Face-to-face, phone, and text messaging are the preferred information sharing practices of participant P9KRF. Finally, participant P10TBF information sharing practices mirrors the organization she currently is employed at.

P2LHF: “We use e-mail. I think the focus has typically been almost military chain of command is really trying to pass on information through those channels because that is the responsible parties. I think the next level of communication is going to be the opposite. I would prefer more internal communications strategies direct from me to H.R., to the employees, whether it be a text but not necessarily for the bad things more for like hey did you all know that this is going on?”

P3CSF: “Well, I technically have a transparency policy myself where I share information with my staff as I get it via email or a team huddle or a meeting.”

P4: “It's usually emails. Lengthy e-mails.”

P5: “So, let me start off by saying again I am in the military so it's not as different but one of the ways that we use the share information is we'll use e-mails, or we will you use face to face. We talk over radios. So, I guess the way that I communicate I like to use like face-to-face conversation, or I'll start off with e-mail and I'll follow it up with like a face-to-face conversation.”

P6: “So, it's a couple ways, the company likes to document everything at least the company I am with. They tended to use e-mail as a documentation port.

Again, it is e-mail but being that the company we are in we're all really close and I can go directly to whoever I need to, to get it done quicker.”

P7: “So, there are a few different ways that we do that. There are typically companywide E-mails that go out to the team. Our CEO shares weekly cascading messages from the leadership team. There are quarterly meetings with all the executives. As the need arises, we have separate meetings that get scheduled to announce different things. If there have been big changes on things that have been communicated before. So, this is the company wide.”

P8: “The main means of sharing information are via e-mail, and we also use slack. The slack is like an instant messaging type tool that we used within our company.”

P9: “Well, generally, when I am talking to my owners, it's either face to face, on the phone or text messages. We stay really, really communicated very closely. It is almost an everyday type of deal. I'm off today so I won't talk to them today, but it is usually face to face when we are there and, on the phone, when we are not but it is an everyday thing.”

P10: “Well, we use email, and we actually do virtual meetings now due to the COVID-19. We do in person. We have message boards, bulletin boards, we have instant messaging on our computers. We do a weekly newsletter and then we do often get video conferencing type newsletters, if you will, or updates from our German partner. What I do to share information and what the company does to share information mirrors.”

Theme 6: How Often Information Shared

Participants shared their thoughts on how often information is shared and if they felt it was adequate. The observation and analysis of the data showed that eight out of the 10 participants felt the timeframe in which executives shared information was adequate. One participant felt the timeframe was not adequate whereas another participant felt sharing information on an “as needed” basis was sufficient. P1CLM & P8SSF received information monthly. When COVID hit, P2LHF and P8SSF bosses started communicating weekly. However, please note that P8SSF boss went from sharing information weekly due to COVID to monthly. P2LHF, P4WRF, and P7MMF received information weekly from their bosses. Participant P3CSF received information every other month and said that she did not feel sharing information every other month was not

adequate. The participants that received information daily were P5JPM, P9KRF, and P10TBF. Finally, participant 6 was accepting of receiving information on an “as needed” basis.

P1CLM: “With me, it's mostly monthly or quarterly. They do not come into my office because I am HR/payroll. They do not come to me for advice. I feel that when executive’s communication information monthly/quarterly that it is adequate.”

P2LHF: “Yes, I would say it probably is adequate. We all talk weekly. We kind of started that, obviously more so with COVID kind of pushing that. We do tend to do a lot of acquisitions.”

P3CSF: “It's not daily and it's not weekly and by far not adequate. Probably every other month. If something catastrophic happens, then, yes, they will send information. Other than that, I don't hear from them, so my life has been pretty good.”

P4WRF: “I would say weekly, and the information is not outdated. It is definitely up to date information. It is a lot of fluff like we are in this together and I'm like no, we are not.”

P5JPM: “So, the way we do it where I've always been in the military is, we do daily briefings/morning briefing. I do feel this is adequate. Sometimes when we have major inspections coming up, we will do like twice a day, like we will do a morning briefing of what to expect during that day. And then towards the end of the day, we will do like a hot wash

or like the end of the day briefing on what all was that taken care of or what we have left on the table and what to expect the next day. Daily, I believe is adequate, but sometimes if there is a major thing that is going on then you kind of must meet twice a day. And I think that helps but daily is adequate.”

P6ABM: “It depends on what it is. If it deals with my arena of what I do at the company, a lot of times they will do a face-to-face conversation.

Again, if I am on the road, they will email me to say hey, give me a call.

They do not tend to put a lot of that pertinent stuff in emails because

eventually if something were to happen, you could go back and have that looked at by, depending what kind of information you're putting out, an

attorney or some of that sort. A lot of that is give me a call kind of thing

with the executive team, because they do not want a whole lot of people

being able to kind of look at the information they are putting out. They are

secretive when it comes to that kind of stuff. When executives are

communicating with me yes, I do feel it is helpful and usually they do not

let it linger. So, if it comes up, they are usually getting in touch with me

right away if it is something that I need to handle right away. Now, if it is

something that can wait and is not really on the top of the priority list, then

they would tend to wait a little bit, but I would say no more than a week so

they can check it off their list as well.”

P7MMF: “Yes, at least weekly. With a cascading message that the CEO sends out to the entire company. Anytime that they always let us know what they are doing, you know, how the company is doing with us especially during COVID. It was really impressive. I think every couple of weeks or every three weeks, the CEO is sending out an e-mail saying this is how the company is doing. You know, everybody must be worried about how the company is doing. Here is where we are. Here is what we are struggling with. Here is what we can do better. I think it is pretty good. I think it is pretty steady. I think over communication too if you do it more often than that. Right. It ends up being where people just tend to ignore the message because you write too often. But I think, you know, once a week, every Friday, we get some sort of communication from him letting us know what the executives talked about and where we stand for certain things that are important for the company.”

P8SSF: “So, previously it was as needed. So, there really was not a set timeframe. But when COVID started our CEO of the company started sending out weekly updates which I found to be awesome because it kept us up to date on what was going on with the company, what was going on with the performance of the company. He reassured us that we were still doing well and that are jobs were not in jeopardy. So, since COVID kind of started, it was weekly and now he is kind of dropped off and from doing weekly, but he's doing it at least monthly now so there's more of a set

schedule now of communication than there was before. The information that is shared is current. Before, when we got the as needed e-mails, we were always like uh oh, the CEO is sending an email out Oh, what is going on? We were kind of concerned and now since he's done it more on a scheduled basis like we know communication is coming and we're just kind of waiting for it and looking forward to it.”

P9KRF: “Well, generally, as strange as this sounds, I am the one in communication with the corporate office. So, all the memos and everything I get and then I communicate it with them and generally we do it daily.”

P10TBF: Daily, and yes, it is adequate. When executives are communicating, they are sharing current information.

Theme 7: Non-effective Communication Approaches

Half of the participants found e-mail to be the least favorable approach used by executives. Participants P2LHF, P5JPM, P6ABM, P7MMF, and P9KRF found e-mail to be the least effective approach used by executives. P3CSF finds being ignored or avoided by executives to be non-effective. Leaders not communicating is non-effective per participant P4WRF. Participant P8SSF finds slack (instant messaging) to be least effective while participant P10TBF finds video messages from executives to be least effective. Below are the participants response regarding the least effective approach of executives when they communicate.

P2LHF: “We utilize a lot of this profile (i.e., e-mail, face-to-face, etc.) and a lot of strategies for favorable and unfavorable situations. So, I would say because we all, and actually all of us are going through this refresher course on that right now, we all take that, we're very good and so if we see that e-mail is becoming not effective and I would tell this and have a conversation with my staff, if we see that e-mail is not working for two e-mails or so, then you've got to pick up the phone.”

P3CSF: “Currently the leadership that I have has a practice of, how do I want to call it, they ignore you. So, if they never respond you cannot say they did not do something. They have this practice of avoidance that is extremely frustrating when you need to get things done. Six months ago, I asked you if you could approve my vacation time or whatever and they never respond. They never give an answer. An example, I tried to apply for a director's position, but I think they find me overbearing so when they decided to go with another candidate, first off, they did not tell me they went with another candidate. When I went back to them and tried to in a constructive manner, ask them what I could be doing to become a successful candidate for a promotion they never answered. She never answered. Never got an e-mail back or a phone call. I sent that email four times for feedback on the interview and I got nothing. To this day, it has been two years and I still have not gotten nothing.”

P4WRF: “Least effect is when executives are just not communicating kind of being like an absent leader.”

P5JPM: “Like if there is a question over e-mail, you may not reply all or you may ask the question individually; however, the responses you receive back from everyone could be different because the person reading the e-mail has interpreted differently from others. So, I found one of the least effective ways to communicate is just by emails. Not everyone checks their emails all the time and some people are busy, you know working like hands on where they don't have time to get to a computer and I understand all jobs are different but in my line of work, like sometimes I have to dedicate my work towards like working on equipment or being out with my guys out and doing other things where I do not always have the time to check emails. Whereas most executives or higher ups they are usually on their computers all day and that is how they like to communicate. It may be effective for them but it's not as effective for me.”

P6ABM: “E-mail tends to lag a little bit, meaning that I'll send an email, they may be traveling, I get to it, things like that. Sometimes the lag in emails could be because people just do not respond, traveling, or it could be how it fits in their schedule. The least effective is e-mail.”

P7MMF: “To me, the least effect is when you send something in an email. Right. Because it is very easy to see all here goes another email, so you just delete it, or you file it.”

P8SSF: “I would say the least effective is through slack. The reason being is that, again, it is kind of like instant messaging type communication, so you post the message people can add on to that chain but then they don't always add on to the same chain, and they start their own separate chain, and it gets kind of lost and gets difficult to retrieve all of the information that's needed that way. I find that to be the least effective.”

P9KRF: “The least effective I have found through my experience with this company is when we had new owners purchase the location I was at before and they did not live in town. So, everything had to be done via a phone call and e-mail. I found a lot of things get lost in translation with email. I sent it. It did not go. They sent it. I never received it. Then there was always a gap in what we were doing and sometimes there was just a delay. So, I would have to say the biggest hinderance that I have experienced as a manager is probably when we are trying to release sensitive information via email and it is not timely, received, returned, replied or however you want to communicate it. Generally, there is just too much time lagging from my opinion. You know what it is like when you get one hundred emails and you got to get through them all and having to go to them and find which ones are OK. I need this first and then this can wait to the end and sometimes you thought this needed to be done first, but it really did not. So, I really think that the email communication is where things get a little lost in my opinion.”

P10TBF: “I would say the least effective, I feel like are the videos. When I see the videos being played by the employees or by talk with the employees it does not seem like they take the time to get the full effect of it. You know, to read, to listen to it all, to go through it all. So therefore, I think it's just a little less effective.”

Under the “Information Flow” section the data showed that most of the companies the participants work at share information via e-mail. However, when the participants shared their thoughts on the least effective communication approach that executives use to share information it was e-mail.

Theme 8: Effective Communication Approaches

In this section, 7 out of 10 participants shared their views regarding the most effective approach of executives. Participants P2LHF and P9KRF said using the phone was an effective way for executives communicate. Participants P5JPM, P6ABM, P7MMF, and P9KRF believed face-to-face was the most effective communication method of executives. Participant P8SSF and P10TBF thought e-mail was most effective in addition to participant P10TBF including virtual meetings and instant messaging as other effective methods of executives to communicate.

P2LHF: “If there is a negative conversation, it is always a phone. You know, you cannot convey negative information in the e-mail because you cannot understand your actions.”

P5JPM: “The most effective way is mostly like face-to-face group setting so everyone has a full understanding. So, as I stated before, I think the

most effective way is face to face conversations. You cannot misinterpret what someone is saying when they are right in front of you, and they say it to you. If you do misinterpret or have questions that would be the time to ask.”

P6ABM: “Whereas if I can catch him in the office, I can get some things verified or handled easier. most effective is face to face conversation.”

P7MMF: “I think that the most effective is when we have communication with either the entire team if it pertains to a specific team or with the entire company so you can have open forum because you can ask questions, you can have an opportunity to clarify, or express frustration if you need to. Our quarterly meetings are great if you need to communicate in person. Great tool!”

P8SSF: “The most effective again, is the email communication because we have that communication is written and then you can store and easily retrieve it when needed. When communicating through e-mail there is room for misinterpretation, misunderstanding, or miscommunication but then you have that opportunity to respond so they leave that open like if you have any questions reach out to your management or reach out to the person that distributed the email. They may misinterpret something, but you always have the ability to follow up and get clarification.”

P9KRF: “The most effective is either face to face or over the phone because you can actually hear it and get answers immediately. We don't do

any streaming just because my bosses are on team iPhone and I'm on team Android.”

P10TBF: “Most effective, I would say is probably the virtual meetings, email, and instant messaging.”

Theme 9: Executives Communication Preferences

While analyzing the data on junior managers perceptions of executive’s communication preferences, I found that eight out of the 10 participants said executives primarily utilize e-mail more so than any other method to communicate. Participants P2LHF, P3CSF, P4WRF, P5JPM, P7MMF, P8SSF, P9KRF, and P10TBF all said their executive utilize e-mail. Participant P1CLM says business meetings are used to communicate with vendors. Participants P3CSF, P7MMF, and P10TBF said their executives use Zoom/virtual meetings. Participant P4WRF, P5JPM, P7MMF, and P9KRF said their executives use a combination of face-to-face /in person method to communicate. Per the data collected from P4WRF, Skype and BlueJeans are methods executives use to communicate. Teams and text messaging are communication methods that participant P6ABM and P9KRF says their executives use.

P1CLM: “Most business meetings are with our vendors or any of the people who do the benefits, which is our brokers.”

P2LHF: “The method is e-mail. I think maybe the strategy within the email. I would make sure that I had solutions presented if I have a question or a problem that I am trying to solve.”

P3CSF: “Primarily it's e-mail. We do have a zoom meeting every other week for about an hour. However, the agenda or topics are not ones of value. So, it is not like it's really doing anything positive with my time but that is how they communicate. They will send you an e-mail. They will wait for this one meeting and then really try to just fill it with whatever. I mean, they really do not have any positive agendas going on except for when discussing COVID stuff.”

PWRF4: “So, they usually do e-mail and quarterly they try to do in-person right now though they change to like Skype. We actually used BlueJeans if that helps at all.”

P5JPM: “We use a little bit of everything. We use face to face and e-mails.”

P6ABM: “OK, so in these times there's a lot of communication over teams. We do with the company right now. Instead of me being able to get out of my office and walk to whoever I need to talk to, it is easy for me to pick up the phone and call them. If they are busy, so I don't forget or they don't forget, I'll just chat a little e-mail and say hey when you have a moment, please give me a call here's kind of what we're going to talk about and then we can deal with that at that time. Again, for me it is face to face or even video it does not matter to me.”

P7MMF: “We do have communication via email on a weekly basis when the executives meet. Anytime we have things that are important to the

business or business changes or how the business is doing things of that sort it is usually in person. Of course, in the current world in person means zoom but that's usually done in person.”

P8SSF: “The executives of the company mainly handle communication through e-mail.”

P9KRF: “It is always face to face the individual, the manager meaning, we do, do text messages and stuff. Now, I e-mail back and forth with them only because I have invoices and stuff that I get from other companies but none of the managers generally do any emailing. Since COVID happened it has not hindered what we have been doing because we are still very hands on. They are still there five days a week and when we sit, we'll sit like across from each other at the table. We still have to wear masks, unfortunately you know it really hasn't hindered anything because we just made sure that the guidelines that the CDC and so forth set up that we are still trying to follow them even while we're continuing our business because we haven't skipped a beat at all.”

P10TBF: “Right now, it's more virtual meetings. They are still using email and the telephone now as well as instant messaging.”

Summary

The purpose of my phenomenological study was to explore and understand junior managers experiences and perceptions regarding executive's leadership styles and communication practices as it relates to information sharing. The study consisted of conducting phone interviews with 10 participants that meet the criteria of the study. The two research questions and my 14-question interview guide guided my study. This section discussed the data collection, data analysis, evidence of trustworthiness, and study results. The findings for this study have been analyzed and common themes emerged from the data based on the participants responses about their experiences and perceptions. I have also included excerpts of the participants phone interviews.

In chapter 5, I will present my interpretation of the findings of my study as well discuss any limitations and implications to social change for future research.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

Introduction

The purpose of this qualitative phenomenological study was to explore the lived experiences of junior managers regarding how they are influenced by executive's leadership styles and communication practices. I addressed the gap on how junior managers are influenced when executives communicate and display their preferred leadership styles. My objective was to gain insight from the participants about their lived experiences and perceptions when interacting and communicating with executives. The qualitative phenomenological approach that was conducted through phone interviews provided rich and in-depth descriptions of the phenomenon studied. The population of the study consisted of a combination of male and female participants. Conducting the phone interviews, which were semi structured, allowed me the opportunity to ask additional questions based on the participants responses. The key findings discovered by conducting this study are all connected to the perceptions and experiences of junior managers that report to executives.

The two research questions guiding this study were "What are the lived experiences of junior managers and their perceptions on how executives' leadership styles influence their behavior?" and "How do junior managers perceive the role of top owned information flow in their ability to do their own jobs?" Most of the participants interviewed in this study reported experiencing negative and positive leadership from executives and were more apt to sharing their experiences with negative leadership than positive leadership. Furthermore, the participants perception on information sharing was

that executives were willing to share information; however, there were some methods in which the information was shared that the participants perceived to be not effective based on the data gathered. The experiences reported by the participants in this study motivated them to either avoid or voice concerns about the negative leadership style or display a leadership style that was opposite of the negative leadership style.

Chapter 5 includes a discussion and description of the conclusions based on the results, the limitations of the study, interpretations of the findings, recommendations for future research, and the implications of social change.

Interpretation of Findings

The study is unique because I explored the experiences and perceptions of junior managers regarding executive's leadership styles and communication practices. The purpose of this phenomenological study was to answer the research questions through the exploration of the lived experiences of junior managers and to uncover common themes. The first research question was meant to examine leadership styles of executives and how leadership styles influenced the behavior of junior managers. The second research question was meant to examine communication practices and how it contributes to the information flow from executives to junior managers. The findings showed that the participants were very specific about leadership styles and good leadership. However, when it came to communication, the participants all seemed to be flexible and was willing to adapt to executive's communication practices. Interpretations of these findings focus on the themes related to leadership styles and communication practices. Furthermore, the findings of this study support LMX that contends individuals in a high

LMX relationship tend to communicate and share information while an individual in a low LMX relationship will not. These findings are in concordance with studies conducted by Geertshuis et al. (2015) and Yahaya and Ebrahim (2016) that determined leaders that displayed a specific leadership style had a positive influence on their subordinates. The following is a summary of the interpretations of the results that provides insight on the lived experiences and perceptions of junior managers of executive's leadership styles and communication practices.

Finding 1: The Importance of Leadership Styles

The participants of the study believed the leadership styles of executives were important because it contributed to impacting junior managers behavior in a positive or negative way. Based on the results of the study, junior managers were positively influenced by executives who displayed a positive leadership style. The positive leadership styles the participants discussed were transformational, transactional, and charismatic. There were some participants who had experiences with a negative leadership style; however, they used the negative leadership they encountered by turning it into a positive by not displaying the negative leadership style to their subordinates (i.e., authoritative/dictator). Also, some of the participants that were positively influenced by the executive they report to that they changed their leadership style.

When participants discussed what leadership style had the biggest impact, most of the participants said charismatic leadership made the biggest positive impact. This was followed by transactional and transformational as the other leadership styles that impacted the participants in a positive way. Whilst one participant believed all good

leadership was positive leadership there were some participants that indicated they have been impacted by positive leadership but did not state what leadership style the positive leadership came from. All the participants shared their thoughts and experiences in detail on why they thought a specific leadership style made the biggest positive impact.

Next, the participants shared their thoughts and experiences on the leadership styles that had a negative impact. Based on the participants responses, the authoritative/dictator type leadership had a negative impact on the junior managers. However, this was followed by some participants saying transactional leadership as well as charismatic leadership also had a negative impact. In addition, it was also mentioned by a participant that avoidance leadership had a negative impact as well. Based on the detailed responses and analysis of the data, the participant's reasons for identifying what they considered to be a negative experience was partly due to being too strict, the lack of support, and taking away their decision-making power.

Finally, the participants provided insight on what they perceived to be noneffective leadership versus effective leadership. The data obtained by the participants showed that most participants believe the authoritative/dictator leadership style to be noneffective. In addition, charismatic, nonexistent, and transactional leadership were also mentioned as being noneffective. Also, when discussing noneffective versus effective leadership, one participant mentioned that a leader that takes credit for an individual's work is noneffective. Although the participants were asked about the most effective leadership most of the participants did not share information on what was considered most effective as they focused more on sharing details on noneffective leadership.

However, the participants that did share their experiences and thoughts on effective leadership styles believed transformational leadership was effective followed by charismatic and transactional leadership.

Overall, based on the results of the study regarding leadership styles, the participants behavior is directly influenced by the type of leadership style that is displayed by executives. When the participants were discussing leadership styles, they were very specific on the type of leadership style they were influenced by. Also, the participants shared in detail how they were positively and negatively impacted by specific leadership styles. Therefore, based on the data, it is important that executives get to know and understand their junior managers to ensure the leadership style that is being displayed is received positively by the junior manager.

Finding 2: Communication and Information Sharing Practices

As mentioned earlier, the aim of the second research question was to examine communication practices and how it contributes to the information sharing process from executives to junior managers. Communicating and sharing information is vital to junior managers with being successful in performing their job responsibilities. The participants shared information on how their organization shares information as well as how they share information. Based on the data, this study shows most participants prefer to communicate and share information face-to-face. However, the junior managers methods differ from the organization's because the data obtained shows that the organizations preferred method to communicate and share information is through email. E-mail is mainly used by executives and the organization; however, this is because e-mail is

convenient, to ensure transparency, and for documentation purposes. Overall, most participants agreed that their organization uses email to communicate and share information but some of the participants prefer face-to-face followed by other methods such as telephone, virtual meetings, slack, team huddle, and text messaging.

Next, the participants shared whether executives communicated and shared information in a timely manner. The results of the study showed most of the participants believed they receive current and up-to-date information from the executives in a timely manner. Although executives at different organizations shared the information at different times (i.e., daily, weekly, monthly, or quarterly) all but one the participants felt it was adequate and another participant felt communicating and sharing information on an “as need” basis was sufficient.

Additionally, the participants in the study shared their thoughts on least effective and effective communication approaches. When it came time to discuss the least effective approach used by executives to communicate all but one participant said email was least effective. The participants gave various reasons why email was least effective but one reason that some of the participants agreed with was that there is a lag or delay in receiving emails and at times emails are ignored or deleted. Based on the information shared by the participants, one can infer that most executives use email as a preferred communication method; however, the junior managers in this study find email to be least effective communication tool used by executives.

Whereas, email is the least effective communication tool used by executives, junior managers, believe face-to-face communication is the most effective

communication tool used by executives. This is followed by executives using the telephone to communicate information as the next effective approach. Analyzing the data from the participants showed me that most of the participants provided only one effective communication approach utilized by executives but there was one participant that provided multiple approaches used by executives that the junior manager considered effective.

Finally, the participants share what they believe is the executives communication preference. Although the participants shared different communication preferences by the executives, the data showed that most of the participants believed executives preferred e-mail over any other type of communication method. Although Zoom, Skype, Teams, BlueJeans, and texting were mentioned they were not methods perceived to be used by executives as much as e-mail.

Overall, when it comes to communication and information sharing the participants of the study were flexible and were willing to adapt to different communication methods the executives used to communicate and share information. The participant's also believed executives were diligent regarding sharing information. Therefore, the participants perceive that the information flow from executives is adequate with helping them do their jobs. One last thought on communication methods by executives and junior managers in general is that some of the participants shared that communication practices changed once COVID-19 became a factor. Furthermore, over time some participants shared that the executives reverted to their old communication practices whereas other executives kept the new communication practices in place.

Limitations of Study

One of the limitations of the study was a small sample size. Although the sample size was appropriate for this study, however, by focusing the study on the perception and experiences of junior managers I was limited on the participants I could recruit. Also, a small sample size creates the possibility of the study not being replicated. Another limitation is the study focused on interviewing junior managers that were recruited from SHRM and SIOP which means the findings of the study could be from any organization and not one specific organization. Furthermore, since the study focuses on interviewing junior managers that report to executives, it may not be applicable in some organizations. The next limitation would be that qualitative studies are subjective and can be viewed as unreliable. Additionally, limitations can occur during the interview process. Such limitations would be due to the use of open-ended questions and participants providing partial answers to questions. One final limitation is if the participants did not respond honestly and truthfully to the questions.

Recommendations

The results of the qualitative study demonstrate that junior managers are highly influenced by the leadership styles displayed by executives. Additionally, junior managers of the study provided in-depth details about positive and negative leadership styles and how they are affected. Furthermore, junior managers seem to be more flexible with the communication practices of executives. The junior managers were more willing to adjust to the executive's communication style than they were with the executive's leadership style. The data obtained from the study showed that although executives

preferred to communicate mainly via e-mail, the junior managers preferred face-to face interaction. Therefore, I would recommend further research be conducted that encompasses the perceptions and experiences of both junior managers and executives regarding leadership styles (i.e. charismatic, transformational, transactional, authoritative/dictator, and avoidance). Also, I would recommend conducting further research into why junior managers tend to be more flexible with executive's communication practices versus their leadership styles. In addition, the junior managers in the study believed they received information from executives through various communication methods in a timely manner which allowed them to do their jobs. More research on this topic would be beneficial to determine if a specific communication method is more effective over other communication methods. Another recommendation, based on the data analysis, would be to conduct research on why organizations use e-mail as the main communication method within the workplace, but the participants of the study found e-mail to be the least effective communication method. It is also worth noting that culture and COVID-19 were two topics mentioned in this study but was outside the scope of the study. However, expanding on this study to address culture and COVID-19 could be beneficial.

The perceptions and experiences of junior managers regarding leadership styles and communication practices is something executives should be aware of. The lack of awareness by executives could be a contributing factor to a low-quality relationship (i.e. LMX theory) versus a high-quality relationship. Therefore, executives can take the opportunity to make a significant impact and build a positive leader-subordinate

relationship by actively working to understand their employees. Foremost, extensive research would need to be conducted on this as a topic as well. This study provides a foundation for future research with a larger sample size to explore the above-mentioned recommendations. Future research should also include a closer examination of culture and COVID-19 and its influence on junior managers' perceptions and experiences.

Implications

The results of the study demonstrate that junior managers within organizations place a strong emphasis on effective and positive leadership by executives. The junior managers of the study believed attributes such as being hands on, supportive, sharing information, and empowering others are qualities that encompass good leaders. In addition, the results of the study show that some participants with experiences with ineffective leadership (i.e. authoritative/dictator) use that negative experience and turn it into a positive by not displaying the negative leadership but using some of the positive attributes of the negative leadership to be a better leader. Whilst the junior managers are more flexible and tolerant when it comes to the preferred communication practices of executives. The findings suggest that junior managers would benefit more if face-to-face interactions were more prevalent in the workplace from executives. Face-to-face interactions with executives would alleviate any miscommunication and if anything is unclear it can be addressed right away. Therefore, the social change benefits that will result from this study will be that executives will have a better understanding of effective, non-effective, positive, and negative leadership styles based on the perceptions and experiences of junior managers. As mentioned in chapter 1, effective leadership is

essential in influencing others (Yahaya & Ebrahim, 2016). The data obtained on leadership shows that the participants were influenced positively or negatively based on their experiences. Also, this study will provide executives with information on the preferred communication practices of junior managers and how it differs from the executives and the company. As mentioned in a previous chapter, communication barriers need to be removed to ensure effective information sharing (Al Saifi et al., 2016). This study is a significant contribution to positive social change throughout an organization and at every level (i.e. employees, manager & executives) because its leadership and communication is essential in executing job responsibilities and making effective decisions. The overall findings of this study make a tremendous contribution to positive social change because executives will know the most effective leadership styles and the in-effective leadership styles based on the perceptions and experiences of their junior managers which will give insight on how they can improve or enhance their own leadership style. In addition, best communication practices can be established or tweaked based on the data obtained from the participants of this study.

Conclusion

The qualitative research study was an exploration of the perceptions and experiences of junior managers on executive's leadership styles and communication practices. The participants were junior managers that shared the perceptions and provided a phenomenological account of their experiences with executive's leadership styles and communication practices. The perceptions and experiences of the junior managers obtained during the interview process generated the following themes:

1. Leadership Styles Influences
2. Positive Leadership Experiences
3. Negative Leadership Experiences
4. Non-effective versus Effective Leadership Styles
5. Flow of Information
6. How Often Information Shared
7. Non-effective Communication Approaches
8. Effective Communication Approaches
9. Executives Communication Preferences

The analysis of the data collected, obtained through semi-structured interviews, brought forth the above-mentioned themes which provided a better understanding of the junior managers perceptions and experiences of executive's leadership styles and communication practices. The study results indicate that junior managers are highly influenced, whether positively or negatively, by executive's leadership styles but are flexible and tolerant of the executive's communication practices. The suggested recommendations in this study were presented to further explore the perceptions of junior managers and executives as well to have a better understanding of leadership styles and communication practices from both perspectives.

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Appendix A: Interview Questions

1. What is the process used to share information in the company? How do you actually share information in the company? Is there a difference?
2. How does the information sharing process differ between you and the executive you report to? If the process is vastly dissimilar, has it effected your job performance?
3. What are some communication practices you have seen executives exhibit (i.e. face-to-face, e-mail/instant messaging, business meetings, newsletter, or other)?
4. What communication approach of executives have you found to be least effective? The most effective? Why?
5. How often do executives communicate pertinent information with you (i.e. daily weekly, bi-weekly)? Do you feel that is adequate?
6. Have you ever expressed concern to the executive you report to about how information is shared? Was there a change? If so, what changes did you observe?
7. What do you consider the biggest challenge when executives communicate with you?
8. What leadership styles have you seen executives exhibit (i.e. transformational, transactional, or charismatic)?
9. Have you had a negative experience with a particular leadership style? How did that impact your job performance?
10. Have you had a positive experience with a particular leadership style? How did that impact your job performance?

11. What leadership style of executives have you found to be least effective? The most effective? Why?
12. Have you ever expressed concern to the executive you report to about a specific leadership style? Was there a change? If so, what changes did you observe?
13. Has your own leadership style been influenced by the executives preferred leadership style?
14. Would you like to add any additional information you may not have had the opportunity to address from the other questions?

Appendix B: Interview, Date, and Time Duration

| Interviewee | Date | Time | Duration |
|-------------|------------|------------|----------|
| P1CLM | 09-16-2020 | 5:28 p.m. | 15:49 |
| P2LHF | 09-18-2020 | 12:03 p.m. | 18:53 |
| P3CSF | 09-30-2020 | 2:27 p.m. | 18:10 |
| P4WRF | 10-06-2020 | 11:36 a.m. | 11:27 |
| P5JPM | 11-15-2020 | 12:01 p.m. | 24:07 |
| P6ABM | 10-24-2020 | 12:16 p.m. | 21:09 |
| P7MMF | 10-26-2020 | 4:58 p.m. | 25:42 |
| P8SSF | 11-01-2020 | 11:27 a.m. | 17:18 |
| P9KRF | 11-12-2020 | 9:56 a.m. | 28:46 |
| P10TBF | 11-13-2020 | 8:57 a.m. | 13:55 |