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Community-Based Organization Leaders' Communication Effectiveness and Effects on Performance Outcomes

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Abstract

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MA, Fordham University, 2014

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Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to determine if effective leader communication builds employee relationships that improves organizational performance. Organizational communication is a prominent factor that impacts the outcome of an organization's goals and assists in executing its mission. There remained some gaps in the current literature considering the work environment and the attitudes of employees as they relate to organizational communication. To address the gap, the constructive grounded theory model was used to construct and analyze a theory of organizational communication. The sample for the study included 12 participants who were leaders or employees in a community-based organizations in the northeastern region of the United States. Data were collected through individual interviews and a focus group discussion. Data were analyzed and the following themes were identified: (a) effective communication and employees' feelings of appreciation and inclusivity, (b) effective communication and employees' freedom of expression, (c) effective communication and leader approachability/open-door policy, (d) effective communication and transparency and clarity in communication, (e) effective communication and improvement in organizational performance, and (f) effective communication and harmonious work environment. From these themes, the effective leadership communication and positive organizational performance theory was developed. The findings contribute to positive social change by identifying insights into how community-based organizations can improve communication to be more effective.

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Dedication

I would like to dedicate this work to my mother, Bernadine Nicholas, RN; Mr. Tyrone Boyd, my eighth-grade teacher, Westchester Area School, New Rochelle, New York; Dr. Moses Musoke, Empire State College, Hartsdale, New York; and Dr. Edgar Tyson, Fordham University, New York, New York.

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Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

Introduction

Effective business and community-based organizations function to provide goods or services to end users. The products or services provided can produce a profit or serve as a resource depending on use. One challenge organizations face is ensuring their internal systems run in a productive manner. From my experience and from speaking with other professionals, I know poor communication can debilitate team effectiveness. Effective leaders are successful in distributing information to individuals and teams. Ineffective leadership can increase expenses and create other negative consequences for an organization, thereby affecting the work environment (Hong et al., 2016). An organization must be consistent in bringing ideas and talent together. Effective leadership is the basis for growth, development, and change (Murray, 2011).

This study was conducted to provide an intrinsic understanding of community-based organization leaders and how their communication effectiveness can affect performance outcomes. The analysis identified opportunities for growth and building healthy working relationships. Ultimate success comes when leaders are able to build stronger relationships and increase their organization's productivity. Monumental output comes from leaders creating, training, and equipping other leaders to execute effectively (Puls et al., 2014). An institution's daily activities are operative when the workgroups of the organization are synchronized. There is an impact on workgroups that affects the company's goals and how leaders interact with group members (Austin, 2010). Choices made lead to positive or negative results. These intermediate exchanges in the workforce

are tightly interwoven with attitude and behaviors (Apostel et al., 2018). Attitude has been the ignition for the environment, culture, and satisfaction of an organization. The lack of positive attitudes also affects communication. Communication is the lynchpin for ineffective leadership and the effects of leadership outcomes (Endacotta et al., 2017). Communication is a vital component that links a leader's characteristics to an organization's outcomes (Bakar & Sheer, 2013).

Leaders tend to build on a workgroup's inherent strengths to rely on the organization's positive performance trend (Charas, 2015). Servant leaders are responsible for elevating a team's morale, thereby affecting their teams' overall performance. These leaders believe in employee-centered growth and focus on engaging members to use their potential to excel in their roles. Members of the group have perceptions that influence interpersonal communication and build workplace relationships (Bakar & Sheer, 2013). The goal of this research was to propose options and ideas on increasing communication, relationships, and productivity.

Background

Existing research has been conducted relating to community-based leadership and how communication affects outcomes. Endacotta et al. (2017), Murray (2011), and McNeff and Irving (2017) each used communication to address the contribution to future research by focusing on how team members adjust to new leadership processes and how they conceptualize change. Murray (2011) and McNeff and Irving (2017) explained the need for finding and addressing what effective leaders need to help their teams to grow. Al-edenat (2018) also discussed current levels of job satisfaction and team performances

impacted by trust. Koražija et al. (2016) explained the connection between spiritual intelligence and work contentment among leaders and employees. While most studies have been concentrated on investigating associations between spiritual information and job satisfaction of workers, Koražija et al. considered worker satisfaction along with the spiritual intelligence and job satisfaction of leaders.

When leaders are consistent in their methods, it provides the organization a level of expectation. A transactional leader is concerned mainly with the day-to-day operations of an organization. A transformational leader may often crafts strategies to take a company, department or team to the next level of performance and success. Transformational leadership helps leaders identify changes and create a vision to guide the change for innovation. Al-edenat (2018) examined transformational leaders and the working conditions in an organization. Pieterse et al. (2010) discussed how transactional leadership styles preserve the standard course of processes.

Problem Statement

Community leadership relies on communication to reach desired outcomes (Watt, 2014). Leaders are ultimately responsible for developing other leaders. The effectiveness of new leaders is partially a result of effective communication. A leader's traits, experiences, and characteristics all have some effect on results. In developing professional relationships, leaders should exemplify qualities that help them and allow others to advance in their personal journey (Endacotta et al., 2017). Koražija et al. (2016) recorded trust as a critical factor in an organization's members, the public, and volunteers involved in community work. The practice of effective communication helps various

entities meet their goals and achieve their missions (Watt, 2014). According to Hartwig (2016), effective communication assists community-based organizations in improving communication, changing behavior, and focusing on managing responsibilities. Davis et al. (2010) showed how communication impacts the culture of the working environment with community associates.

In some cases, a population may include volunteers, vendors, and community members. The population for this study included members of organizations at all levels who play a role in serving their community. I obtained permission to participate from three local nonprofit organizations and several local churches in the New York City area. One nonprofit group is a family-based organization that functions to unite family members and create healthy relationships between them. Another organization is a sports-based group that organizes community sports for recreation and offers job training for local youth. Several churches expressed interest in being a part of the study.

Relationships are developed by first communicating, then by understanding what is meant (Smith, 2003). When communication is unclear and relationships are limited, employee performance or satisfaction may be reduced (Sutherland, 2017). Further, Sutherland (2017) discussed that when communication is effectively distributed, the implications of its effects can increase performance outcomes. Puls et al. (2014) showed that a lack of communication can make it difficult to connect with team members to complete organizational goals. Because communication is a part of an organization's process, a lack of communication opens the door for diminished performance (McNeff & Irving, 2017). A leader's behavior and the outcomes are reflective of how the message is

delivered or understood. The decision-making process can be affected by the types of relationships leaders have with their teams. Endacotta et al. (2017) shared data showing age, ethnic background, and gender have been areas of cross-cultural communication discussion.

No gap in the scope of the discussion could have influenced or limited this research. In addition, the potential gap of the sample size did not affect the results. The gaps also pointed to the impact of culture and the effects on how leaders respond and interact with their working community (Etowa & Debs-Ivall, 2017). Further exploration of the data lead to a more detailed explanation of the effects of communication. Communication in an organization is vital because it connects individuals to information (Etowa & Debs-Ivall, 2017). Communication allows for sharing information to assist in the distribution of the products or services an organization offers. Effective communication is necessary to operate the functions of an organization. Communication allows individuals to understand or address concerns. Effective communication also builds trust and empowers members to make a substantial contribution to their work (Etowa & Debs-Ivall, 2017).

Purpose Statement

Effective leadership is essential for growth, development, and change (Murray, 2011). There is a constant need for leaders to be trained and equipped with the tools to create other leaders (Puls et al., 2014). The purpose of this qualitative study was to gain a deeper understanding of community-based organizational leadership efficiency and how communication effectiveness can affect performance outcomes. The results offer

solutions and options for community-based organizations to implement in leadership and communication procedures. The outcomes also provide opportunities for leaders to build stronger relationships and increase organizational productivity.

Research Questions

RQ1: What types of experiences do community-based organization members have when leaders are communicating effectively?

RQ2: What are the attitudes of community leaders as they interact with the community members and what are the effects on performance outcomes?

RQ3: How do relationships between leaders and employees influence the performance levels for organizational outcomes?

Theoretical Framework

Leadership is a primary expectancy of an administrator (Prior, 2018). Effective leadership takes not only responsibility but also culpability. Several theories are essential to understanding the relationship between leaders and the outcomes created. The theory of the association between the relationship of the leader and the team is established by the choices of the leader.

Leaders should be able to make decisions, communicate well, adapt to change, and support others in achieving goals (Gordon et al., 2018). Leadership is not limited to those in administrative roles, but to all levels of an organization. In leadership roles, one of the most important components to success is communication (Gordon et al., 2018). The dynamics of communication revolve around how individuals give and receive information (Key et al., 2018). When communication is effectively exchanged, the

message becomes clearer and the potential of effective work is reachable (Key et al., 2018).

Leadership effectiveness has been researched for years (Livstrom et al., 2018). Implications of the leadership process affect collective groups of members throughout organizations. Leaders are representative of the collective body of those they serve. The culture of an organization weighs on the leadership model while characteristics of leaders and their abilities to communicate effectively with others closes the loop of effectiveness. Although leaders set the identity of the organization, the team's identity is reflective of a leader's relationship with the team (Key et al., 2018). A group's behavior is indicative of how individuals receive added value and communication from leaders (Minei, 2016). Leaders should think about future developments and fairness when making decisions. A positive image, reputation, and identity are tools useful to avoid interpersonal conflict in organizations (Livstrom et al., 2018). Effective communication from leaders incorporates a comprehensive model for improving performance. The projected results can be enriched by theoretical ideas and professional developments for members of the organization. The new theory of effectiveness provides an advancement of a potential behavior model for individuals, groups, and organizations (Mishra et al., 2014).

Conceptual Framework

Servant Leaders

Servant leaders who are building organizations to support social change can help their communities by building relationships (McNeff & Irving, 2017). In *The Servant Leader*, Greenleaf (1977) conceptualized the term *servant leader*. Servant leaders

empower those they serve to provide a welcoming and productive environment for the organization they represent. A major component of a leader's success is the overall level of job satisfaction demonstrated from their teams. When looking at an organization through the servant leadership lens, the atmosphere of the organization weighs in on the team and how well they execute (Hu & Liden, 2011).

Research has helped support individual growth and shown the impact of service that servant leaders practice (Duren, 2017). Duren (2017) explained how a leader's level of trust increases for both the leadership and organizational components of service leadership. These patterns create a greater level of service provided, creating positive relationships in the process. Job satisfaction becomes an element of how work is performed and a benefit of the service provided. Finding a person's strengths and allowing them to work on those helps to build, empower, and develop the individual. The process is learned under the guidance of leaders by offering great benefits to individuals and the organization. Being engaged and understanding what is going on catalyzes progression (Yiğit & Bozkurt, 2017). The leader's role becomes a humble and empathetic undertaking to the cohorts connected to the work being performed or provided. Progressive and successful servant leadership tends to involve followers in the planning process (Yiğit & Bozkurt, 2017). Leaders benefit from building a professional relationship with their teams while helping them to provide the best service possible. These relationships contribute to an ethical framework, behaviors displayed, and empowers the team. When leaders are communicating, they incorporate persuasive gestures to help influence behavior and attitudes (Hong et al., 2016). Servant leaders

should listen to their teams for ideas and suggestions. This level of communication helps create healthy organizations that view people with a higher value and propose the mindset of development (Yuan et al., 2010). Leaders begin to understand the value people add when they are open to listening.

The communication process is more effective when team members know and understand they are valued. These leadership behaviors are developed with training, experiences, and growth. A significant part of a servant leader's repertoire is developing excellent listening skills (Sipe & Frick, 2015). Understanding and communication are also needed for high levels of performance. Sipe and Frick (2015) determined listening required that leaders should first listen to themselves. Good listeners should be empathetic and understand verbal and nonverbal language (Storsletten & Jakobsen, 2015). Organizational ethics indicates top leaders should act as role models by demonstrating ethical leadership before requiring employees to engage in ethical work behaviors (Shin et al., 2015). Servant leaders are more likely to achieve results when they make those who serve a priority (Amah, 2015). Being able to identify and solve problems leads to rewards and success. Goal setting will have more meaning and keep a team motivated to achieve a higher level of results (Rohr, 2013).

A leader can promote and foster growth by transforming people through an organization's culture (Fehr et al., 2014). Tracking progress is important, and mapping is a tool that can help leaders understand the environment and influence followers. The contribution will be made to the community or the population that benefits from the services provided. The process creates value and, as a result, the end user benefits from

the provided actions. Servant leadership behavior has contributed to positive performance

and outcomes. Laub (2005) described servant leadership as the implementation of

leadership that puts the betterment of the team over the self-interest of the leader. Servant

leaders are also recognized for trust and creating job satisfaction, which produces a

higher level of service and a stronger level of commitment by team members.

Nature of the Study

This study was qualitative. Creswell (2014) suggested that qualitative research

explores research by answering questions about experience or perspectives. This method

has been used to gain an understanding of motivations and opinions. Qualitative research

has helped to develop hypotheses and ideas that provide insight into problems and has

allowed the exploration of community leadership, addressing gaps from previous studies,

and investigating previous outcomes. This approach offers an occasion to explain the

theory of why things happen through a lens of the people on the front line. The study's

theory was developed around the life experiences of the participants and how they relate

to instruction from their leaders. Participants' experiences shape the facts and highlight

information on the theory. This research method provided a firsthand view of events,

experiences, and knowledge. This approach also aligns with the objectives of the study

by shedding light on a new theory of performance through effective communication.

Through data collection, I was able to present a theory on how relationships and

communication may impact leaders' influence on performance outcomes.

Definitions

The following terms are defined for this study:

Attitude: A state of mind that can be positive or negative. Thoughts may be related to a particular work-related task toward a person or the organization (Apostel et al., 2018).

Constructivist grounded theory (CGT): A version of grounded theory that embraces organizational strategies such as coding, memo writing, and theory of the original statement of the method but shifts its practical knowledge founded procedural developments in qualitative inquiries (Charmaz, 2014). CGTs serves as the creation, quality, and use of data, relationships, situations, subjectivity, and social settings of the researcher. CGT's intention serves the intangible yet supports life views. The CGT analysis is generated from a certain period, place, and condition.

Culture: The understood and followed expectations of behavior, values, and beliefs established by leaders (Bakar & Sheer, 2013).

Effective communication: An acceptable exchange of information and ideas in a manner understood by the participating members involved in the discussion (Boies et al., 2015).

Environment: The physical and emotional energy the organization members exercise and that of members that surround the organization (Al-edenat, 2018).

Job satisfaction: Organization members' feelings or attitudes of contentment in their work and how they feel about their organization (Kashdan & Biswas-Diener, 2013).

Leadership: The capability to motivate an individual or team to accomplish goals. A leader will influence, empower, encourage, or inspire others to perform at their best (Boies et al., 2015).

Performance: The analysis of events that lead to reaching an organization's objectives or goals, the results or the outcomes compared to projected outputs (Al-edenat, 2018).

Servant leadership: A philosophy of leadership in which the main goal is for leaders to be of service; other people's needs come first and helping others to develop is a priority (Tafvelin et al., 2018).

Social change: The significant adaptations over time of patterns of behavior and cultural values in a community or alterations of a society (Tanno & Banner, 2018).

Working relationships: The dynamics created among people who are connected because of work-related interactions; a level of cooperation to make progress is desired to be effective (Bakar & Sheer, 2013).

Assumptions

Assumptions are accepted as accurate, or at least plausible, by researchers (Apostel et al., 2018). This is important because both assumptions and limitations affect the inferences one can draw from a study. One of the more common assumptions made in qualitative research is the assumption of honesty and truthful responses from participants (Apostel et al., 2018). However, for specific sensitive questions, this assumption may be more challenging to accept and can be described as a limitation of a study. The assumption is that the entwined connection between communication, working relationships, and products helps build environments that can benefit a community.

Scope and Delimitations

The qualitative research participants in this study resided in the tri-state area of New York, New Jersey, and Connecticut. These participants from this northeastern region may have had different experiences or opinions than individuals in other regions of the United States; however, there is consistency and overlap in their experiences. The answers to the interview questions uncovered the personal experiences of each participant. The dynamics of what is expected are not always forthcoming or may not embrace an inclusive process, including those affected by decisions made. Due to quarantine and pandemic-related barriers, there were restrictions for in-person interviews. Therefore, I made adjustments to accommodate social distancing. The goal of this study was to reveal the experiences of participating colleagues regarding their leaders' levels of communication.

Collecting data for this study took approximately 4 weeks, which included gathering and analyzing the data. The study encompassed 12 participants. Interviews and the focus group took place remotely due to the COVID-19 pandemic and omicron variant. The interviews and group data collection were organized through Zoom, an online video conference application.

Participants needed to have worked in a community-based organization for at least 6 months, and leaders were required to have been in a leadership role for more than 1 year. In-person or virtual interviews were used to provide the data for the study. These were unstructured interviews, and there was no formal script to compile the information. Participants could have refused to answer questions or end the interview during the

interview process. The data were analyzed by using an open coding method. The codes helped to identify and explain emerging concepts until a new theory emerged.

Limitations

The framework for identifying research gaps builds on the theory of the influence leaders have in community-based organizations. The differences are the topics that miss or do not provide sufficient information to address a research question. The research gaps may also limit the ability to make responsible decisions. The decision-making process is an unresolved part of how productive members of a leadership team can be and their effectiveness clarifying the level of connection between servant leadership and employee satisfaction (McNeff & Irving, 2017). The urgency to implement change for an organization becomes a factor in finding methods to overcome challenges. Because many organizations will vary in how they operate, gaps are also recognized based on limited success patterns.

Significance

This research addressed a gap in the understanding of communication in community based organizational leadership, by focusing on how effective communication affects attitudes and social positive outcomes. Effective communication takes the idea from an individual and paints a picture in a manner for another person or group to clearly understand the words or the meaning stated. The contribution of this research's theory will help community-based organizations develop and meet their goals. This project is exclusive because the relationships between leaders, their teams, and the communities they serve have not been explained in detail and often are understudied

(McNeff & Irving, 2017). The primary organization studied in this project is located in Harlem, New York. Harlem is a vital part of New York City's culture and has a rich history. Galea et al. (2002) noted that Harlem is predominantly African American and Latino, and residents have been labeled as a population of lower-income people. Over the last couple of decades, this area of New York City has had higher needs both financially and medically, making this area an underserved community. The term *underserved* in this research project is based on limited economic, education, and lifestyle resources available to a community (see Galea et al., 2002).

The details identified in this study offer help to organizations, their leaders, and those connected with the community-based organizations to recognize the effects of communication. Organization 1 was the primary organization where data were collected. Local churches and other nonprofits also expressed interest in participating in the study. Organization 1's mission is to improve the lives of youth and create positive alternatives for them. The organization's model is designed to promote team-building and leadership skills for adolescents in a recreational setting. The goal is to help these young adults become problem solvers and cognitive thinkers. Members of Organization 1 are instructed on how to internalize lessons for life and apply them daily. Organization 2 and 3 were also invited to participate in the study. Churches that expressed interest were Christian-based denominations that function in Harlem and in the Bronx, New York. These churches serve their respective communities as spiritual guides for all age groups. The common denominator for each organization is that they all seek to affect social outcomes for adolescents, individuals, and families across various communities. With the

collected data or new information, leaders can make changes or adjust their style to meet the needs of those they serve (see Smith, 2003).

Tanno and Banner (2018) described *community* as being an extension of the family. The findings of this study can have positive changes that affect the community by contributing to the community-based organizations. Leaders govern the possibilities to initiate and maintain positive social change through service. Service is a part of the behaviors that influence how things are accomplished. The effects on the community are limitless when an organization can effectively offer goods or services as a resource. Also, positive social change influences moral practices, performance, and reliability.

Social change is the noteworthy variations over time of patterns in the behavior of cultural values (Tanno & Banner, 2018). These changes occur through relationships and human interactions. This project offers a view of changes in organizational systems, relationships, and team performance. With the appropriate change plans, organizations can systematically organize techniques of productivity through effective communication. Levels of human potential may be recognized by incorporating the results into an organization's culture as another layer of positive social change. Tanno and Banner (2018) discovered organizations that practice organizational change tend to experience positive social change. This study makes a contribution to positive social change by demonstrating the benefits of healthy working relationships between leaders and their organization's members.

Summary

In Chapter 1, I detailed the responsibility of leaders for producing an outcome and maintaining a healthy working environment. A leader's effectiveness in conveying thoughts and ideas to others demands specific communication strategies. In this chapter, I outlined the significance of a need for effective communication. The background of the research was focused on community-based organizations. However, effective communication is needed in all areas of everyday life. The nature of the study substantiated my choice of a qualitative model. The answers address the stated research questions to the interview questions (Appendix C). In Chapter 1, I also explained the conceptual framework, operational definitions, assumptions, limitations, and scope and delimitations of the study. This research also filtered the purposefulness of the data between the two groups of participants and how they related or were unrelated to each other. This summary provides an overview of the expectation explained in the study.

Chapter 2 provides an analysis of research related to effective communication, leadership, work relationship, and employee productivity. This section outlines the purpose of the study based on current literature. The research gave the premise of the impact leaders have on their outcomes by their communication effectiveness. One of the determining factors of success is the outcomes or the level of goal attainment. The impact on the members and leadership relies on the administrative commitment to improving the working culture. The purpose of the study was to investigate how communication affects performance outcomes. This study offers valuable data for teams to encourage a new or more effective work environment.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Introduction

In Chapter 2, I present the foundation of applicable background information and motivation for this research. This chapter delivers an overview of some existing literature and how it functions as the background for this study. The following data provide an analysis of scholarly research as it relates to leaders and how effective they are in communicating information to reach goals. The literature review was created to unpack how leaders communicate and uncover if they could be more effective in their interactions with their teams.

A literature review can function as a foreword to a grounded theory by delivering an understanding of the current rationale of communication in the field of social sciences (Thistoll et al., 2016). Grounded theory is the discovery of emergent patterns in data (Corley, 2015). A researcher must look at the foundation of previous studies and how they compare to current studies. Monitoring outside influences of a study will help to pinpoint current findings and open the gateway for new information in future studies (Glaser, 2011). The present study is an introductory review of effective communication, goal achievement, and the responsibilities of leaders. The objective of this literature review was to help understand existing research in the field of psychology, to expand the possibilities for progression in the field, and to fill the gaps in existing literature.

Literature Search Strategy

The literature was collected from various professional databases of articles, journals, and books. Significant data that support the information were the basis of the

literature review. I used the Walden University online library to search for peer-reviewed and scholarly studies. I limited most of my searched timeframe no later than 2015 to gather the most relevant, recent information published. Some critical milestones in research from previous years extended the data compilation. The foundational grounded theory origination dated back to 1967. I investigated some specific key terms that included *leadership, communication, effective communication, community-based organizations, work relationships, leadership, positive work environments, behavior,* and *productivity*, among other words related to areas of industrious working environments.

The Walden University library afforded me access to a variety of resources used in gathering data. I used the term *AND* to extend the search for more detailed information. I used the Thoreau, PsycINFO, and EBSCO search engines to access the documentations. The main topics I used as search tools were psychology, education, nursing, and multidisciplinary studies. I extended the search for more detailed information to provide peer reviewed and verification of current information. The terms I chose were selected in the search process because they were pillars in identifying data for this research study. The terminology embodies a global perspective of thought initiating profound opinions in community organizations and healthy working relationships.

Literature Review Related to Key Variables Concepts

Communication

Communication is known as the transaction of sending and receiving information that meets a receiver's values, needs, education, and abilities (Ruben & Stewart, 2016). Community leaders depend on communication to reach anticipated goals (Watt, 2014).

Leaders have an obligation to nurture and build their teams to be effective. Being able to convey a message and enhance an organization member's abilities is a virtuous task. A part of establishing rapport is establishing relationships that encompass respect and trust (Alkaabi & Wong, 2019). Healthy relationships are built on natural communication opposed to adaptive reconciling. Sutherland (2017) discovered that effective communication can increase performance outcomes. Puls et al. (2014) indicated a lack of communication can make it difficult to unite colleagues. These factors of communication create the environment determining the outcomes and adhering to the concerns of the organization's effectiveness. A leader's role will incorporate endowing team members with the tools necessary to maximize their impact on organizational outcomes. There will be a continuous need for development and training if there is a desire to grow. The goal of this study was to unfold another layer of empowerment for community development through community-based organizations. Through my findings, I sought to equip leaders with effective practices that will expand the vision and mission of organizations in the future.

Team performance is affected by critical decisions and the process used to reach decisions (Endacotta et al., 2017). The perception of those involved in the structures of businesses, churches or nonprofits, and businesses revolves around the perceptions of the individual. The repetitive association between an organization and its associates has been comparatively understudied. What stands out as leaders reflect on growth is the nature of the organization's team process and team performance (Endacotta et al., 2017). As community-based organizations use team-based approaches to leadership, there is a

greater need to understand both the processes that allow these teams to succeed and the impact that community-based organizations have on teamwork (Endacotta et al., 2017). Most servant-centered organizations strive to be more productive by maximizing effects on their client base. In corporate organizations, research supports a strong relationship between leaders' performance and organizational performance (Endacotta et al., 2017). Research has indicated that corporate environments are congruent with the culture of the organization and teamwork is a foundational component to direct actions. When leaders establish strong relationships, they harness a more strategic and creative environment. Many leaders in nonprofits lead as caregivers, mentors, advisers, or counselors. These administrators are responsible for the narrative members receive while carrying out the message. Communication includes empowering employees and the team (Endacotta et al., 2017).

Communication has been linked to leadership and has been considered a tool used to achieve specific goals (Dinh et al., 2014). Communication also has a focus on social influence from a global perspective, connecting the relationship between teams and leadership (Tourish, 2014). Leadership reflects an individual's approach to how they influence others. A leader's contribution incorporates strategies to achieve goals by practicing the habits of effective leadership. Leadership is developed by a natural capacity and practiced experiences (Tourish, 2014). Making mistakes and learning from them also contributes to good leadership (Ruben et al., 2016). Communication consists of the conception and transmission of verbal messages for a receiver to understand and execute. The meaning goes beyond verbal or visual cues when communication is

exchanged. Communication has to be intentional for it to be effective. Collyer (2016) defined leadership as a form of communication that alters the behavior and attitudes of others to meet a group's needs and goals. If a leader is not understood in their form of communication, they are less likely to establish efficient outcomes (Roberts et al., 2007). Effective communication influences the outcomes of leaders (Ruben et al., 2016). Leaders' levels of social influence may be seen as leverage as opposed to limitations when it comes to being an example for others. Leaders need to know how to recognize, capture, and resolve these limitations (Ruben et al., 2016).

Because people express, choose, and create messages from what is being stated, effectively exchanging information is critical in leadership roles (Ruben et al., 2016). Leaders should be aware of other people's values, attitudes, needs, goals, abilities, and culture among other life circumstances to improve their effectiveness. Biases affect how individuals or groups experience outcomes. Communication requires a proper understanding of the controllable influence of followers (Ruben et al., 2016). The members of a group play a major role in making leadership function effectively (Ruben et al., 2016). Communication perspectives offer an alternative way of understanding influence. Understanding communication is not only about the message but also about social influence.

Decision makers are better suited to reach goals when intentional messages influence future behavior (Igoni & Prentis, 2016). Leadership communication is a practice that includes the negotiation of future efforts and encounters (Igoni & Prentis, 2016). Communication can be viewed as a function of decision making. Building an open

and formal relationship should not be an effortless practice. Opportunities for leaders to communicate should be created and not waited on to happen haphazardly (Stone, 2015). Taking the initiative on the correct actions draws teams closer to potential opportunities used to inspire others to perform at their best. When leaders develop their competencies to assess their knowledge, ability, and skill, they become more efficacious leaders (Webb, 2008). Leaders cope with filling in the gaps in what they know and how to impact results (Webb, 2008). Leaders' intentions alone are not enough to reach goals. Webb (2008) suggested leaders must commit to insightful practices that can guide and build personal development. If leaders want their teams to be committed, they should engage them through equity stakes in the solution process.

Leadership

Listening to employees and acknowledging their ideas allows for stronger bonds and healthier interactions towards the organization mission or goals (McNeff & Irving, 2017). Effective communication upkeeps the organization's mission when the information being relayed is understood by the receiver of the information (Collyer, 2016). The message is an intentional process to be followed up with actions. Collyer (2016) stated leadership is indicative of the behaviors and attitudes of others to meet needs. When there is poor communication, individuals may also recognize reduced levels of leadership. A critical component is understanding incomplete information. When the process is not predictable, correspondence should be even more purposeful and intentional. Leaders should be mindful of their environment and meet people where they are for them to gather and understand the meaning of what is meant (Watt, 2014). As a

leader communicates, the recipient also has a responsibility to reciprocate a level of

understanding. The individual leader who aims to lead others, should see their

communication practices as a critical area of development. The dynamic of the leader-

follower relationship is affected by the setting in which the message is being relayed

(Ruben et al., 2016). Leaders have a responsibility to be ethical and practice good

business ethics (Yazdani & Murad, 2015). That includes enhancing the conduct and

interactions they have with others. Leaders should be concerned about the wellbeing of

their followers and build interpersonal relationships along the journey. Honesty,

empowerment, and transparency are a part of the collective actions needed for successful

results (Hoffman & Shipper, 2018)

      Transparency and open communication are critical for leaders, more specifically

for ethical leaders. An organization's culture is more likely to be affected and thrive in an

ethical environment Yazdani and Murad (2015). Communication is vital and how it is

presented (i.e., tone, inflections, etc.) sets the stage for its effectiveness on how it is

received. The well-being of the team affects their performance (Bouckenooghe et al.,

2015). The responses from the team show the success and efficiency of instruction with

the clarity of communication significant for performance (Lynch & Friedman, 2013). It

appears team members like to have the security of feeling that others have their back. The

efforts of support start at the leadership level. Leaders should be fair in their role and

should lead by example (Lynch & Friedman, 2013). Being aware of their position and

power should be a conscious practice as leaders consider their decisions and how they

make decisions (Wang & Zhu, 2010). Wang et al. (2014) indicated leaders should be

accountable and empower those they lead. Their focus should be consistent on goal-oriented tasks (Lynch & Friedman, 2013). One of the gaps in research is the viewpoint or perception of the team in their comprehension of instruction or communication tactics in servant leaders (Baker et al., 2016).

A servant leader is defined as an individual who performs service ethically and humbly for the betterment of others rather than being served (Ehrhart, 2004). Servant leadership does not stop in the workforce, but it continues as a way of life. When leaders have this mentality, they build a higher level of trust from their employees and promote active organizational functions (Avolio & Gardner, 2005). Servant leaders are known for promoting development through the application of organizational functioning. There are essential behavior types Liden et al. (2008) have associated with servant leadership. They are behaving ethically, offering emotional healing, putting others first, helping their team to grow and succeed, empowering others, creating value for the community, and providing skills that go beyond the leader's train of thought. Avolio and Gardner (2005) discussed how organizations operate more effectively when the exchanges between the members of the group and their leadership have healthy communication exchanges. Leaders tend to build on the inherent strengths of the workgroup to rely on the organization's positive performance trends. Members of the group have perceptions influencing interpersonal communication and building on workplace relationships (Bakar & Sheer, 2013).

Servant leaders are responsible for elevating the morale of the team, thereby affecting their overall performance. These leaders believe in employee centered growth

and focus on engaging members to use their potential to excel in their roles (Campion & Bond, 2018). Campion and Bond (2018) added in cases when team members are influenced by their leaders, their behavior reflects their interactions and learning. Charas (2015) reported when servant leaders are polite, they have better relationships with their team members. These actions have the potential to bring about change and productivity. When positive communication is exchanged, team members interact positively with each other which can affect performance (Charas, 2015). Respect, humility, and politeness are positive variables in relational exchanges that also support productivity (Charas, 2015).

Community service leaders would benefit from preparing themselves to demonstrate ethical leadership and community service. According to Webb (2008) reaching a substantial level of success is representative of developing positive and healthy relationships. There are many areas of leadership in community service organizations. In churches, you may have pastors or related ministry leaders. In other organizations, you may have mentors, teachers or counselors. When a leader is placed in a leadership role, they should have the abilities, skills, and knowledge to meet the needs of the population they serve (Watt, 2014). A good leader should continue to hone their skills to equip, empower, and educate the individuals or teams they influence (Gregory & Wiles, 2018). The good thing is these positive results can potentially carry over into other areas of their lives. Relational theory identifies attributes people have when they are interacting with others and building relationships (Watt, 2014). Even when people have dissimilar views, they complement each other in different ways. Interpersonal

communication and relational communication both impact communication between people (Bakar & Sheer, 2013).

Summary and Conclusions

Chapter 2 introduced gaps that may have limited past studies in leadership, specifically effective communication. Uncovering the new data will introduce alternative methods of reaching positive results based on innovative theories of communicating with leaders. The presented literature review presented developing outlines of data that integrated a summary of current research studies on leadership and communication. It asserted examples of leadership effectiveness past studies and leaving room for new theories of communication effectiveness (Livstrom et al., 2018). This chapter sought to yield ideas on the impact of effective leadership and its influence on the employee's performance. The study set out to enhance existing research and fill gaps that could benefit social science by solidifying conclusions of effective communication through new theories. The literature highlighted servant leaders as individuals seeking to spearhead social change through their organizations (Mishra et al., 2014).

The premise revolved around effective communication and building healthy working relationships (Alkaabi & Wong, 2019). Leaders should inspire and motivate the behavior of employees to perform at a higher level (Mishra et al., 2014). One of the keys is the decisive actions of decisions that support the organization's vision and meets the employee's professional needs. The teams' connections were dependent on the types of relationships established through the organizational culture (Corley, 2015). Asserted researchers should consider how healthy working relationships, create an environment to

sustain a more productive working environment. The literature review established the demand for research, which will result in developing theories. Authentic leadership deserves focused attention.

This grounded theory study holds a substantive impact and effects on leadership, communications, and healthy working relationships. The grounded theory was selected for its value in first-hand educational research. Its system complements a variety of qualitative data collection methods. Glaser (2011) pointed out that when implementing grounded theory, it is critical to release expectations and find the findings. The new theory has credibility from acceptable literature directly related to leadership and communication.

The literature review laid the groundwork for the necessary components of Chapter 3. Chapter 3 introduces the research design of this study, the population, the instrument for surveying, the data collection process, and how it will be analyzed. This project will give details of the design and the rationale for selecting grounded theory on leadership effectiveness and the effects on employee performance. The role of the researcher will encompass the responsibility of performing in an ethical and trustworthy manner.

Chapter 3: Research Method

Introduction

Qualitative research can strengthen the understanding, the methodologies, and obstacles faced in the role that communication plays between leaders and employees (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). The purpose of this qualitative analysis was to explore the experiences of participants to establish a path for effective communication and increased work performance. In Chapter 3, I present an outline of the research design and rationale, the role of the researcher, the methodology of the research, issues of trustworthiness, and a summary of the chapter.

I describe my research method and the manner of conducting this study. The method that complemented the research questions was CGT. My reasoning came from various research ideas; however, Charmaz (2006) was influential in me selecting this approach. The purpose of this CGT study was to explore relationships between leader communication and employee performance. I analyzed whether the participants felt a connection to the organization by working relationships and effective communication. By using an approach that captured the individual experiences of the participants, my goal was to understand how employee relations affect performance based on employees' reaction to leadership's communication skills. The leadership process encompasses many angles of development that need precise attention and resilient communication.

Research Design and Rationale

RQ1: What types of experiences do community-based organization members have when leaders are communicating effectively?

RQ2: What are the attitudes of community leaders as they interact with the community members and what are the effects on performance outcomes?

RQ3: How do relationships between leaders and employees influence the performance levels for organizational outcomes?

The fundamental research question is how relationships affect communication and how these relationships affect employee performance. In the past, communication has been described as being able to break down barriers (Erdal & Altindag, 2020). The benefits of using grounded theory also offered autonomy and manageability for the study to be creative in nature. Jones (2019) suggested that grounded theory also is used to dissect complex phenomena while gathering the social experiences that affect social issues. The benefits allow emerging or unfamiliar matters to be presented, analyzed, and interpreted (Jones, 2019). Instead of presumptuous guessing, the opportunity is afforded to gather facts through data and its analysis by exploring the research questions.

Role of the Researcher

My primary role as a researcher was to gather information in an environment of confidentiality and trust. To aid this process, I was mindful of participants' experiences and mitigated any personal or external biases by being authentic and transparent. Information was gathered through interview questions and a focus group, and I followed up with additional questions with participants or experts. I set up and moderated the focus group after the interviews were complete. While the data were being collected from the interviews and the focus group, I continued to analyze the data by coding and developing themes. Information was structured to explain a general understanding of effective

communication in the workplace. Participants' opinions, ideas, prejudices, or thoughts need to be safeguarded while they are participating (Charmaz, 2014).

My intention was to circumvent analytical biases by actively bracketing while I collecting and analyzing the data. I implemented bracketing, which is the process is established when a researcher suspends their beliefs, biases, expectations, or experiences to understand and explain the occurrences reported (Bejar et al., 2019). Bracketing allowed me to examine, negotiate, and create supportive relationships that functioned as a boundary between data and researcher. By bracketing interviews, I expanded the lucidity of the participant and researcher engagement.

While bracketing, I wrote memos throughout the data collection and data analysis process. The purpose of memoing was to record reflective summaries concerning what I gathered from the data. Memos are instruments that capture insight, ideas, and observations. Memos accrue as ideas or written records about theories and how they relate. Memos define ideas that appropriately interpret data in an exploratory yet analytical manner (Charmaz, 2014). Effective memoing contributes to the qualitative research process and its credibility (Charmaz, 2014). In addition, memoing is valid to achieving analytical concepts from raw data. Memos are progressive and can increase the clarity and accuracy through the progressions of the data analysis. Memos keep a researcher rooted in the empirical experience to contribute to trustworthiness of a study; trustworthiness is synonymous with dependability in qualitative research (Hope et al., 2019). Once the data were collected, I analyzed the data, compared and contrasted the findings, then reported on emerging information from the interviews and focus group.

Methodology

Population

I conducted my study in the New York City area and included participants

primarily from New York, New Jersey, and Connecticut. The organizations included in

the study are referred to as Organization 1, Organization 2, and Organization 3. Each

organization had a coordinator who did not participate in the study but who coordinated

with me. Participant identities remained anonymous throughout the study. The focus

group was the only exception where participants' voices were audible. All participants in

the group were asked to keep their cameras off and use a name given to them to sign in to

the online platform. The population of the study was community-based professionals who

have worked and had experience in the community service industry space. Suitable

participants worked with their leaders for a minimum of 6 months and leaders were

required to have been with the organization for a minimum of 1 year. The participants

agreed to be involved in the research voluntarily. The inclusion criteria were detailed in

the invitation e-mail (Appendix G), and people who met the criteria selected to

participate by their free will.

Leaders in the sample did not need to have daily contact or interactions with each

participant; however, they did need to have a team they had led for at least a year. No

additional participants were needed to reach saturation. Participant selection was made

from a diverse population of potential participants. Each person completed and emailed

their own confidentiality statement indicating they were willing to participate without any

compensation. As the researcher, I was the only person with access to the email account with these responses.

Sampling and Sampling Procedures

A request for participation was made available for volunteers to accept. Once approval was granted by the Walden University Institutional Review Board (IRB), I shared the study information with the organizations that agreed to participate. Each potential participant received an email invitation with a concise summary of the study and a list of the terminologies used in the study. Qualitative researchers make suitable recommendations when estimating sample sizes, commonly between seven and 12 participants (Soffer-Elnekave et al., 2020). Aldiabat and Le Navenec (2018) suggested that researchers can chart no exclusive strategy to achieve data saturation. While supervising the data, the point that no new information emerges represents the theoretical saturation point or data saturation. The convergence of information at this plateau allows for an all-inclusive assessment of the collected data (Malterud et al., 2016).

Instrumentational and Materials

When I met virtually with each participant for their interview, I engaged them with questions that warranted explanations, examples, and stories. The questions triggered an organic response from the participants to build the data. While collecting data, I used an interview protocol, focus group protocol, Zoom, an audio digital recorder, and memoing to gather and analyze the data.

Interviews

Interviewees were given the background of the study and how it would be conducted. I explained the purpose of the interview and highlighted the confidentiality measures to each participant. Each participant was given an outline of the interview format, including a range of interview time lengths. Each participant was given contact information for the researcher if they had any questions or concerns at any point. Participants were allowed to ask questions or clarify any additional information related to the study if necessary. I prepared the method of recording, established note taking, and then began the interviews. Each interview had the same format. After each interview, I immediately reviewed the notes and recording to interpret the data. During the review, I prepared questions for things that may not have been clear.

Recordings

I used Zoom recordings to document the interviews and focus group activities. Before the sessions, I tested the recording device by recording audio for accuracy and clarity before the interviews and focus group began. I checked to ensure the recording captured the audible activities while collecting the data. I asked one question at a time and ensured that a participant was done with their answer before moving on.

Focus Group

The purpose of the focus group was to support the triangulation of the study. There was one focus group session, and the focus group ran for 70 minutes. This session was recorded following the protocol noted for the individual interviews. There were no more than five questions for the session. The format provided a welcome, an explanation

of the purpose and context of the group, and introductions. I asked questions to the focus group and allowed time for questions, then closed the session. All information has been kept confidential and no names were used. The focus group was conducted to capture the views and experiences of the 12 participants. In the focus group, there was no ability to observe nonverbal channels, such as body language or gestures. The focus of the group revolved around responding to the focus group questions (Appendix E). I moderated the group and ensured they remained focused on the research area. I recorded and transcribed, and I took notes to make sure I did not miss any information.

Memo Journaling

I documented reflective notes about what I learned from the data after each interview. Memos are notes from a researcher about the relationship between categories. A memo is an instrument that captures the outflow of ideas (Charmaz, 2014). Memos contribute significantly to credibility in the research process. The process unfolded at two levels, a textual level in reading the data and a conceptual level theorizing the categories, concepts, and themes. Memos increased the clarity, density, and accuracy as the data analysis progressed.

To ensure consistency of the interviews and focus group, I designed a schedule for both. The schedule outlined a welcome, summary of the topic, ground rules, and assurance of confidentiality. The instruments used to collect the qualitative data were recorded, transcribed, and analyzed by finding and examining themes across interviews or the focus group. I continued to gather data until I reached theoretical saturation.

Data Analysis

The purpose of ongoing analysis is to capture emerging themes. Ranney (2015) mentioned that once themes are established, they are coded into assorted categories. Smith and Firth (2011) recommended that recorded interviews be transcribed and stored on a locked computer that only the researcher had access to. Nowell et al. (2017) recommend bracketing, explaining, categorizing (themes), summarizing, modifying themes, validating findings, then reporting on the final themes as an effective data analysis plan. I chose bracketing to mitigate researcher bias while going through the validation process. The idea was to capture a full picture of what was intended from the participants' experiences. The themes helped me to organize how individuals received information differently, and therefore they may communicate differently. The responses to each question were categorized by participants' responses. Any reoccurring themes were accented into inferences and then explained. Interpretation came from the exclusive perspective of each participant. An audit of the data was conducted to authenticate the findings, as suggested by Nowell et al. (2017).

Data Analysis Steps

1. An integration of analysis through data collection cycles were: coding, analysis, writing, design theoretical categorization and data collection.

2. Persistent comparative analysis of data with each other and theoretically categorized through each cycle.

3. A theoretical sampling process of labeling established data with an ongoing vigorous process of theory, operationalization, sampling, collection, interpretation, and validation.

4. The data was cultivated, refined, and continuously checked through the process.

5. Codes started from the first interview and memos.

6. The formal theory will take into account the variation in the data or the circumstances associated with any discrepancy. The findings will be an analytical product describing the accounts.

As described by Charmaz (2014), CGT emphasizes the construction of theory from the collected data. The key steps involved in the data analysis were to familiarize myself with the data by submerging myself in it. I conducted interviews and reviewed transcripts while jotting field notes and data sources. After reading and rereading the data to become familiar with its content and context, I reviewed notes and made my initial observations. The initial coding process was generated that captured the patterns, main ideas, and concepts. The codes emerged directly from the data. The codes were examined line-by-line. The analysis was systematic, and codes were attached to relevant divisions. The objective was to capture the actions, perspectives, and meanings. Open coding allowed for a braider section of codes to emerge. My use of theoretical sampling involved electing new data sources that provided rich information on emerging concepts. My goal was to pursue a distinct perspective of an enhanced emerging theory. Through the process, there were some reflective notes of ideas, thoughts, questions, and

interpretations of emergent codes. The transcripts assisted in making connections between unclear expectations to cultivate the emerging theory. The process demanded the continuous comparison of codes, the organizing of concepts, and the construction of data segments. I sought the latest information for relationships and differences to help identify patterns across the data set. These steps allowed me to identify theoretical insight, categories, and patterns. At one point, the theoretical data met a saturation point. Saturation occurred when there was no new data for additional codes. Saturation proposes that the primary concepts and categories have been adequately established, and further data collection may maintain the emerging theory.

Threats to Validity

The features of trustworthy data demanded results to be confirmed, reliable, consistent, and exchangeable (Shufutinsky, 2020). I built trust by making the participants feel comfortable through prolonged engagement. I was transparent and honest in helping the participants to open up and feel comfortable while I sought the participants true experiences. Member checks are follow-ups with the participants to ensure that the data is received accurately and is understood by its meaning. I paid attention to the contextual details while observing and interpreting the meanings of what was being said. I accomplished this by repeating back the answers that were given to me to ensure they were precise through their description. I established confirmability of the research discoveries with audit trials. Etowa and Debs-Ivall (2017) suggested that the participants responses should be their own and not tainted by the researcher. By asking follow-up questions and reciting the responses, the organic experiences of the participants were

evaluated. I examined the data until all identifying data exposed the variants through the case analysis. Documentation of the researcher's thinking throughout the research process was supported with a reflexive journal. Archiving portions of the raw data for subsequent analysis and interpretation, for verification of initial findings and conclusions will be supported through referential adequacy.

Ethical Procedures

I began gathering data once I received approval from the IRB. The approval number assigned to this study was 08-26-22-0668510. My contact with the participants was imitated through the coordinator in the respective organizations. Contact began with me providing each organization with a description in writing that explained the purpose of the study, the research design, the methodology, and the informed consent process. Once the participants meet the criteria, they were asked to give consent by an emailed response. I proceed to gather data ethically. I ensured the ethical standards by exhibiting truthfulness and maintaining a standard of excellence based on Walden University's research protocol. The participants agreed to correspond electronically. To give each participants an idea of what to expect, individually they received an email of the same introductory letter. The letter explained why the research is essential, noting that the discussion would be recorded and assuring them confidentiality. I was committed to ethical concepts of safeguarding the participants' interest and ensuring the credibility of the research process (O'Reilly & Kiyimba, 2015). I gave each participant the means to reach me by phone or by email if they needed additional information. The participants were free to withdraw from the study if they chose at any time. Once the participants

agree to be a part of the study, they were asked to give their informed consent at that time. I was the sole researcher and in complete control of the entire data files. The hardware and software were stored on a computer with a secure password for security. The data was entered on an Excel spreadsheet that is password protected. Any and all records related to the study will be destroyed after five years of completing the study. These records will be disposed of through a licensed and professional shredding or disposal services.

Summary

This chapter highlighted the CGT approach that was used to understand the perception of employee and leaders as they strive to meet goals and benchmarks in their organization. Their execution revolved heavily around effective communication. Chapter 3 recapped the data collection process from both the interviews and the focus group. The results from my data analysis is highlighted in Chapter 4. I conducted this study under the Walden University Institutional Review Boards (IRB) recommendations.

Chapter 4: Results

Introduction

The purpose of this qualitative study was to gain a deeper understanding of community-based organizational leadership efficiency and how communication effectiveness can affect performance outcomes. Effective communication is among the key factors that leaders rely on to meet their goals and achieve their missions. While the importance of effective communication among leaders is well-established in existing literature, its impact on employee engagement and job performance is yet to be explored exhaustively, particularly within the context of community leadership (Alkaabi & Wong, 2019). The present study is intended to fill this gap by exploring the experiences of community-based organization members in terms of communication from their leaders, and how effective communication, or lack thereof, may influence their performance levels. The following research questions guided this study:

RQ1: What types of experiences do community-based organization members have when leaders are communicating effectively?

RQ2: What are the attitudes of community leaders as they interact with the community members and what are the effects on performance outcomes?

RQ3: How do relationships between leaders and employees influence the performance levels for organizational outcomes?

The remainder of this chapter is organized into five major sections: setting, demographics, data collection, data analysis, and results. In the setting section, I present a review of the organizational or geographical context of the study. The demographics

section will be focused on the attributes of the participants, such as gender and age. A brief review of the data collection and analysis methods will be explained. Lastly, key findings obtained from the analysis are presented.

Setting

The setting of study consisted of three states in the United States: New York, New Jersey, and Connecticut. Because the focus of the study was on communication among community-based organizations, organizations meeting this criterion in these three states were targeted. The selected organizations were all community-based organizations with participants having experience in their respective fields for at least 6 months. However, higher-level administrators were required to have been in their role for at least a year. Each participant took ownership of their organizational agreement to be involved in the research project. Each participant volunteered on merit and was not obligated to contribute to the study. The criteria offered a baseline for commonalities across the organizations. Chapter 3 highlighted the guidelines required to participate. Each candidate completed and emailed their confidentiality statement demonstrating their free will to participate without compensation of any form. As the sole researcher, I accessed all the emails and responses.

Three community-based organizations agreed to participate in the study, Organization 1, Organization 2, and Organization 3. The identities of the three organizations have been concealed for ethical purposes. One of the organizations that participated in the study is a nonprofit organization dedicated to youth initiatives by empowering youth through the power of sports. Organization 1 strives to provide

opportunities for children to participate in sports activities, personal development, confidence building, and promote teamwork and cultivate fundamental life skills. Organization 1 has been in operation for over 50 years. Organization 2 is a family-based initiative dedicated to promoting family unification. This organization strives to facilitate and support the reunification of disconnected families by creating opportunities for nurturing to strengthen family bonds. Organization 2 believes every individual deserves the opportunity to be part of a loving and supportive family unit. This organization has served its community since 2013. The final organization, Organization 3, is a leadership initiative that offers financial literacy and leadership skills to empower youth and communities. Organization 3's primary goal is to equip individuals with skills and information to make informed financial decisions regarding their financial futures. The organization's leadership platform allows youth to develop as front-runners in society for their personal and professional lives.

Data Collection

The target population for this study consisted of community-based professionals who have worked and had experience in the community service industry space. To qualify for inclusion in the study, potential participants needed to have worked in their community-based organization for at least 6 years. An interview protocol (Appendix D) and a focus group protocol (Appendix F) were used to collect qualitative data from the participants. Interviews were conducted via Zoom and audio was recorded using a digital recorder. Recorded interviews were later transcribed for further qualitative analysis. Transcription was done with the help of Zoom transcription services. However, I also

went through each transcribed interview to ensure consistency between each audio file and its corresponding transcript. Member checking was also done where each participant was sent their respective interview transcript to identify and correct any errors or statements that did not reflect the originally intended meaning. There were no unusual circumstances encountered during data collection. The interviews averaged 1 hour and 5 minutes. Some were longer because of sidebar chats that I had to reel in to manage the time. After the interviews, some participants wanted to share more about their experiences. All interviews were conducted Monday–Thursday between 4:00 p.m. and 8:00 p.m. The participants set the times and days of their interviews. The focus group took 1 hour and 15 minutes. The focus group was conducted on a Tuesday at 6:00 p.m., as agreed on by the participants. The data collection steps were followed as described in Chapter 3.

Data Analysis Phases

Data were analyzed using NVivo Version 20 software. The CGT approach initially proposed by Charmaz (2014) was used to perform qualitative analysis of the data. The first stage involved initial open coding. During this stage, I broke down the data into meaningful units and assigned a descriptive name to each of them. Each code represented an idea or concept relevant to communication effectiveness and organizational performance in community-based organizations.

The second phase was constant comparison, which involved comparing codes within and across interview files. According to Charmaz and Belgrave (2012), constant comparison essentially involves looking for similarities, relationships, and differences

between different codes, data sources, interview files, categories, and concepts. I conducted this process iteratively until a relevant theoretical framework emerged from the data. Comparing data and codes allowed me to determine which segments of text in the data were closely related to existing codes and could be assigned similar meanings to those codes. Comparing codes with other codes allowed grouping the codes into categories based on similarity in meanings. Comparing codes and categories also allowed me to determine the existing categories into which those codes could be placed. Comparing categories and other categories allowed me to form higher-level categories or concepts by grouping similar categories together.

The analysis process also involved theoretical sampling whereby I purposely selected new participants based on emerging concepts. In this study, new data sources were focus group interviews. Data from focus group discussions were compared to the individual interview data and codes to identify similarities and differences for more effective categorization. The findings of the focus group discussions were coded in the same way coding was done for the individual interviews. These codes were compared to codes and categories from individual interviews. Most of the codes fit perfectly into already existing codes and categories.

The higher-level concepts were assessed for coherence and relevance to the study topic. A concept was deemed coherent if all its constituent categories and codes had a homogenous meaning. If the different codes and categories did not have a homogenous meaning, it was necessary to split the theme. Apart from coherence, I also assessed the concepts to determine whether they were relevant to the current study and would answer

the research questions directly. Names were assigned to the concepts such that they captured the meanings of underlying codes and categories. The last phase involved writing a report of the findings obtained.

Results

The qualitative data collected yielded 194 open codes, 20 categories, and six themes. The findings contain themes obtained both from focus group discussions and from individual interviews. Table 1 contains a summary of the thematic analysis results. The table contains three columns: themes, subthemes, and number of participants. The themes column contains the major themes obtained from the qualitative analysis. The subthemes column contains the categories or subthemes under each major theme. Lastly, the number of participants column identifies the number of participants who contributed toward a particular category or subtheme. For instance, two participants contributed toward the first subtheme: Employees are treated equally regardless of their level.

Table 1

Summary of Findings

Themes	Subthemes	No. of participants
Theme 1: Communication makes employees feel valued, appreciated, and part of the company	Employees are treated equally regardless of their level	2
	Employees feel valued when leaders communicate	3
	Leaders appreciate and value employees	3
	Effective communication cultivates a feeling of inclusivity among employees	3
Theme 2: Employees are comfortable communicating with leaders and can express themselves freely	Comfortable communicating	8
	Employees can express themselves freely	5
Theme 3: Leaders are friendly, approachable, and have an open-door policy in place to allow employees express themselves freely	Open-door policy	6
	Friendly and approachable leaders	3
	Leaders engaging and pay attention to employees	2
	Leaders are friendly and approachable	4
Theme 4: Transparency and clarity in communication are necessary for effective communication	Clarity in communication particularly from leaders	5
	Getting employees always informed	6
	Transparency on the part of leaders	5
	Focus group: Transparency and clarity in communication	3
Theme 5: Effective communication improves organizational performance and success	Communication improves employee performance and overall organizational success	9
	Positive organizational performance attributed to effective communication with employees	2
	Strong work relations and leaders value to employees improves organizational performance	7
	Effective communication improves organizational performance	4
Theme 6: Communication creates a harmonious work environment and good relations between leaders and employees	Good relations between leaders and employees	3
	Harmonious and healthy work environment	6

Research Question 1

The first research question was focused on the experiences of community-based organization members regarding effective communication from their leaders. Theme 1 and Theme 2 directly answered this research question. Based on Theme 1, employees feel valued, appreciated, and part of the organization when leaders communicate effectively. The second theme was less focused on the actual experiences of employees. As per the second theme, employees feel comfortable communicating with their leaders and expressing themselves freely. However, it was not clear from the participants' responses whether their level of comfort communicating with leaders was attributed to leaders' effective communication.

Theme 1: Communication Makes Employees Feel Valued, Appreciated, and Part of the Company

The participants reported that communication makes employees feel valued, appreciated, and part of the company. The participants indicated that employees are treated equally regardless of their level. Participant 6 responded: "Yes. That's it, that's the culture. I mean, the culture that's created is one, where the first year, first month, first day, a person is treated the same way as the, you know, the seasoned veteran." Participant 8 reported that treating employees equally makes them feel valued: "There are no 'big I's' and 'little you's.' We are all treated equal. They see value and will reward employees as needed."

Three participants indicated that leaders appreciate and value employees. Participant 7 reported that togetherness makes people feel valued and appreciated.

Participant 7 said, "There is an attitude of togetherness and an interest in making people feel valued and appreciated." Participant 8 echoed Participant 7's responses in reporting that togetherness creates a healthy work relationship: "We have a healthy working relationship. We clicked when we met, but it took us time to build on that. We are agreeable and I am appreciative of our relationship."

Participant 9 also reported that the team worked together and received support from the leaders, saying, "Keep things the way they are now. The team working together and getting support from the leaders made the employees feel valued and appreciated. Employees like to feel valued and appreciated." Participant 1 reported that employees feel valued when leaders communicate:

> People want to feel valued. There's trust, there's appreciation, everyone feels inclusive. You can just imagine how frustrating it is when our frontline isn't getting the correct information, and they're executing upon what they think they should be. So, you know, as I think of when our leaders are communicating effectively and we're all on the same page, everyone feel empowered. And you feel purposeful, you feel like, yes, I'm here, and I've been a part of them being impactful. I'm a part of the movement. When the opposite is true as well.

Participant 10 revealed feeling valued and appreciated. "I feel valued and appreciated when we discuss my performance." Participant 12 reported having a positive attitude regarding their performance: "The attitude is very positive. We have time to meditate and regroup when needed during the day. We are truly treated like we are a part of the company and given the authority to make decisions."

The data collected from the focus group also yielded the theme of effective communication and how it cultivates a feeling of inclusivity among employees. Only three of the four participant groups contributed to this theme. In the first focus group, Participant P6 held that effective communication helps build strong positive work relations:

> When there is effective communication, employees feel included and appreciated which shapes the dynamics of their relationship with leaders. It truly seems like people work harder, make an attempt to be on time and make sure they are on point in completing their work when these relationships are nurtured. Even to the point where people help others to complete their work, making sure the team wins and achieves its goals.

In the focus group, Participant P8 stated that effective communication from leaders makes employees feel connected. Employees also develop a sense of inclusivity where they feel their voices are heard. Participant P8 stated:

> When leaders communicate effectively, it can be an incredibly rewarding experience. Effective communication from leadership allows us to feel connected and supported within our organization or team. We know that our voices are being heard, and we have the opportunity to make meaningful contributions.

Lastly, Participant P11 from the focus group held that effective communication cultivates trust between leaders and subordinates where employees feel valued:

> Effective communication also helps build trust between leaders and their teams or organizations because everyone is on the same page with clear expectations for

progress towards a shared goal. This creates an environment of collaboration where all members feel valued for their contributions which in turn leads to higher morale among employees as well as better overall performance from the group as a whole.

Theme 2: Employees Are Comfortable Communicating With Leaders and Can Express Themselves Freely

Five participants described being comfortable communicating with their leaders and could freely express themselves. Participant 1 reported being comfortable to call their leaders at any time and have a conversation. "I'm very comfortable, that I can walk up to, I can give the CEO a call, let her know how I'm feeling or let her know what's keeping me up at nights." Participant 4 reported that his supervisor had no problem with unscheduled conversations:

Being an outgoing person, I have no problem communicating with anyone especially my immediate supervisor. I feel very comfortable talking to him. I can call him when he's not at work and talk about work stuff and of course, he'll still answers the call.

Participant 7 reported that their leaders are friendly and approachable. "I am very comfortable. My leaders are friendly and approachable." Participant 8 added being comfortable with expressing themselves to their leaders:

I am very comfortable with expressing myself to my leaders. I feel like I add value, so it makes it easier for me make suggestions because my intentions are to make the organization's community effective in our work. We communicate very

well. I like the dynamics of our relationship, and I think that is key to the success

we are having together in our department. Being comfortable is a relief to me it

takes a lot off of my mind when I am working.

Employees need to be comfortable with communicating their feelings freely to the

leaders. Participant 9 reported having developed a friendship and healthy relationship at

work and can even speak outside of work:

I am very comfortable with communicating my feelings. Being an outgoing

person, I have no problem communicating with anyone. I am very comfortable

expressing myself. I am very comfortable. We have developed a friendship and

healthy relationship at work, and we even speak outside of work. We have a

strong relationship. I am very comfortable as I mentioned, we have a relationship

so that helps us a lot to work through things when we disagree. Most of the time

we are on the same page.

Four participants reported that employees can express themselves freely. Participant 1

reported that because everyone is able to express themselves freely, everyone is able to

get creative and get a mode of communication that can work among the team members in

the organization:

But as I said, because everyone was able to come to the table, everyone was able

to get creative, get a mode of communication that works amongst us. It allows us

to feel supported and included. And so it gives me that comfort level to be able to

approach her with whatever it is that I may have to discuss.

Participant 2 indicated that an open door policy allows employees to share their thoughts and be expressive knowing that they can speak to their leaders if something is not right:

> So it's an open-door policy here. People can come in and share their thoughts and be expressive so they can be comfortable knowing that they can speak their minds and what they feel about what's going on in our organization. We allow them that open door policy, they come and speak to us if something doesn't feel right. Or if they feel like something could be done differently to enhance the organization.

Participant 3 described feeling comfortable expressing himself to the supervisor:

> Well, I feel comfortable expressing myself to both my direct supervisor and even his supervisor, but it's not necessarily that I'm gonna get a great outcome with you know, expressing how I feel. And the worst experience was when I was explaining to him about the personnel situation, and we needed to get more bodies but he just kept over talking me and said, well, we're gonna get a temporary person for two days a week. And we actually lost two people.

Employees feel comfortable having autonomy to complete tasks with limited supervision with no micromanagement. Participant 7 expressed having the best experiences in an autonomous working environment:

> One of the best experiences that I had when it came to communicating is when I was given the autonomy to complete a task not micromanaged. There were minimal check ins and updates. The project was a success and the working relationship got stronger and we work very well together. I feel like I am informed and my leader respects my opinion. I feel like I have buy-in, in the

organization and I feel like I am a part of the organization. I feel very

comfortable. While they report to me, I give them the latitude to make decisions. I

will often take a subordinate role at events and report to the directors. Often the

attitude is too familiar and friendly which makes it difficult sometimes to

command respect and adherence.

Research Question 2

The second RQ focused on the attitudes that community leaders have when they

interact with community members, and how those attitudes influence performance

outcomes. Only one theme – Theme 3 – directly answered this research question.

According to Theme 3, leaders are friendly, approachable, and have an open-door policy.

Thus, participants generally painted their leaders as having a friendly attitude

supplemented with an open-door policy. In another theme, though not directly answering

this second RQ, participants contended the need for leaders to exercise transparency and

clarity to ensure effective communication.

Theme 3: Leaders Are Friendly, Approachable, and Have an Open-Door Policy

Three participants reported that leaders engaged and paid attention to employees.

Participant 6 reported that leaders should be engaging and approachable:

I think people in this particular place make sure that this is the place you want to

be. Because the leadership structure is about development and support. For

example, I had a question, a simple question, and the assistant to the leader,

stopped what she was doing, and made sure that the question was answered.

Participant 7 also reported that leaders push for a harmonious working environment. "I feel very comfortable because of our relationship. Our leaders push for a harmonious working environment and they listen to hear, not listen to speak." Two participants reported having friendly and approachable leaders. Participant 6 described his leader as very approachable:

> My leader is very approachable. I mean, it gives you a sense of the saying when you are here you are family. The style and the atmosphere is very communal. Very family oriented in terms of the engaging nature of the leaders. So based on the fact that an individual knows that leaders are approachable, the engagement to their subordinates plays a big role in the success of the team. If an individual is distracted or pretends to give the illusion that they're doing the work, this may hinder the overall operation of the organization.

Participant 8 also described the leadership in his organization as very personable:

> The leadership in my organization is very personable. They have big hearts and are willing to go to the ends of the earth for the staff. Yes, my leaders are flexible and friendly. I believe because she has seen my work in the past, she is more understanding to challenges that arise. She is very generous with her time.

Participant 10 reported that their leaders are very encouraging and more approachable. "My leaders are easygoing and encouraging, that is also very helpful and I feel encouraged to perform and do my job. My leadership are usually encouraging and flexible. I appreciate that they are friendly and respectful when we communicate."

Four participants reported that an open-door policy made their leaders appear friendly. Participant 2 reported that open-door policy enhances the sharing of opinions and thoughts. "The open-door policy we have, you know, I'm still very comfortable. I allowed the people that I work with to be able to come and share their thoughts and opinions on how we can better our organization." Participant 5 responded:

My immediate supervisor is an effective communicator. I've never had any real issues with him communicating. He has an open-door policy. So we don't really have any problems. I can talk to him; I can call him; I can email him.

Participant 5 also highlighted that the open-door policy helps leaders to meet and engage employees.

Sometimes when I come in, they do meet and greet us, they come, they talk to us, they Say hello, you know, and they make us feel like they have an open-door policy. I've never Had to like go directly to them because I mean, there's a chain. I follow the chain and I Deal with my immediate supervisor for the most part, but I never felt like I couldn't go to them if I needed to.

Employees provide better performance when they stay engaged with their leaders and as long as they stay engaged, and keep the door open for employees to communicate with them:

Again, I think that has a lot to do with the fact that we they're not doing check-ins that much anymore. Like, when I said earlier about the townhall meetings that we use, that they're not really checking in with the staff, you know, and then we have a lot of new people. And I don't think they understand that we do have an open-

door policy, they can go and talk to anybody they need to. So, I feel like these

townhall meetings would add a lot of better performances for some employees, to

be honest. I believe that because the leaders will engage you, when it comes to

employees, we have better performances if they stay engaged, and they and they

keep the door open for us to be able to communicate with them. I feel like that

will definitely keep the performance positive.

Participant 7 described that leaders are accessible and have an open-door policy.

"Leaders are accessible and have an open-door policy. They are always open for

suggestions and allow you to express how you truly feel without backlash." In addition,

Participant 9 reported that leaders provide an open-door policy for expression in

organizations. "Leaders provide open-door policy for expression. Yes, they do. They are

always willing to answer questions and give incite. They love to talk and share their

knowledge." According to Participant 9, leaders make great teachers and like to share

knowledge with staff. Participant 10 also reported that their leaders are great and are

patient with the staff. ""They are great teachers and are patient with the staff."

The theme of community leaders friendliness and approachability also emerged

from the focus group data collected. A majority of the participants across the focus

groups indicated that their leaders were friendly and approachable. In group 1,

participants P1 and P3 contributed to this theme by describing various ways in which

their leaders were friendly and approachable. Participant P1 stated that community

leaders in his organization respect the opinions of their subordinates, which makes

employees feel respected. By respecting the opinions of employees, the leaders also send the signal that employees can easily approach them and talk with them:

> One thing about our leaders is that they respect the opinions of the staff and that is helpful. If the staff feel respected, their contributions will usually reflect benefits for the company instead of promoting selfishness for the individual employee.

Participant P3 also indicated his leader is friendly and approachable, and that this is one of the reasons why the organization was doing well:

> My leader is friendly and accessible. I attribute the success of our organization to this open-door policy. Employees perform at their ultimate when the communication between the community leaders and employees is effective. When an employee believes the employee's opinions and suggestions are being heard, there is incentive for the employee to contribute more to the success of the company.

Participant P3 further indicated that leader approachability allows sharing of more ideas to the benefit of the company: "Employees perform better and keep the interest of the company in mind when the employees feel that they can approach their leadership. More ideas are shared and communication flows effectively."

However, participant P2 was the only one in the focus group who described a negative experience with his leaders particularly with regard to approachability and friendliness. According to P2, their leader was not approachable and had a self-promoting persona: "My supervisor's overall effectiveness is lacking in leadership. He has a self-

promoting persona." P2 went on to indicate that although the leader appeared respectful, he did not take subordinates' contributions seriously:

> The leaders of my organization are respectful, but do not take all staff member contributions seriously. It seems like the less an employee contributes his or her ideas, the more the leadership approves of the employee. This makes it unproductive for the employee to offer any suggestions.

> Four of the participants in the focus group described their leaders as friendly and approachable. For instance, P4 described his leader as friendly and approachable for both personal and professional needs of the employees: "He is a visible leader and makes himself available for our professional and sometimes personal needs." Participant P4 added that leaders in the organization promote respectful dialogue, which is a friendly gesture to employees: "Leaders have to take accountability for their actions and promote respectful dialogue, a friendly gesture to employees."

> Participant P5 described the attitude of his leader as positive and welcoming. The leader has been able to transmit this attitude throughout the organization thus improving the overall performance of the organization: "My leader's overall attitude is positive and welcoming. He is a great teacher and wants to build other leaders. His attitude is contagious which adds to the betterment of the organization's culture and community." Participant P6 described his leader as friendly and approachable. P6 cited an incident where he was invited to a barbecue by one of his leaders:

> My community leaders are very friendly and approachable. I was surprised when I was invited to a leader's home for a BBQ. It changed my attitude towards

others. I had never seen them in a casual light. In speaking with other colleagues,

they also agreed that by him opening up his home, shifted their way of seeing him

and the organization.

Participants in the focus group contributed to this theme, indicating that their

community organization leaders are friendly and approachable. Participant P7 stated that

the leader was not just friendly but also encouraged open dialogue between subordinates

and leaders:

He also encourages open dialogue between members and leaders so we can all

work together towards common goals with mutual understanding among

ourselves which makes it easier for him to get tasks done efficiently without

having any miscommunications along the way.

Participant P8 believed that the community organization leaders he has interacted with so

far are friendly and approachable as characterized by their openness to communication

and willingness to listen:

From my experience, I believe that community leaders are friendly and

approachable. Having a leader who is open to communication and willing to listen

creates an environment of trust between the leadership team and employees. This

allows for better collaboration when it comes to problem solving or decision

making, which can lead to improved employee performance.

Lastly, participant P9 acknowledged that his leaders are friendly and approachable. The

participant went ahead to describe the benefits of such a positive and welcoming attitude

among leaders:

My leaders are friendly, approachable, have this welcoming and positive attitude. When employees feel comfortable talking with their leaders, they are more likely to express ideas or concerns without fear of retribution from management. As a result, this helps foster creativity in the workplace as well as encourages workers' commitment towards their tasks at hand since there is mutual respect between them and their supervisors/managers/leadership teams.

Theme 4: Transparency and Clarity Are Necessary for Effective Communication

Five participants reported that transparency on the side of leadership results in improved organizational performance through effective communication. Participant 1 reported that the need for transparency or the clarity in communication would enhance effective communication in organizations:

When we realized that this was happening, it was impacting our operation and impacting what we set out to do. We had to go back to the drawing board, and we had to figure out what is going on. And why is it that everyone's getting the same message and we're not operating in unison. So, with that, we realized that the transparency or the clarity in communication wasn't there.

Participant 2 echoed Participant 1 by reporting that leaders should be transparent enough to allow others who are informed and educated do the same. "So I'm informed and I think I'm transparent enough to allow others also who are also informed and educated to do the same. If that makes any sense." Participant 3 descried having to go out of the way to make every effort to improve productivity in the department:

You know, he doesn't inform us of any changes until they're about to occur. And he started going out of his way to appear, you know, he wants to make every effort to improve productivity in the department. But he basically just makes, he just wants to make himself look good.

Participant 4 indicated that some leaders may be friendly but lack effective communication: "Absolutely not, we usually get information after something is done. She has a positive attitude towards the employees, she's very friendly, she just lacks in communication. Being more forthright when it comes to letting everyone know what's going on." Corresponding to Participant 4 responses, Participant 9 indicated that they get information after something has happened. "Absolutely not, we usually get information after something is done. She does more talking than she does listening."

Five participants revealed that clarity in communication particularly from leaders breeds effective communication. Participant 1 reported that clarity in communication makes employees move in one accord and feel responsible for the company success.

So, we're able to give that clarity and everyone is able to move in one accord, absolutely feel heard, they feel a part of the whole process. They feel what we're celebrating; they feel a part of the celebration and feel responsible for, for the success. So I think it that's the way it is. It is so important for leaders to be on the ball. And it's so important for leaders to be clear and concise with what they say what their goals are in the model, and what their visions are. And in doing that, being transparent and inclusive of every member that's on the team that will definitely help in terms of leading and guiding others.

Participant 7 reported that leader's effectiveness should be thorough and clear. "My leaders effectiveness is thorough and clear. He is an ex-military guy that closes the loop. He is flexible yet firm. He also follows up well." Participant 8 added that leaders can be effective when they are ready and focused:

My leader can be effective when she is ready. When her mind is clear and she is focused, her communication is much better. Because of our close knit relationship, it is easier to perform my duties. My other leader, he is direct and gets right to the point. If he needs to explain things that are not clear, he is open and takes the time to share his knowledge. My worst experience was when I was asked to organize a luncheon for our team. The instructions and what was expected was not clear. I did what I was asked to do, however that was not what should have been done. The problem was that the person who gave me the instructions did not take responsibility for the giving me the wrong information. I did not feel informed. Although information seems discrete, I feel like our team gets up-to-date and accurate information in a timely fashion. I understand how it feels to have poor communication. It leaves others guessing. That can go bad quickly.

Four participants reported that keeping employees informed contributes to effective communication in organizations. Participant 1 highlighted that getting information to team members promotes effective communication:

Anything that came up that I would suggest improving communication, I would say that being able to, if it comes to your mind, being able to, to get that

information out to team members sooner rather than later that will, that definitely

helps with communication.

So one of the things that we have also incorporated with improving our

communication is being very purposeful and being present. So if you come up, if

it's something that needs to be done, and you can't do it right now send the

information out to the team, someone else would pick it up.

Participant 2 reported effective communication is important because it makes people

understand the leaders' vision for the organization.

My best experiences, when it comes to communication is the fact that you're able

and people are able to understand where you're coming from. So effective

communication is very important. Because if you can't get people to see your

vision, to see your light, it becomes difficult.

Participant 5 added that getting updates on different policies and rules to follow

contributes to effective communication:

My job is just a lot of different policies and rules to follow. And we're constantly

getting updates on these things we have to do in real time like this is changing and

they're posting things and sending us emails. There's, a board for us to see

everything, everything is right there for us to see, I find the communication with

that is really good. And my job always informs us, it's beautiful.

Corresponding to Participant 5, Participant 8 reported that good relationships with leaders

makes employees informed thereby resulting in effective communication:

I believe because of the relationship that my director and I have, I am informed. I
do my best to execute and my leader knows I like information. I like to stay a few
steps ahead so I am usually kept informed with what is going on and what needs
to be done. Directors not informed enough. It's evident in the difference between
the outcome and the preferred outcome. I am very much informed. We
communicate verbally, by text, by email or telepathically…just kidding but we
are definitely on the same page.

Participant 10 reported that it is easier to perform duties as a result of the close
relationship between employees and leaders. The participant indicated that although
information seems discrete, employees feel like the team gets up-to-date and accurate
information in a timely fashion.

The thing is, when we are in sync, all systems are go. My supervisor keeps our
team aware and information flows freely. We have company outings and retreats.
We get to know one another on a deeper level than just the office. We
communicate and work as a cohesive team. Leaders, Directors, Managers and
Staff all come together to make projects work because of the familiarity we share
by communicating with each other. It's amazing when it works.

Participant 11 described that employees need to understand how it feels like to have poor
communication in organizations. "I understand how it feels to have poor communication.
It leaves others guessing. That can go bad quickly.

In Focus group 1, participants expressed a range of opinions that pointed towards
the importance of clarity and transparency in communication on the part of community

organization leaders. All the participants acknowledged that their leaders are effective

communicators who embrace transparency and clarity in communication. For instance,

one participant in the focus group held that when community leaders embrace

transparency and clarity in communication, employees feel that their roles are being

taken seriously:

> Our leaders are effective communicators, very transparent, clear, and straight to
>
> the point. When community leaders are transparent and clear in their approach to
>
> communication, the employees feel as though their contribution is appreciated
>
> and taken seriously. The employee will always think of ways to help the
>
> organization and feel as if their contribution to the organization is important.

Participants in the focus group also held that community leaders exhibit a positive

attitude, which is manifested through open, clear, and transparent communication. The

participants added that clarity and transparency in communication was a key attribute of

good leaders. According to one of the participants, clarity and transparency ensures

employees have all the information required to perform their tasks: "I think good leaders

exercise transparency and clarity in communication. Any areas of missing information

limits the ability to complete the assignment."

Participants in the focus group emphasized that the community leaders they have

encountered implement clarity and transparency in communication. For instance, one

participant indicated that his leader implements individualized communication.

According to this participant, this individualized approach is intended to ensure every

member of the team understands their role clearly. The participant stated as follows: "He

[the leader] takes time when speaking with each individual member of the team by making sure everyone understands." Another participant from the group added that the individualized communication approach allows employees to seek clarification on a personal capacity: "Some leaders achieve this through active listening techniques such as summarizing key points or asking questions for clarification purposes. Thus, they allow each person to seek clarification so that everyone is on the same page."

Participants in this group also acknowledged the importance of clarity and transparency in communication to organization success. A participant contended that in his organization, clarity and transparency in communication on the part of his leaders was associated with a gradual improvement in organizational performance as employees felt more comfortable seeking clarification thus avoiding errors when executing their tasks: "In my experience working within organizations that practice transparency and clarity in communication, there has been a marked improvement in employee performance. Employees feel more comfortable asking questions or seeking clarification when needed because they know that their input is respected by leadership." Another participant from the focus group added that clarity and transparency in communication helps employees to decide which tasks should be prioritized over others: "Furthermore, employees are able to better prioritize tasks based on the objectives outlined by leadership which leads them down a path towards success quicker than if left without direction from management teams who lack transparency or clarity of purpose."

Research Question 3

The third RQ focused on how the relationships between leaders and employees influence organization performance levels. Two themes directly answered this third research question. The first theme was that effective communication generally improves organizational performance and success. However, this theme was not specific on how organizational performance and success comes about as a result of effective communication on the part of leaders. The second theme was that effective communication creates a harmonious work environment and promotes good relations between leaders and employees. It is this harmonious work environment that allows the organization to thrive and perform well.

Theme 5: Effective Communication Improves Organizational Performance and Success

The participants described that effective communication results in improved organizational performance and success. Two subthemes emerged during data analysis: Positive organizational performance attributed to effective communication with employees; strong work relations and leaders' value to employees improves organizational performance and communication improves employee performance and overall organizational success.

Three participants indicated that positive organizational performance is attributed to effective communication with employees. Participant 2 highlighted that effective communication improves organizational performance based on the experience and years of service of being together. "Um, I'm basing this on our experience and the years of

service that we have been together." Extending Participant 2's response, Participant 5 reported that team performance is good as a result of effective communication. Participant 5 said:

> Overall, my, the team performance is pretty good. You know, lately, among allies, you know, it's been kind of hectic, because COVID kind of burnt a lot of us out, you know, and a lot of us have left the profession.

Six participants reported that strong work relations and leaders' value to employees improves organizational performance. The participants highlighted that creating strong relationship with employees by treating subordinates well can result in improved organizational performance. Participant 2 indicated that leaders should treat their subordinates well by showing appreciation for the overall success of the company. "So if the leaders treat their subordinates well, and the leaders show appreciation then the company overall will be successful, in my belief, okay." Extending Participant 2's responses, Participant 3 indicated that strong relations improve employee morale. "They do not. Morale is really not great. You know, but, and it's, you know, before that, when everything is going well, the morale of our department is really good, but isn't that great lately?" Participant 4 indicated that strong relations make employees enjoy working with the company. "Overall, everyone looks forward to coming to work. And that's largely due to everyone being hybrid. There is no pressure to go into work every day, so the days we do have to go in, we look forward to it."

Participant 6 reported that strong relations lead to higher productivity among employees. "They, it makes people feel they make them feel like okay, I want to do this

job. I want to go that extra mile. You know, do I think it leads to higher productivity? Oh, yes. What I think about it. I mean, you know, people do the work willingly not begrudgingly. Right." Corresponding findings to Participant 6 were reported by Participant 8 who highlighted that clear expectations and open suggestions provide everyone with an opportunity to speak. "Everyone had an opportunity to speak. The information was clear on the assignment and the agenda. Expectations were clear and leaders were open for suggestions to make the transition smooth." Interviewee also reported that feeling valued increases the performance. "I notice that when I feel valued my performance increases. I feel like I am a part of the team and when we communicate, I feel valued." Participant 9 indicated that leader's style of communication affects performance of everyone. "As explained previously, because there is no day-to-day pressure, the performance of everyone is exceptional." Participant 12 reported that their leader' style of communicating is very effective. "I like my leader's style of communicating. She is very effective and we have a very strong working relationship."

Nine participants highlighted that communication improves employee performance and overall organizational success. Participant 1 reported that feeling uncomfortable results from the lack of communication or ineffective communication that was going on in their organization:

> And that's just because we were able to identify what our issues were, come
> together in a respectful manner and come up with a plan and watch that plan
> work. If you were to ask me this question, maybe five years ago, I would say

uncomfortable, and that was all surrounding the lack of communication or

ineffective communication that was going on in our organization.

In addition to Participant 1's responses, Participant 2 reported that if communication is

clear cut and understandable, then the company is heading in the right direction.

I mean, of course, if communication is clear cut and understandable, then I think,

you know, with any company, you're heading in the right direction. And like I

stated before, there's always room for improvement. So the more you improve on

this, the better your company has a chance of surviving. And the employees want

to stay and continue to work in this organization.

Some participants also indicated that effective communication leads to improved

organizational success. Participant 5 said:

Yes, I do. The fact that I can communicate with him effectively, I think that helps.

It adds to me being able to be better at my job. Absolutely. I feel like what I think

had gotten lost at my job, we used to have these townhall meetings where we

would get to express ourselves. And I felt like that kind of connected the

employees to management, if that makes any sense. And I feel like that we don't

have that anymore.

Corresponding response to Participant 5 was reported by Participant 6 who indicated that

communication keep employees informed:

I mean, there's the emails that come frequently, but not to the point of a nuisance.

They keep us informed. But they're not, they're not too overbearing. So, you

know, it's a good thing. I think the communication is there, the individual would have to, you know, take the initiative for themselves."

Participant 8 indicated that when leaders are supportive, the team seems to be stronger. "Leaders tend to determine the level of output. When leaders are supportive our team seems to be better team players. There is a stronger sense of togetherness and trust." Participant 9 indicated that when leaders communicate effectively employee performance is high. In addition, Participant 9 reported that communication opens doors for transparency: "When leaders communicate effectively employee performance is high. I think the outcomes have a major impact on employee performance. When communication is effective and people are harmonious people perform at a higher level." Participant 10 reported the need to understand employees' needs and help them buy into the vision of the organization. The participant indicated that employees need tools to work more efficient as well as a comfortable environment to enhance production.

> Understanding the employees' needs and helping the employees to buy in to the vision of the organization is great. Employees also need tools to make their efforts efficient. I think production would be that much better when people feel like they are in a comfortable environment. They can be professional and still have fun in doing their work.

Participant 11 reported the need for more clarity for buy-in among employees. "More clarity in expectations and more buy-in." Participant 12 reported the need for leaders to build stronger relationships and spending time getting to know and understand employees. "Building stronger relationships and spending time getting to know people

and what is important to them." According to Participant 12, communication promotes transparency thus helping people feel comfortable. "Communication opens doors for transparency which helps people to feel comfortable in who they are and then they are able to exuberate their talents."

Participants from the focus groups contributed to this theme. Generally, participants provided a range of ways through which effective communication among community organization leaders may lead to improved organizational performance. In the first focus group, participants generally contributed to the theme, although their responses were not detailed enough to make sense of the ways through which effective communication affected organizational performance. For instance, participant P1 from the group held that: "Effectiveness in leader communication leads to employees feeling heard and contributing to the health of the company rather than feeling used."

Another participant from this first group also stated as follows: "When the communication is not effective, the relationships dynamic is superficial and unproductive when building the company." Yet another participant from the group contended that "when leaders and employees work together as a team, there is a potential for greatness to develop."

Members of the focus group included slightly more details in their responses while holding the same view that effective communication was essential for improved organizational performance. One participant from the second group stated that effective communication from his leaders drives him to perform even better: "It drives me to perform at a higher level. I am motivated to give more at work and do my best. It affirms

me and I can see that other employees focus more on the organization's goals. It makes me feel like I am a part of the team. I am more apt to do my part to make sure we reach our goals."

When asked to describe whether his leader was an effective communicator, participant P5 agreed that the leader indeed exhibited effective communication skills. This participant added that his leader's effective communication skills motivated him to perform much better. He also mentioned that due to effective communication on the part of his leader, he [P5] avoided many errors that he otherwise would not have avoided if there was ineffective communication: "If you are referring to good leaders, then yes. He is respectful towards his subordinates and they appreciate it. His effective communication is the reason why our organization is successful. I personally feel motivated due to his effective communication, I mean, he makes sure the point is driven home."

Participant P6 acknowledged that organizational performance has improved significantly since communication was heightened. P6 also indicated that due to effective communication, he and his colleagues, together with the leaders, enjoy strong positive relationships that have also contributed to improved organizational performance:

> Performance has definitely improved since communication was heightened. We are fortunate that the environment has been established for us to be a family, thanks to emphasis on communication. Since we continue to develop working relationships, we are able to communicate better. We have to continue working on ways to make our communication better, but our relationships with each other definitely helps.

Participants in the third group also provided a range of ways through which effective communication has affected organizational performance. According to participant P7, for instance, effective communication on the part of his leader helps the team of employees understand their roles in the organizations better:

My leader's communication effectiveness is exemplary. He has a clear and concise way of expressing his thoughts, ideas, and expectations to the team. His ability to communicate effectively helps us stay on task and understand our roles in the organization better.

From participant P8's perspective, organizational performance is closely tied to effective communication from leaders: "Effective communication from a leader is essential for any successful organization." Participant P8 went on to say that his leader is an effective communicator who sometimes exhibits a great sense of humor, which keeps employees motivated even during tough times:

He also has a great sense of humor which helps keep morale high even during challenging times when we are under pressure to meet deadlines or exceed expectations. His ability to lighten the mood with a joke or funny story is invaluable in helping us stay focused on our goals without feeling overwhelmed by stressors that can come with any job role.

Participant P9 described how effective communication from her leaders has led to a significant reduction in workplace conflicts:

There are fewer conflicts between staff members since they know how they should treat one another when disagreements arise; this helps maintain an

efficient workflow which leads directly into better performance from all levels

within an organization. Finally, it creates loyalty among employees who are more

likely stay longer at an employer if they feel respected by management rather than

just another number on payroll sheets.

Participants from the focus group also made their contributions to this fifth theme.

Participant P10 held that leaders who valued members by explaining things clearly were

likely to experience great success: "In my opinion leaders that are effective

communicators, those that value and include the members will experience the greatest

success." Participant P11 also included similar views, holding that inclusion of

subordinates in the communication process motivated them to perform even better:

"When subordinates are included in the process, they will take ownership and be willing

to go extra mile."

Theme 6: Communication Creates a Harmonious Work Environment and Promotes Good Relations Between Leaders and Employees

Three participants described that good relations between leaders and employees

creates harmonious working environment. Participant 1 reported being compassionate

and transparent as well as trusting each other, creates a harmonious work environment.

"I'm strong, focused, compassionate, and transparent. And trust trustworthy. I think we

all have that trust with each other. Thank you." Participant 5 added that good work

relationships contribute to harmonious work environment and promotes good relations

between leaders and employees.

And actually, he's been my supervisor for the last three years. And he requested to keep me on with him. Because we have a good working relationship. So, I can say our communication is pretty good. So we just have a really good working relationship. He's like that with everybody. It's not just me. You know, he's just so yeah, we have that kind of relationship. So again, me and my immediate supervisor, we have a very good working relationship.

Participant 9 also reported that good relationship with leaders can make job enjoyable. "Good relationships with leaders make the job enjoyable."

Three participants highlighted that a harmonious and healthy working environment promotes good relations between leaders and employees. Participant 1 said, "Oh, mood, I would say very positive, and very enthusiastic. A really great mood, I would say. We all we love what we do, and we love the impact that we make on our community." Participant 7 corresponded to Participant 1 by stating that the environment is harmonious which creates stronger relationships:

The environment is harmonious which creates stronger relationships. We are keeping a harmonious environment and culture. When leaders build healthy working relationships, the team feels very comfortable because of that relationship. Our leaders push for a harmonious working environment and they listen to hear not listen to speak. Healthy, respectful and supportive."

According to Participant 8, harmonious environments foster a lot of support and togetherness:

In our close knit environment my leader is easygoing and encouraging. There is a lot of support and togetherness. I would say that the mood is usually a positive vibe and collaborative. Because we have a close knit group we tend to act like a family. You do know that there is no perfect environment; however there are times when relationships are strained not because of communication but because of everyday life. I as well as most employees I've spoken to feel very comfortable. My leaders tend to create or attempt to create a harmonious environment which helps to elevate positive energy in the work culture. A worst time is hard for me to think of. There are always areas of miss-communication but we have been able to work through things. The energy and willingness to get thing done helps us to work through poor communication. My leader's attitude is very pleasant. I believe her energy is what motivates her employees to perform at a higher level.

Summary

The study also explored the attitudes that community leaders have as they interact with community members, and the effect of these attitudes on organizational performance. The study took approximately 4 weeks to complete, which included approximately an hour to an hour and a half long interview and a focus group. The study encompassed 12 participants to make a reasonable generalization of the findings. The interviews and focus group took place in a remote space due to the covid Omicron variant. Each participant was required to complete a consent form to participate in the study. The participants had worked in a community-based organization for at least one

year, and leaders were required to have been in a leadership role for more than three years. Such criterion excluded other participants who may have different perspectives regarding the phenomenon. In-person or virtual interviews were the tool used to provide the data for the study. These were unstructured interviews and there was no formal script to compile the information which may lead to unreliable responses that may contribute to the unreliability of the study findings.

From the findings obtained, employees of the community-based organizations that were included in the study generally look at their leaders as friendly and approachable. The participants also emphasized on the importance of transparency and clarity in communication, and its effect on organizational performance. Lastly, the study explored how relationships between leaders and employees influence the performance levels of community-based organizations. Findings indicate that effective communication generally improves the performance of the organization. The findings also indicated that effective communication creates a harmonious work environment that promotes good relations between leaders and employees. The next chapter will focus on discussion and interpretation of these findings in light of past literature related to the subject. The next chapter will also include practical and theoretical implications as well as recommendations for future research and practice.

The purpose of this qualitative study was to gain a deeper understanding of community based organizational leadership efficiency and how communication effectiveness can affect performance outcomes. In particular, the study explored the experiences community-based organization members have when their leaders are

communicating effectively. It found that when leaders are communicating effectively, employees are likely to feel valued, appreciated, and a part of the company. It was also found that effective communication from leaders makes employees feel comfortable communicating with the leaders and expressing themselves freely.

Bridging the gap to Chapter 5, explains the discussion, conclusion, and recommendations from my investigations. It details the comprehensive analysis of the findings, draws central conclusions, and proposes valuable recommendations that addressed the research objectives. The goal in this section is to make a valuable contribution to the existing data in the field.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

Introduction

The purpose of this qualitative study was to gain a deeper understanding of community-based organizational leadership efficiency and how communication effectiveness can affect performance outcomes. Effective leadership is essential for growth, development, and change (Murray, 2011). There is a constant need for leaders to be trained and equipped with the tools to create other leaders (Puls et al., 2014). The research was important because the results offer solutions or options for community-based organizations to implement in leadership and communication procedures. The outcomes provide opportunities for leaders to build stronger relationships with their teams and increase the organization's productivity. Creswell (2014) suggested that qualitative studies are conducted to answer questions about experiences or perspectives, and the findings are used to gain an understanding of motivations and opinions. This study was conducted in the New York City area, which included participants primarily from New York, New Jersey, and Connecticut.

The data were analyzed using NVivo Version 20 software. The purpose of the analysis was to capture emerging themes. Ranney (2015) mentioned that once themes have been established, they should be coded into assorted categories. The findings established that employees feel valued, appreciated, and part of the organization when leaders communicate effectively. The results revealed that employees feel comfortable communicating with their leaders and expressing themselves freely. However, it was not

clear from the participants' responses whether their level of comfort communicating with leaders was attributed to leaders' effective communication.

The participants generally painted their leaders as having a friendly attitude supplemented with an open-door policy. However, participants contended the need for leaders to exercise transparency and clarity to ensure effective communication. Further, the study findings demonstrate that effective communication generally improves organizational performance and success. However, participants were not specific on how organizational performance and success come about as a result of effective leader communication. Research findings also revealed that effective communication creates a harmonious work environment and promotes good relations between leaders and employees. This harmonious work environment allows an organization to thrive and perform well. In Chapter 5, I present the interpretation of the findings, limitations of the study, recommendations, implications, and a conclusion.

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Interpretation of the Findings

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Emerging Theory

The proposed theory that emerged from the qualitative findings is the effective leadership communication and positive organizational performance theory (ELCPOPT). ELCPOPT holds that effective communication on the part of leaders creates a positive work culture environment that, in turn, leads to positive organizational performance. The theory recognizes the importance of effective communication among leaders, especially in the role it plays in shaping an organization's culture and subsequent performance. The theory is composed of the following major components that represent the underlying

themes obtained in the analysis: (a) effective communication and employees' feelings of appreciation and inclusivity, (b) effective communication and employees' freedom of expression, (c) effective communication and leader approachability/open-door policy, (d) effective communication and transparency and clarity in communication, (e) effective communication and improvement in organizational performance, and (f) effective communication and harmonious work environment.

Effective Communication and Employees' Feelings of Appreciation and Inclusivity

Based on the findings obtained in this study, employees reported that they feel valued, appreciated, and a part of the organization when leaders communicate with them effectively (Theme 1). By communicating effectively to employees, leaders demonstrate how much they value their employees and the contributions they make toward the organization. Employees, in turn, feel that their views, opinions, feedback, and suggestions are heard and taken seriously by their leaders and are likely to be more engaged and committed to the company. Thus, effective communication with employees leads to overall positive performance of the organization.

Effective Communication and Employees' Freedom of Expression

As the second theme indicates, when leaders communicate effectively, employees feel comfortable expressing themselves in the workplace. The ELCPOPT theory recognizes that effective communication is a two-way process in which not just leaders are expected to communicate. Employees are also given the opportunity to air their views, opinions, and suggestions freely without fearing retribution from leaders. This

results in a positive workplace environment that fosters better organizational performance.

Effective Communication and Leader Approachability/Open-Door Policy

The third theme is related to the second theme. In the third theme, participants described experiences in which leaders demonstrated an open-door policy with a friendly and approachable attitude. This attitude from their leaders allowed employees to express themselves freely. This theme is consistent with ELCPOPT, which describes the importance of effective leader communication for organizational performance. When leaders are friendly and approachable, they are likely to encourage employees to share their thoughts, ideas, and concerns freely.

Effective Communication and Transparency and Clarity in Communication

The fourth theme identified transparency and clarity in communication as the key indicators of effective communication among leaders. Transparency allows employees to have a clear picture of any changes occurring in the organization, allowing them to adjust their approaches to assigned tasks accordingly. Clarity, on the other hand, allows leaders to relay messages and instructions in a way that is easily understandable to employees. Maintaining transparency and clarity helps prevent miscommunication, misunderstandings, and confusion, which may cause unnecessary delays in decision making and resource wastage. This theme is thus consistent with ELCPOPT as it demonstrates how clarity and transparency, which are aspects of effective communication, lead to positive organizational performance.

Effective Communication and Improvement in Organizational Performance

There was a general perception among participants that effective communication improves organizational performance. Some participants mentioned specific ways positive organizational performance comes about as a result of effective communication, while other responses were more general. Effective communication aligns employees with the goals, vision, and mission of the organization, which increases chances of organizational success.

Effective Communication and Harmonious Work Environment

Effective communication by leaders can create a harmonious work environment and good relations between leaders and employees. When leaders communicate effectively, they build trust with employees, leading to a positive work culture and good relations among leaders and employees. This can help to improve employee engagement and organizational performance.

RQ1: What Types of Experiences Do Community-Based Organization Members Have When Leaders Are Communicating Effectively?

The findings demonstrated that communication makes employees feel valued, appreciated, and part of the organization. The participants indicated that employees are treated equally regardless of their level. Treating employees equally makes them feel valued by seeing the value and being rewarded as needed for their efforts as well as performance. Three participants indicated that leaders appreciate and value employees in the company and that togetherness' makes people feel valued and appreciated. The team working together and support from the leaders makes employees feel valued and

appreciated by treating them like they are a part of the company and given the authority

to make decisions. The results imply that effective communication from leaders creates

trust and commitment through appreciation, teamwork, and feeling valued as part of the

company.

The findings are consistent with the previous studies. Sipe and Frick (2015)

reported that communication becomes effective when team members know and

understand when they are valued, appreciated, and recognized. Understanding and

communication among leaders are also needed for high levels of performance in the

company (Sipe & Frick, 2015). Good listeners should be empathetic and understand

when using verbal and nonverbal language. Thereby promoting effective communication

which can encourage employee commitment and teamwork contributing to enhanced

results (Storsletten & Jakobsen, 2015). Organizational ethics indicates top leaders should

act as role models by demonstrating ethical leadership, before requiring employees to

engage in ethical work behaviors (Shin et al., 2015).

Although current findings indicated that effective communication from leaders

creates trust and commitment through appreciation resulting in improved performance,

previous research demonstrates that servant leaders are more likely to achieve results

when they make those who they serve a priority (Amah, 2015). Being able to identify and

solve problems leads to rewards or success among employees thereby resulting in

positive organizational performance and success. Setting goals through effective

communication will have more meaning and keeps the team motivated to achieve a

higher level of results (Rohr, 2013). Consistent with current study findings, prior research

highlighted that a leader can promote and foster growth by transforming people through the organization's culture including effective communication that enhances togetherness and commitment among employees (Fehr et al., 2014). It is important to track progress and mapping is a tool that can help leaders understand the environment and influence followers by creating a harmonious working environment that makes employees feel appreciated and valued as part of the company goals.

The thematic data analysis revealed that effective communication makes employees feel comfortable communicating with their leaders and can freely express themselves because their leaders are friendly and approachable. The results imply that employees need to be comfortable with communicating their feelings freely to the leaders after having developed a friendship and healthy relationship at work and can even speak outside of work. Consistent with the present study findings, previous research indicates that effective communication from leaders incorporates a comprehensive model for improving company performance through leaders being friendly and approachable so employees feel comfortable communicating with them (Mishra et al., 2014). In contrast, past studies contradicted the study findings by establishing that being engaged and understanding employees need to catalyze company progression (Yiğit & Bozkurt, 2017). Leadership that is progressive and successful tends to involve employees in the planning process through effective communication (Yiğit & Bozkurt, 2017).

Though the findings indicate that providing equal treatment to employees makes them feel valued and rewarded as needed for their efforts, previous research opined that leaders would benefit from building a professional relationship with their teams while

helping them to provide the best service possible to the organization (Hong et al., 2016). These relationships contribute to the ethical framework, and behaviors displayed and empower the team thereby creating a comfortable working environment in which employees are free to communicate with the leaders (Yuan et al., 2010). When leaders are communicating, they incorporate persuasive gestures to help influence employee behavior and attitudes (Hong et al., 2016). Servant leaders should listen to their teams for ideas as well as suggestions. This level of communication helps to create healthy organizations that view people with a higher value and propose the mindset of development (Yuan et al., 2010). Leaders begin to understand the value people add or what they bring to the table when they are open to listening and creating an autonomous working environment because employees feel comfortable having the autonomy to complete the task with limited supervision with no micromanagement thereby improving company success. While previous research provided limited results regarding the effects of effective communication on performance outcomes, the current study findings have added to prior research by establishing that effective communication improves employee relationships with leaders and performance results.

RQ2: What Are the Attitudes of Community Leaders as They Interact With the Community Members and What Are the Effects on Performance Outcomes?

Leaders' engagement and payment of close attention to employees result in enhanced performance outcomes. The results indicated that such engagement is a result of leaders who are engaging and approachable to the employees. The findings revealed that leaders push for a harmonious working environment that makes employees feel very

comfortable because of their work relationship. Encouraging, flexible, and more approachable leadership through effective communication promotes positive performance outcomes in the organization. Four participants reported open door policy made their leaders friendly and approachable in the organization. The findings imply that leaders who are approachable with an open-door policy by engaging and encouraging employees through effective communication contribute to improved organizational success and outcome.

Study findings are consistent with the previous studies regarding community leaders and interaction with community members and its effect on performance outcomes. Previous research demonstrated that effective communication influences the outcomes of leaders (Ruben et al., 2016). Leaders' levels of social influence may be seen as leverage as opposed to limitations when it comes to being an example for others as a result of the need to know how to recognize, capture, and resolve these limitations including creating a positive relationship with community members (Ruben et al., 2016). While the current study indicates a positive relationship with employees through effective communication leads to positive performance outcomes, past research reveals that the dynamic of the leader-follower relationship is affected by the setting in which the message is being relayed (Ruben et al., 2016). Leaders have a responsibility to be ethical and practice good business ethics (Yazdani & Murad, 2015). Such includes enhancing the conduct and interactions they have with others such as employees to promote positive performance outcomes through an open-door policy encouraging communication and approachability of leaders by the employees (Yazdani & Murad, 2015).

Leaders should be concerned about the well-being of their followers and build interpersonal relationships along the journey. Honesty, empowerment, and transparency are a part of the collective actions needed for successful results in organizations (Hoffman & Shipper, 2018). These behaviors coincide with the current study findings which established that leaders push for a harmonious working environment that makes employees feel very comfortable because of positive relationships with their leaders. When leaders establish strong relationships, they harness a more strategic and creative environment. A part of communication includes empowering employees and the team by providing autonomy, and encouragement and creating positive work relations with subordinates in organizations through effective communication (Endacotta et al., 2017). As a result, effective communication also builds trust and empowers members to make a substantial contribution to their work (Etowa & Debs-Ivall, 2017).

Leaders tend to build on the inherent strengths of the workgroup to rely on the organization's positive performance trends. Members of the group have perceptions influencing interpersonal communication and building on workplace relationships thereby leading to improved organizational performance outcomes (Bakar & Sheer, 2013). Similar to current study findings, prior research established that servant leaders are responsible for elevating the morale of the team, thereby affecting their overall performance. These leaders believe in employee-centered growth and focus on engaging members to use their potential to excel in their roles (Campion & Bond, 2018). Campion and Bond (2018) added in cases when team members are influenced by their leaders, their behavior reflects their interactions and learning. Although Charas (2015) agreed

with the current study findings, the researcher established that when servant leaders are polite, they have better relationships with their team members and that these actions have the potential to bring about change and productivity. When positive communication is exchanged, team members interact positively with each other which can affect performance (Charas, 2015).

Study findings confirmed that transparency on the side of leaders results in improved organizational performance through effective communication. As a result, leaders should be transparent enough to allow others who are informed and educated to do the same to improve productivity in the department. The findings concur with past study findings which reveal that transparency and open communication are critical for leaders, more specifically for ethical leaders resulting in improved performance (Yazdani & Murad, 2015). Although transparency enhances organizational performance, some leaders may be friendly but lack effective communication. However, the findings demonstrated that clarity in communication particularly from leaders may lead to effective communication thereby making employees move in one accord and feel responsible for the company's success. However, inconsistent with current study findings, previous research demonstrates that the well-being of the team affects their performance (Bouckenooghe et al., 2015). The responses from the team show the success and efficiency of instruction with the clarity of communication significant for performance (Lynch & Friedman, 2013).

Concurring with current study results, past studies reveal that open and effective communication makes team members the security of feeling that others have their back

since the efforts of support start at the leadership level. In this regard, leaders should be

fair in their roles and should lead by example (Lynch & Friedman, 2013). Being aware of

their position and power should be a conscious practice as leaders consider their

decisions and how they make decisions (Wang & Zhu, 2010). Wang et al. (2014)

indicated leaders should be accountable and empower those they lead through effective

communication and encouragement. Leaders focus should be consistent on goal-oriented

tasks (Lynch & Friedman, 2013). One of the research gaps was the viewpoint or

perception of the team in their comprehension of instruction or communication tactics in

servant leaders (Baker et al., 2016). The findings have filled this gap and added to the

previous research by establishing that clear-cut communication, particularly from leaders

may lead to effective communication thereby making employees move in one accord and

feel responsible for the company's success.

RQ3: How Do Relationships Between Leaders and Employees Influence the Performance Levels for Organizational Outcomes?

The findings demonstrated that effective communication results in improved

organizational performance and success. Positive organizational performance was

attributed to effective communication with employees such as strong work relations and

leaders' value to employees, which improves organizational performance. The

participants highlighted that creating a strong relationship with employees by treating

subordinates positively can result in improved organizational performance. Strong

relations lead to higher productivity among employees thereby resulting in improved

organizational performance and success. Research findings imply that creating a strong

working relationship through effective communication enhances performance outcomes in the company. The findings concur with past research which reveals that effective communication offers opportunities for growth and building healthy working relationships between leaders and employees leading to improved performance outcomes (Puls et al., 2014). The ultimate success comes when leaders can build stronger relationships and increase their organization's productivity and that monumental output comes from leaders creating, training, and equipping other leaders to execute effectively (Dinh et al., 2014; Puls et al., 2014).

While strong relations lead to higher productivity among employees thereby resulting in improved organizational performance and success, earlier research posited that effective communication has a focus on social influence from a global perspective, connecting the relationship between teams and leadership (Tourish, 2014). Since leadership reflects an individual's approach to how they influence others, their contribution to leading incorporates strategies to achieve goals by practicing the habits of effective leadership (Tourish, 2014). However, current findings contradict Collyer (2016) who revealed that communication alters the behavior and attitudes of others to meet the group's needs and goals. If a leader is not understood in their form of communication, they are less likely to establish efficient outcomes (Collyer, 2016).

Further, the results demonstrated that a leader's style of communication affects the performance of employees. However, feeling uncomfortable results from the lack of communication or ineffective communication among leaders. Leaders with effective communication lead to improved organizational success because communication keeps

employees informed. Concurring with current study findings, past research highlights that ineffective leadership can increase expenses and create other negative consequences for an organization, thereby affecting the work environment and performance outcomes (Hong et al., 2016). However, it behooves the organization's leadership to be consistent in bringing ideas and talent together through effective communication because effective leadership is the basis for growth, development, and change in organizational performance outcomes (Murray, 2011).

The findings highlighted that leaders' style of communication impact performance outcomes. Alkaabi and Wong (2019) demonstrated that organizational success outcomes revolve around effective communication and building healthy working. Through effective communication, leaders can inspire and motivate the behavior of employees to perform at a higher level (Mishra et al., 2014). One of the keys is the decisive actions of decisions that support the organization's vision and meets the employee's professional needs thereby resulting in improved performance outcomes. The findings have contributed to the previous studies by establishing that leaders that use effective communication skill, leads to improved organizational success because communication keeps employees informed.

Limitations of the Study

This qualitative research was limited because of the participants, who were mainly from the tri-state area of New York, New Jersey, and Connecticut. These northerners may have different experiences or opinions than individuals in other regions of the United States of America. Besides, many organizations operate under the auspices

of a standard set of rules and regulations. The dynamics of what was expected were not always forthcoming or could not embrace an inclusive process, including those affected by the decision when the decision was made. Due to the quarantine and pandemic-related barriers, there were restrictions for in-person interviews. The outcomes were limited to the experiences the participants faced.

Recommendations for Future Research

The theory that emerged in this research was ELCPOPT. This theory posits that effective communication by leaders leads to a positive work culture and overall positive organizational performance. The theory recognizes that communication is a crucial component of leadership and that it plays a significant role in shaping the culture of an organization. Researchers should consider using ELCPOPT to investigate how healthy working relationships, create an environment to sustain a more productive working environment and implement positive communication strategies in organizations. The findings revealed that a healthy working environment creates a positive relationship and hence improved performance outcomes through effective communication. The prior research's review established the demand for further research, which may result in developing theories. As per the theory, effective communication by leaders can create a harmonious work environment and good relations between leaders and employees. When leaders communicate effectively, they build trust with employees, leading to positive work culture and good relations between leaders and employees. This can help to improve employee engagement and organizational performance by investigating how this theory may enhance effective communication in organizations. As a result, future studies

should be conducted using ELCPOPT to determine whether it can help in improving

effective communication and organizational performance in organizations.

Communication creates a harmonious work environment and good relations

between leaders and employees. The emerging theory in this study states that effective

communication by leaders leads to positive work culture and overall positive

organizational performance. In this regard, the researchers recommend that future studies

should be conducted using this study theory to understand how effective communication

promotes organizational performance.

Study findings revealed that transparency and clarity in communication are

crucial components of effective communication. As per ELCPOPT, when leaders

communicate clearly and transparently, they build trust with employees, leading to a

better understanding of organizational goals and objectives. This, in turn, can help to

improve organizational performance. The theory can be used by other researchers to

develop more theories or improve on this current theory and how effective

communication can improve organizational performance. Therefore, there is a need for

further research to investigate how ELCPOPT can be used to enhance organizational

performance.

Implications

Implications for Positive Social Change

The findings identified in this study may help organizations, their leaders, and

those connected with community-based organizations to recognize the effects of

communication. Local churches and other non-profits that expressed interest in

participating in the study may use this study's findings. Organization 1 is one of the oldest youth basketball leagues in the United States. Their mission is to improve the lives of the youth and create positive alternatives to the streets.

Tanno and Banner (2018) described the community as being an extension of the family. Success will resemble positive changes that affect the community through the contribution the community-based organizations make. Leaders govern the possibilities to initiate and maintain positive social change through service. Service is a part of the behaviors that influence how things get done. The effects on the community are limitless when an organization can effectively offer goods or services as a resource. Also, positive social change influences moral practices, performance, and reliability. Social change is the noteworthy variations over time of patterns in the behavior of cultural values (Tanno & Banner, 2018). These changes occur through relationships and human interactions.

This project's results may be able to offer changes in organizational systems, relationships, and team performance. With the appropriate change plans, organizations can systematically organize techniques of productivity through effective communication. Levels of human potential may be recognized by incorporating the results into an organization's culture as another layer of positive social change. Tanno and Banner (2018) discovered organizations that practice organizational change tend to experience positive social change. This study will contribute to positive social change by demonstrating the benefits of healthy working relationships between leaders and their organization's members resulting in positive performance outcomes.

Theoretical Implications

The theory emerging from this research was ELCPOPT. The theory states that effective communication among leaders contributes to positive work culture and overall positive organizational performance. This theory recognizes that communication is an important element of leadership and it plays a significant role in shaping the culture of organizations. The implication is that effective communication by leaders creates a sense of inclusivity among employees. When employees feel valued, appreciated, and part of the company, they are more likely to be committed to their work, be productive, and contribute to the overall success of the organization. This, in turn, can improve organizational performance. The theory emphasizes the importance of leaders being approachable and having an open-door policy in place through effective communication. When leaders are friendly, approachable, and open to communication, they create a culture that encourages employees to share their thoughts, ideas, and concerns freely. This can help foster a culture of collaboration and innovation, leading to improved organizational performance.

Leaders should be able to make decisions, communicate well, adapt to change, and support others in achieving goals (Gordon et al., 2018). Leadership is not limited to those in administrative roles but to any level of an organization. In leadership roles, one of the most important components of success is communication (Gordon et al., 2018). The dynamics of communication revolve around how individuals give and receive information (Key et al., 2018).

When communication is effectively exchanged the message becomes clearer and the potential for effective work is reachable (Key et al., 2018). The findings contribute to the theory by establishing that leaders with effective communication create a positive relationship with employees thereby enhancing performance outcomes. A positive image, reputation, and identity are tools useful to avoid interpersonal conflict in organizations through effective communication (Livstrom et al., 2018). Effective communication from leaders incorporates a comprehensive model for improving performance. The results can be enriched by theoretical ideas derived from ELCPOPT to improve professional development for members of the organization. The theory recognizes that effective communication is a two-way process. Leaders must not only be effective communicators, but they must also create an environment where employees feel comfortable communicating with them. This can include providing avenues for feedback, being approachable and listening actively to employees. The implication of this theory is that when employees are comfortable communicating with their leaders, they can express themselves freely, which can lead to better decision-making and problem-solving within the organization.

When leaders communicate effectively, they create a positive work culture, leading to increased employee engagement, productivity, and innovation. Effective communication also helps to align employees with the organization's goals and objectives, leading to improved overall organizational performance. The findings have resulted in the development of ELCPOPT, thus adding to the body of knowledge and theories regarding effective communication and organizational performance.

Conclusion

The purpose of this qualitative study was to get a deeper understanding of community-based organizational leadership efficiency and how communication effectiveness can affect performance outcomes. The research was important because the results offer solutions and options for community-based organizations to implement in leadership and communication procedures. The study results provide opportunities for leaders to build stronger relationships and increase the organization's productivity. When employees feel comfortable communicating with their leaders, they express themselves freely. Research findings contended the need for leaders to exercise transparency and clarity to ensure effective communication. Effective communication creates a harmonious work environment and promotes good relations between leaders and employees. It was this harmonious work environment that allows the organization to thrive and perform well. There is a need for more qualitative studies to be conducted to further establish the relationship between effective communication and performance outcomes.

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Appendix A: Letter of Invitation to Participate in the Study

Dear Community Professional,

Your participation is being requested to partake in a research study to examine how effective communication affects employees' performance in community-based organizations. You have been selected because of your role in a community-based organization.

This study will be conducted by Troy Nicholas, a doctoral candidate in the School of Psychology at Walden University. I am requesting your contribution to this study by sharing your experience and insight by answering various interviews.

The study's outcomes are valuable to the community-based organizations and those who work or plan to work, and these types of institutions will benefit from the results.

Your participation in this study is voluntary, and there is no compensation for participating. The information that you provide will be kept confidential and anonymous. You will be asked to sign a standard consent form to confirm you are clear on your participation in the study.

Your participation will be much appreciated. If you have any questions, I can be reached at 347-773-XXXX.

Thank you in advance for considering your participation.

Best,

Troy

Appendix B: Consent Form

(Left blank intentionally)

Appendix C: Interview Questions

Thank you for participating this study. My name is Troy N. Nicholas, I am an

Industrial Organizational psychology doctoral candidate at Walden University. The

purpose of the study is to grasp how relationships affect communication and work

performance. Please give me a brief description of yourself and your background.

Preliminary Questions:

What is your current job designation and your role?

Who do you report to?

What department are you currently working in or have you had experience in?

How long have you been associated with your current organization?

1. How would you describe your leader's communication effectiveness?

2. How comfortable are you with expressing how you feel with your leaders? (please explain)

3. Tell me about one of the best/worst experiences you have had when it came to communicating?

4. Do you feel you are informed and your leaders are transparent with information or instructions? (please explain)

5. How would you describe your leader's attitude toward employees? (please explain)

6. What is the mood or attitude of your organization's community? (please explain)

7. How would you rate the performance of your teams? (please explain)

8. What do you think would help with employee performance? (please explain)

9. How comfortable are you with communicating with leaders? (please explain)

10. How would you describe your relationship with your leaders? (please explain)

11. How often does your organization have social activates?

12. What percentage of employees attend these events?

13. Are your leaders accessible for conversations and support? (please explain)

14. Do your leaders have an open door policy or a gate keeper?(please explain)

15. Can you think of a situation(s) where you felt communication was not good or could have been better?

16. What would you suggest to improve communication?

17. If communication was better, how much more productive do you think you and your colleagues might be? (please explain)

18. How do you think your leader's communication affect employee performance?

Is there anything you would like to add?

Thank you for your contribution.

Appendix D: Interview Protocol

A. The interview session will begin with acknowledgements and an introduction of myself and the research participant. We will also discuss the research topic.

B. I will thank the participant for accepting the invitation to participate.

C. I will give the participant and opportunity to ask questions concerning the interview or the research topic before signing the consent form.

D. I will have copies of the consent form available for the participants records.

E. I will turn on the tape recorder, and notate the date, time, and location of the interview.

F. I will code the participant sequentially by interpreting the participant's name, e.g., 'Participant 1', This will be documented on the original consent form before the beginning of each interview.

G. The duration of each interview should last approximately 60 minutes for responses to the interview questions, including any additional follow-up questions.

H. I will inform the participant regarding the review of the interview report after transcription for accuracy and member checking.

I. After the interview, I will thank the research participant participating in the research study.

Appendix E: Focus Group Questions

How do you think you have interacted or participated in communication exchanges with your leadership?

What are ways of creating a stronger community of clearer communication?

What factors are most important to you in building healthy relationships in your organization?

What are practices that could facilitate clearer communication ties through your organization?

What would you consider a critical part of developing strong working relationships?

Appendix F: Focus Group Protocol

A. The focus group will begin with me introducing myself and explain why we are here. I will also review the research topic and the expectations of the group.

B. I will thank the participant for accepting the invitation to participate.

C. I will give the participant and opportunity to ask questions concerning the interview or the research topic before signing the consent form.

D. I will have copies of the consent form available for the participants records.

E. I will turn on the tape recorder, and notate the date, time, and location of the interview.

F. I will code the participant sequentially by interpreting the participant's name, e.g., GM (group member) 1, This will be documented on the original consent form before the beginning of the focus group.

G. The duration of the focus group should last approximately 90 minutes for responses to the questions, including any follow-up questions.

H. I will reiterate contact information for any follow up questions.

I. Address any questions or concerns.

J. After the focus group, I will thank the research participant participating in the research study.

Appendix G: Organization Agreement

This agreement is a request for your organization to participating in a study led by Troy N. Nicholas a doctoral student at Walden University. The study was created to better understand Community Based Organizations Leaders Communication Effectiveness
and its Effects on Performance Outcomes.

Your organization was selected, however it is not required to participate and may opt out at any time. If at any point you no longer wish to participate, please inform the researcher (Troy N. Nicholas – 347-773-XXXX or troy.nicholas@waldenu.edu). You will not receive payment or compensation for your organizations participation. We are asking you to perform duties associated with your participation in this study, gratuitously and without expectation of payment or any other form of compensation. The identity of your organization and its participants will be masked in the data collection and recruitment process.

We will request a point person that will not participate in the study to act as a coordinator for any communications or to ensure internal policies are upheld. The researcher will take appropriate precautions to protect your privacy, as well has the privacy of the participants.

This agreement is between the "organization" and Troy Nicholas (researcher) for the "organization" to participate in this research project. The "organization" is allowing its employees to participate in the research project. Please read this agreement carefully before signing. If you have any questions, I can be reached at:
Researcher - Troy N. Nicholas – 347-773-XXXX or troy.nicholas@waldenu.edu

_____
Date

_____
Organization's Decision maker

_____
Institutional Title