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# A Study of How Leadership in a Nonprofit Organization Can Create a Positive Workplace Culture

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Katrina Coffman

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Walden University
2024

Abstract

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MA, Walden University, 2012

M.Ed, Southeastern Oklahoma State University, 2000

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Professional Administrative Study Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Public Administration

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May 2024

Abstract

Negative workplace culture can occur in any organization, but one nonprofit organization had experienced a negative workplace culture for many years according to information obtained from employees. Creating a positive workplace culture is critical to organizations to ensure long-term sustainability. The purpose of this qualitative study was to explore the strategies the leadership of a nonprofit organization implemented to create a positive workplace culture. A review of literature indicated that different leadership styles could have an impact on organizational culture. By learning about the culture in another nonprofit organization, the leadership of the nonprofit organization involved in this Professional Administrative Study could determine best practices to create a positive workplace culture. The competing values framework was used to analyze the culture of a nonprofit organization that had been known to have a positive workplace culture. Interviews were conducted with nine employees from this nonprofit organization to determine how the organization had achieved a positive workplace culture. Findings from coding and thematic analysis indicated the need for leadership to be completely invested in a culture change, listen to feedback from employees, and provide better training to employees through a learning management system. Findings may be used for positive social change by program administrators to better serve their employees.

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Dedication

This professional administrative study is dedicated to my father, Willie Carol Coffman. As he neared the end of his life, he asked me to promise him that I would go as far as I could in my education so that I could better support myself, my son, and any other children I may have. Because of this promise and the strong drive to succeed that my father instilled in me, I was able to obtain a bachelor's degree, two master's degrees, and finally a doctoral degree. My education has allowed me to raise my children to successful adulthood.

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Section 1: Introduction to the Problem

A nonprofit organization in suffered from a negative workplace culture for many years. Employees of the organization stated they felt they could easily have been fired without cause. Employees stated they felt unappreciated and undervalued. This study was based on a positive cultural change needed in a nonprofit organization. A negative culture environment existed in the nonprofit organization. According to Marmo and Berkman (2018), employees' perception of leadership affects workplace culture. Employees at the organization stated they felt like the leadership did not care about them. The current study provided information that could assist leadership in the nonprofit organization in making positive cultural changes. These positive changes could have a positive impact on employees as well as a positive fiscal impact on the organization. The information gained from the study could allow the organization to understand practices that create negative and positive workplace culture and best practices for positive workplace culture, is critical to social change (Shier & Handy, 2016). Positive workplace culture yields happier and more productive employees, which can increase productivity (Marmo & Berkman, 2018). This section of the study covers the background of the organization, the problem statement, the purpose of the paper, a summary of the data sources and analysis, definitions of significant terms in the study, the significance of the study, and a summary of the section.

**Organization Background and Problem Statement**

The nonprofit organization was established in 1958. The organization's leadership team consists of a CEO, chief compliance officer, vice presidents, directors, and

managers. The CEO is supervised by a board of directors that consists of leadership from the communities the organization serves. The organization is a branch of another nonprofit organization and pays monthly dues to that organization. The organization employs 350 individuals, with 86% of those individuals having some type of disability or disadvantage. The organization accepts donations of clothing and household items. The organization then sells these items to generate revenue. The organization's focus is helping individuals live more productive lives through training and employment.

The nonprofit organization regularly surveys its employees and provides exit surveys to employees who are leaving the organization. According to employee surveys and exit surveys, there was evidence of a negative workplace culture. Workplace culture is shaped by previous and present events and by social and cultural circumstances (Spencer & Skalaban, 2017). Surveys conducted over the last several years indicated employees felt they had been verbally abused and they were not appreciated. Grievance forms that were submitted to human resources indicated employees had been ridiculed, vacation had been denied, unreasonable demands had been placed on them, and they had been intimidated by management. According to Erdurmazh (2019), employees feel there is a negative workplace culture when there is inconsistency in leadership; and organizational values, and when leadership shows a lack of organizational commitment.

Because of the reports of mistreatment and negative culture, the CEO hired new leadership to create a positive cultural environment. After the new leadership was hired, the vice president of human resources was replaced, the vice president of operations was replaced, the vice president of workforce development was replaced, the vice president of

donated goods retail was replaced, and many directors and managers were replaced.
Changes were made and plans implemented to make the culture more positive and to
make employees feel valued by management. Changes were made to ensure employees
were being treated with kindness and respect.

Despite the changes over the last 4 years, there continued to be a perception of a
negative workplace culture. Employee surveys, both yearly and exit surveys, continued to
show dissatisfaction with employment and services. Some managers and directors
reported employees would cry and fear they would lose their jobs over minor mistakes.
Based on verbal reports and employee surveys, the workplace culture continued to be
negative. Leadership in the organization had a fervent desire to change the workplace
culture to a positive culture. Many factors contributed to this problem, among which was
continued negative view of leadership, not understanding policies and procedures, lack of
cohesiveness between hourly employees and leadership, and work environment. The
study contributed to the body of knowledge needed to address the problem by studying
the culture in another nonprofit organization.

**Purpose**

The practice-focused research question for this study was what strategies can the
leadership of a nonprofit organization implement to create a positive workplace culture?
The purpose of this qualitative case study was to determine what strategies can be used to
create a positive workplace culture. The leadership of the nonprofit wanted the
organization to be a wonderful place for everyone involved with the organization.
According to Langer and LeRoi (2017), organizational culture is impacted by positive,

supportive leadership. Spence, et al. (2014) indicated strong, supportive, and positive leadership in nonprofit organizations can make a difference. The results of the current study indicated that for an organization to have a positive workplace culture, the organization must have leadership that is committed to changing the culture and that is modeling the new culture. The organization must be willing to listen to employees and consider feedback received from employees. The organization must be willing to invest in their employees through events and a learning management system. This study allowed the leadership of the nonprofit organization to understand how to create a positive cultural change.

<div align="center">**Summary of Data Sources and Analysis**</div>

The study was a qualitative study with a case study design. Data were collected through a case study methodology. The case study was conducted with employees and leadership of another nonprofit organization. The nonprofit organization where the study was conducted was known for its positive workplace culture. I traveled to the nonprofit organization and conducted research interviews with nine different employees. The employees were from various positions in the organization, and all of the employees had worked for the organization for at least 2 years. After the interviews were conducted and the recordings were transcribed, an analysis was conducted to determine themes, trends, and patterns. A written discussion of the results was included. The competing values framework was used to analyze the results. The competing values framework also provided information to formulate the questions that were used in the interviews to

produce deliverables to the organization. This information may be used by the partner organization to make changes that will promote a positive workplace culture.

## Definitions

Clarification of a few terms used in the study was needed. The organization in the study is a nonprofit organization that assists individuals with disabilities and disadvantages through the power of training and work.

*Board of directors*: A governing body of a for-profit or nonprofit organization (Langer & LeRoux, 2017).

*Chief compliance officer (CCO)*: A corporate executive in charge of the organization's accreditation, safety, and insurance compliance (Shier & Handy, 2016).

*Chief executive officer (CEO)*: A corporate executive in charge of managing an organization (Shier & Handy, 2016).

*Competing values framework*: A connection between organizational success and activity and organizational culture (Mehmet & Hakan, 2018).

*Stakeholder*: A person with a stake or interest in a business or organization (Rukh & Qadeer, 2018).

*Workplace culture*: The characteristics of an organization (Rukh & Qadeer, 2018).

## Significance

For the nonprofit organization to have a successful future, there needed to be an understanding of the perceptions and experiences of leadership and employees for there to be a positive cultural change. Organizations need to examine their workplace culture to determine why employees feel the culture is positive or negative (Milbourn et al., 2019).

The current study yielded findings that could be instrumental in making positive changes in the nonprofit organization. The findings could lead to training for leadership that would create positive cultural change. Reports of a negative workplace culture affected the production of donations and the sales of the donated goods. These negative effects affected the overall financial well-being of the organization. The reports of negative workplace culture at the organization also affected the organization's image in the communities the organization served. Workplace culture needed to be positive to ensure long-term success for the organization.

There were many potential implications to this study. The results of this study could impact other nonprofit organizations by allowing them to have information on how to create a positive workplace environment. Findings could also help leadership of other organizations understand the actions and workplace environments that create a negative workplace culture. Numerous stakeholders could be affected by this study, including employees, customers, members of local communities, and board members.

By understanding how to create a positive workplace culture, organizations could better meet the needs of employees. When workplace culture is positive, and employees are more content and happier at work, then positive social change could be created. When employees are content and positive at work, then their home life has a chance of being more positive.

## Summary

Section 1 covered the introduction to the problem, the organization background and problem statement, the purpose of the study, the summary of data sources and

analysis, and definitions. There was a problem in a nonprofit organization. The problem involved a negative workplace culture in the organization. Information was needed to determine why, despite efforts to change the culture of the organization, there was still a perceived negative workplace culture. Information was also needed regarding how to change a negative workplace culture into a positive workplace culture. The purpose of the study was to determine what changes could be implemented to create a positive workplace culture. This qualitative case study was important not only to the specific nonprofit organization but also to create positive social change in other organizations. Studies defined different leadership styles and how these styles affect workplace culture. However, there were few studies on how to change workplace culture when strong efforts from leadership have failed to change that culture. Section 2 provides an introduction, literature search strategy conceptual framework of the study, literature review of the study, and a summary of the section.

Section 2: Conceptual Approach and Background

There was a negative workplace culture in a nonprofit organization. The negative workplace culture had a negative impact on the processing of donations. According to surveys, employees felt they had no incentive to meet their production because they were not appreciated. Employees felt they did not need to treat donated goods with respect because leadership did not care. Production was negatively affected, and this affected revenue. Current and previous employees stated through surveys and exit surveys that they could easily have been fired without cause, and they felt unappreciated and undervalued. Employees and former employees stated they did not feel leadership cared about them. The purpose of this qualitative case study was to determine how the leadership in the organization can create a positive workplace environment. The central research question for this study was the following, "What strategies can the leadership of a nonprofit organization implement to create positive workplace culture?." Section 2 includes the literature search strategy, conceptual framework, literature review for the study, and a summary.

**Literature Search Strategy**

I had firsthand knowledge of the negative culture in the partner organization. I reviewed current and previous employee surveys for the organization and talked with several employees about their perception of the organization's culture. From the surveys and through the perceptions of the culture, I knew the culture needed to be changed in the organization. I used the Walden University Library to research peer-reviewed articles and studies published in professional journals, including Academy of Management Journal,

Journal of Business Ethics, Voluntas, Healthcare Financial Management, Implementation Science, Public Performance & Management Review, International Journal of Public Leadership, Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health, Journal of Social Work in End-of-Life & Palliative Care, Journal of Social Science, Journal of Applied Psychology, British Journal of Management, Journal of Progressive Human Sciences, and Journal of Industrial Engineering and Management. The journal articles found at the Walden University Library allowed me to develop the research question for the study and to review literature on organizational culture. The key search terms were "*organizational culture*, *nonprofit organizational culture*, *positive organizational culture*, *negative organizational culture*, and *leadership in organizational culture*." I spent 2 years researching my topic while completing my course work. I used peer-reviewed journal articles in the study. I searched for information regarding nonprofit organizations and culture.

## Conceptual Framework

The competing values framework was the conceptual framework that was used for this study. The competing values framework was used to determine organizational culture and to determine the quality of improvement implementation processes, employee satisfaction, and other outcomes (Landekic et al., 2015). The leadership of a nonprofit organization desired to have a positive culture to remain competitive and to be sustainable long term. Culture can be affected by leadership effectiveness, whether the organization is values driven, the integrity of the organization, stakeholder balance, and long-term perspective of the employees and other stakeholders (Craft, 2018). Based on

employees' perceptions and experience, using the competing values framework in nonprofit organizations can improve the workplace culture in an organization. Research indicated that when organizations are person centered and employees feel supported and valued, a positive culture can be achieved (Craft, 2018). Craft (2018) also indicated that to reach a positive workplace culture, the organization must show sustainability as well as growth along with trustworthy strategic changes. A case study methodology was used to examine the culture of a nonprofit organization that was known for a positive workplace culture throughout the nonprofit network and through surveys completed by their employees.

The leadership of a nonprofit organization desired to have a strong organization with a positive workplace culture to be sustainable and highly competitive. Based on employees' perceptions and experiences, using the competing values framework in nonprofit organizations can improve the workplace culture in an organization. Culture can be defined as a collective achievement of groups of people (Landekic et al., 2015). Organizational culture can be defined as the culture that involves values and behaviors that are associated with the social and psychological environment of the business (Landekic et al., 2015). The competing values framework involves the relationship between the organizational culture and the success and activities of the organization (Helfrich et al., 2007). The current study investigated the site organization's culture to provide another nonprofit organization with strategies to implement positive culture change.

The competing values framework measures organizational culture (Helfrich et al., 2007). The competing values framework was appropriate for the current study because the framework deals with leadership and management (Lindquist & March 2016). The competing values framework can increase personal and organizational self-awareness (Lindquist & March, 2016). This personal and organizational self-awareness is critical to create a positive workplace culture at the nonprofit organization (Lindquist & March, 2016).

## Literature Review for the Study

A review of the literature was limited to research that addresses strategies to change a negative workplace culture to a positive workplace culture. Gonzalez-Roma et al. (2017) indicated that there is a relationship between work climate and leadership. According to Craft (2018), when there is a negative workplace culture, there is a negative impact on an organization.

There is also a relationship between styles of leadership and organizational culture. Servant leaders seek to lead through service to others (Erdurmazh, 2019). According to Erdurmazh (2019), there is a relationship between job satisfaction, organizational attitudes, and organizational culture. Servant leadership has been linked to positive attitudes from employees and a better work environment, which leads to a positive workplace culture (Erdurmazh, 2019). Servant leadership involves putting the needs of others before the leaders' own needs, seeking to inspire others through a vision for an organization, practicing ethical behavior, striving to empower others, and being a

humble leader (Erdurmazh, 2019). According to Erdurmazh,(2019) there is a strong correlation between servant leadership and a positive workplace culture.

When an organization provides support for their employees, provides growth opportunities for the employees, and assists the employees in expanding boundaries and overcoming obstacles, a positive culture can be developed (Langer & LeRoux, 2017). For organizations to have a positive workplace culture, they need to have open discussions, participation from leadership, openness, and willingness to change (Langer & LeRoux, 2017). Often leadership of an organization seeks to have stability and control, but for there to be a positive workplace culture there needs to be loyalty, cohesion, and positive morale (Langer & LeRoux, 2017).

When employees love the job they do, then a positive workplace culture can be achieved (Roulin & Krings, 2019). Employees are more likely to maintain their employment when there is a positive workplace culture (Roulin & Krings, 2019). According to Roulin and Krings (2019), there is a correlation between passion for one's job and the culture of the organization.

According to Marmo and Berkman (2018), retention of employees is based on job satisfaction, and job satisfaction can be based on workplace culture and leadership communication. Servant leadership, interdisciplinarian collaboration, and feelings of being valued are all areas that can lead to job satisfaction (Marmo & Berkman, 2018). Marmo and Berkman indicated that workload size and compensation were not linked to job satisfaction and a positive workplace culture. Having engaged leadership and a strong

relationship made a positive impact on culture and job satisfaction (Marmo & Berkman, 2018).

Information was collected regarding why individuals leave nonprofit organizations. Work overload, lack of autonomy, alienation, and lack of faith in leadership are some of the reasons individuals leave nonprofit organizations (Milbourn et al., 2019). These concerns are connected to organizational culture (Milbourn et, al., 2019). Many people join nonprofit organizations to belong and to feel they are a part of something, people want to feel they are contributing to society and making a difference (Milbourn et al., 2019). When workplace culture is indifferent to the needs of employees, then employees are less likely to stay (Milbourn et al., 2019).

## Summary

Section 2 provided the literature search strategy, the conceptual framework, the literature review for the study, and a summary. Having a positive workplace culture can be critical to the success of an organization. The nonprofit organization in the current study had a history of negative workplace culture. Despite efforts from the leadership, the negative culture of the organization had not changed. Current employees reported this negative culture through surveys. A study was needed to determine how the nonprofit organization could change a negative culture to a positive culture. This study was needed to ensure the organization is sustainable long term. A competing values framework was used in this study. Interviews were conducted in a nonprofit organization that had a reputation for a positive workplace culture, which was confirmed through employee surveys. Section 3 includes an introduction; the practice-focused research question and

research design; he roles of the researcher and client organization; the methodology; the

procedures for recruitment, participation, and data collection; the strategy for data

analysis; as well as issues of trustworthiness; and ethical procedures.

Section 3: Data Collection Process and Analysis

The central research question was: What strategies can the leadership of a nonprofit organization implement to create a positive workplace culture? The nonprofit organization was experiencing a negative workplace culture. Based on surveys, employees felt undervalued, were denied leave, and felt they could be terminated from their job without just cause. The purpose of this qualitative case study was to determine how leadership can change the organization's culture from a negative workplace culture to a positive workplace culture. Surveys and exit questionnaires completed by employees and previous employees indicated a negative workplace culture. The leadership of the organization had tried different strategies over the previous 4 years to change the negative culture to a positive culture. There were some positive changes, but despite the changes employees still reported an overall negative workplace culture.

Employees of the nonprofit organization that had a reputation for a positive workplace culture and had employee surveys that supported a positive workplace culture were interviewed to determine positive workplace culture practices that could be used in the organization. The information obtained from the employees of the other nonprofit organization could assist the nonprofit with a history of negative workplace culture in changing their negative workplace culture to a positive workplace culture. Previous research indicated positive culture change can be based on the leadership styles in the organization (Erdurmazh, 2018). This information was considered when developing interview questions to address positive workplace culture. Full completion of surveys was necessary to ensure the quality of the data. Section 3 of this study addresses sources of

evidence, ethical procedures, and how the data were analyzed and synthesized. This section also addresses the practice-focused research question; research design; roles of the researcher and client organization; methodology; procedures for recruitment, participation, and data collection; strategy for data analysis; issues of trustworthiness; and ethical procedures.

## Practice-Focused Research Question and Research Design

What strategies can the leadership of a nonprofit organization implement to create a positive workplace culture? The research design of the study was qualitative with a case study design. The qualitative design was used because I did not need numerical data and wanted to collect information based on structured interview questions (see Amankwaa, 2016). The administrative study focused on a nonprofit organization's negative workplace culture. The employees reported negative workplace culture through workplace surveys and exit surveys. Despite leadership's efforts to change the organization's culture, employees indicated they felt unappreciated and fearful they would lose their job. Negative workplace culture could affect production and the overall financial standing of the organization.

Prior research was limited regarding changing employee culture. There was a great deal of research regarding diverse types of leadership styles and how these styles affect organizational culture (Langer & LeRoux, 2017). However, there was a gap-in-knowledge regarding how leadership can change from a negative workplace culture to a positive workplace culture once all traditional attempts have been made. The purpose of the current study was to determine how leadership in a nonprofit organization can change

from a negative workplace culture to a positive workplace culture. The purpose of this study and the research question in this study were aligned because they both addressed how leadership can move from a negative workplace culture to a positive workplace culture.

## Role of the Researcher and Client Organization

I currently work for the nonprofit organization in the study and have for over 15 years. I started out as the director of workforce development, then vice president of mission services, then chief operations officer, and president/CEO as of July 1, 2020. The information was obtained through case studies that were conducted at another nonprofit organization where I did not work. I was familiar with the CEO at the other organization, but there was no relationship between me and the two nonprofit organizations that were addressed in the case study. The CEO of the organization where the research was conducted let her employees know I was coming to the organization and posted a flyer regarding the research to all employees. Those who wanted to participate in the research project spoke with me and I explained to the potential participants they could drop out of the research project at any time, and participation was strictly on a volunteer basis.

I conducted interviews for the case study. The motivation to conduct the research was to change the culture in a nonprofit organization from a negative culture to a positive workplace culture. I had bias based on my work in a similar nonprofit organization. I also had a professional relationship with the CEO of the organization where the research was conducted. I was aware of this bias, and relied only on the answers the participants gave in their interviews. I maintained detailed records through recordings and written notes to

ensure there were no biases. I also conducted random sampling, allowing all potential participants equal opportunity to volunteer for the study. I was open to information on positive workplace culture and the best practices in creating positive workplace culture.

## Methodology

The methodology for this study was qualitative. Current research, personal interviews, and published articles were the data sources used in this study. Interview questions were developed using the competing values framework. The data sources provided valuable information related to positive workplace culture. I focused on information in the data sources related to methods or best practices used to create positive workplace culture and how to change negative workplace culture into positive workplace culture. The participants in the study were asked questions in interviews with me. The participants in the study were volunteers who had worked for the organization for a minimum of 2 years. The participants came from different work positions within the organization where the interviews were conducted.

The purpose of the study was to identify best practices in creating a positive workplace culture. The partner organization in the study had reports of a negative workplace culture. The partner organization wanted to change their culture. I sought to gather best practices related to workplace culture. This information was then presented to the partner organization so changes could be made to create a positive workplace culture.

Through the interviews with participants, I was able to analyze the data from the answers to the interview questions. Themes were identified based on answers to interview questions. For example, the theme of change begins with leadership listening to

their employees, accepting feedback, and providing training to grow employees. This information could be used by the partner organization so that changes could be made to assist in building a positive workplace culture.

The competing values framework was used to organize the research so that a plan could be developed within the framework to make positive changes regarding culture. The internal process model within the competing values framework allowed me to take the data gathered through the interview process and identify themes through coding. Thematic coding would assist the organization in disseminating information throughout their organization (see Helfrich et al., 2007).

### Procedures for Recruitment, Participation, and Data Collection

The evidence for this study came from a different nonprofit organization that was well known for its positive workplace culture. The employees of the nonprofit with a reputation for a positive workplace culture were interviewed. The nonprofit was selected based on its history of positive workplace culture, demonstrated by employee surveys. The CEO of this nonprofit was often used to mentor other CEOs throughout the United States because of their positive workplace culture.

A case study was conducted using interviews to gather information regarding how the organization creates and maintains a positive workplace culture. Once the interviews were completed, the data from the interviews were used to implement culture change in the organization. The competing values framework was used to develop the questions for the interviews.

The data that were gathered from this study were used to determine best practices to create a positive culture in a nonprofit organization. The evidence from the study indicated leadership must model a positive workplace culture, must be willing to listen to their employees, must invest in their employees, and must provide a learning management system for employees. Information was given to the organization based on the data from the study. This information may be used to change a negative workplace culture to a positive workplace culture.

**Participants**

The participants that were interviewed for this study were recruited on a volunteer basis. I was allowed to send a flyer to the organization, which was then posted for all employees to see. Both males and females were eligible to participate in this study and the organization has approximately 200 employees. The sampling size was 9 employees in the organization. The criterion for participation selection was for individuals to have been with the organization for at least 2 years. The organization was able to verify how long the participants had worked for the organization. When I was interviewing the participants, I verified how long they had worked at the organization and what their position was in the organization. I did not ask the participant's level of education. There were nine participants from the nonprofit organization in the study. The rationale for the number was this number should give a thorough view of how the organization had a positive workplace culture. The number of participants should yield valuable information regarding positive workplace culture. I thought that a larger sample size would not have been beneficial to the study.

**Procedures**

The CEO of the organization where the interviews were conducted posted a flyer to employees of the organization. I provided the flyer to the CEO. The employees of the organization were allowed to volunteer to participate in the study. I arrived at the organization and met with potential participants. I informed the participants of the confidentiality of the study and let them know they could drop out of the study at any time. I informed the participants they would not be identified or singled out.

The questions for the interview addressed the workplace culture of the participants' organization. I conducted face-to-face interviews. The interview questions were open-ended, and the participants were allowed to give their answers. The participants were able to give short or long answers; there were no restrictions. The participants were given release-of-information forms to review and sign. I audio recorded the interviews and took notes during the interviews. The audio records were transcribed after the interviews, once I was back in my office. I traveled to a nonprofit organization and spent 1 day at the organization conducting the interviews. All participants were excited about their involvement in the study. The participants provided details on many of their answers. Interviews were recorded. If there had been fewer participants, I would have come back to the organization on a different date to complete the interviews. Participants completed the interviews and were reassured of the confidentiality of their answers.

The interviews provided valuable information regarding positive workplace culture. The participants' answers were compared to each other. There were clear themes

that emerged from the answers to the questions. Coding was used to identify the themes. From these themes, recommendations were given to the organization regarding positive workplace culture.

**Instrumentation**

I interviewed participants from the different nonprofit organizations with a specific set of interview questions. The interviews were recorded for each participant. Each participant was assured of confidentiality of the interviews. I started each recorded interview using a number for each participant. The recording of the interviews was an audio recording. The questions used in the interview were as follows:

1. How long have you worked at this organization?

2. What is your position in the organization?

3. How do you perceive the culture at this organization?

4. What do you think makes this organization have a good or bad culture?

5. How does leadership contribute to the culture of the organization?

6. What are the ways you feel the organization can improve the culture?

7. How important do you feel culture is in an organization?

8. What role do you believe the employee plays in an organization's culture?

**Strategies for Recruitment**

Leadership in the nonprofit organization had agreed to allow employees of the organization to volunteer to be interviewed. The employees had the opportunity to decline the invitation. Fifteen employees expressed interest in participating in the study. When I arrived to start the interview process, some of the employees who were interested

decided they did not want to participate. I interviewed nine employees. Having

participants from another nonprofit participate in interviews was ideal for gathering the

strongest data possible about employees' experiences with workplace culture.

**Consent and Privacy**

The participants in the study were asked if they were willing to be interviewed for

the study. If they did not want to participate in the study, then another individual was

asked out of the group of volunteers. Once the individual had decided to be a participant

in the study, then I provided the participant with a letter of confidentiality so the

participant would understand their name would not be used in the paper and all

information would be confidential. Everyone was referred to during the interview by a

number. Participants were allowed to stop the interviews at any time and the recording

would be deleted. If this had happened, then another participant would have been

selected. Data were kept on a recorder. Once the study was completed, and the tape

recordings will be destroyed after 5 years.

**Strategy for Data Analysis**

The interviews with participants were recorded. The answers to the interview

questions were transcribed, reviewed, and analyzed using coding to understand positive

workplace culture. The responses to the interviews were analyzed with the competing

values framework, and the documents were stored.

The data was organized and analyzed by compiling the answers to each question

regarding workplace culture. As a qualitative study the interview questions were

addressed in the study and an overarching theme on positive workplace culture was

developed based on the answers from the interview questions. I used Word software to transcribe the interview recordings.

**Analysis Procedures (Coding)**

For the analysis procedures, thematic coding was used. Thematic coding is analyzing specific words or paragraphs to identify themes (Erdurmazh, 2019). I selected thematic coding because it is often used in qualitative studies to analyze feedback from participants. Specific phrases were selected to code the interview answers. These phrases were based on positive workplace culture themes. The deliverables that were presented to the organization were leadership modeling positive workplace culture, leadership investing in their employees through training or a formal learning management system, and leadership listening to employees and accepting feedback from employees.

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**Issues of Trustworthiness**

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It was imperative to ensure I made thorough efforts to ensure the integrity of the data. The research must aspire for high quality when conducting research and reporting the research (Cope, 2014).

**Credibility**

Credibility is the truth of the participants opinions of the research questions and the interpretation and representation of the data that was gained from the participants (Cope, 2014). There must be truth in the findings of the research (Amankwaa, 2016). The integrity of the data was maintained by ensuring accuracy in coding interview answers. Credibility is evident when the I can show engagement, methods of observation, and how the information was audited (Cope, 2014). To ensure the coding was trustworthy I was

precise, and consistent in recording data. I regrouped words and phrases as different themes emerged. All interview questions were answered, and there were no outliers or missing information.

**Dependability**

Dependability is demonstrating the findings are constant and can be recapitulated (Amankwaa, 2016). To ensure dependability of the research I documented in detail all steps in the research process including the data collection process. All steps in the process were completely explained to the participants in the study. I recorded all the interviews and then the interviews were transcribed. The analysis process was also very well documented. All the data and the analysis are reviewable.

**Confirmability**

Confirmability is when the research can show the data is not biased or has the researcher's own point of view in the data (Cope, 2014). Confirmability is when the data represents the actual responses of the participants in the study (Cope, 2014). To show confirmability there must be a neutrality as the findings are formed (Amankwaa, 2016). I was diligent in self-evaluation to ensure the findings were credible. I used data collection measures of recorded interviews and took notes during the interviews which is appropriate in qualitative studies. The analyses included thematic coding to ensure transparency in the research process.

**Transferability**

Transferability is showing the findings of the research can be related in other contexts (Amankwaa, 2016). The research study will have transferability when the

findings of the research have meaning to other people (Cope, 2014). There should be transferability of the research data because workplace culture is in all nonprofit organizations and is a critical component in nonprofit organizations for success. The transferability of the study allowed for other nonprofit organizations to take the information and use it in their own organizations.

## Ethical Procedures

This section reviews the processes used to ensure there was ethical protection of the research participants. This relates to parts of the study including recruitment, consent, privacy, client authorization, and Walden University Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval.

I presented flyers, consent form, and interview questions to IRB for approval. The Walden University Institutional Review Board did approve to move forward with the research.

I provided the flyer regarding the research study to the organization prior to arriving at the organization. Once arriving at the organization, I assured the volunteer participants that the study was strictly volunteer, and they could drop out of the study at any time. I ensured ethical procedures by providing informed consent to participants.

The interview with the participants was recorded and I also took notes. I ensured the data was transcribed as it presented on the recording. The participants were assigned numbers so there was no identifying information. Through self-reflection I identified bias before the interviews were conducted. The highest integrity was upheld, and confidentiality was maintained in all aspects of the research. Respect was shown to all

participants as well as openness in what the participant could expect during the interview process and documentation of the interview. The participants understood the purpose of the interview questions and how the results of the interviews would be used. The competing values framework was used to glean information from the interviews.

I used a laptop which is password protected to gather and record data. My university email is password protected as well. When I no longer need the data on my laptop, I will delete all information from my computer.

## Summary

Section 3 of the paper included an introduction to the section, practice-focused research question and research design, methodology, procedures for recruitment, participation and data collection, strategy for data analysis, issues of trustworthiness, ethical procedures, and a summary. The purpose of this qualitative case study was to gather direct knowledge of how to create a positive workplace culture. To do this, interviews were completed to understand how a positive workplace was achieved in another nonprofit organization. From this information recommendations for changes were provided to the nonprofit organization with a history of negative workplace culture. Section 4 provides information on data collection, data analysis, the findings, deliverables and recommendations, evidence of trustworthiness, and strengths and limitations of the study, and a summary.

Section 4: Evaluation and Recommendations

The purpose of this study was to assist a nonprofit organization in changing the workplace culture from negative to positive. The research question for this study was the following: What strategies can the leadership of a nonprofit organization implement to create a positive workplace culture? A nonprofit organization had a history of negative culture. Employees reported they felt unappreciated, and they were fearful of losing their jobs. Employees reported in organizational surveys as well as in exit surveys; that they viewed the organization as a negative workplace culture, and they did not feel the organization was a good place to work.

Leadership desired for the organization to have a positive workplace culture. The new CEO hired a leadership team who worked to make positive changes within the organization. Workplace culture is affected by employees' view of leadership (Marmo & Berman, 2018). Despite the efforts of the leadership, there continued to be reports of a negative workplace culture. I sought to gather information from another nonprofit organization that had a history of a positive workplace culture. From the information gathered, strategies to create positive workplace culture were given to the nonprofit with the negative workplace culture. These deliverables included having leadership that is invested in the culture change, models the positive culture, value feedback from employees, and provides employees with a learning management system. These strategies could be used to create a positive workplace culture. Section 4 of this study includes data collection, data analysis, findings, deliverables and recommendations, evidence of trustworthiness, and strengths and limitations. There is a summary.

There were nine participants in the study. The participants all worked for a nonprofit organization with a history of a positive workplace culture. All participants had worked for the nonprofit organization for at least 4 years with the maximum length of 14 years. All participants were current employees of the organization where the research was conducted. The nine participants had varied job duties throughout the organization with some working hourly positions and others working in leadership positions.

**Table 1**

*Participant Demographics*

| Demographic | Category | Number of participants |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Age | 20–30 | 3 |
| | 31–40 | 3 |
| | 41–50 | 2 |
| | 51–60 | 1 |
| Gender | Male | 2 |
| | Female | 7 |
| Race | White | 5 |
| | African American | 3 |
| | Hispanic | 1 |
| Length of employment | 2–5 years | 5 |
| | 6–10 years | 3 |
| | 10–14 years | 1 |

The data were collected from interviews with each participant at the organization. I was allowed to use an unoccupied office at the organization with a history of positive workplace culture. I arrived at 9:00 a.m. at the organization. I was shown to the office that I was allowed to use. The interviews started at 9:30 a.m. Each interview lasted approximately 15 minutes. I had a 10-minute break between participants. I took a break for a 30-minute lunch, and I finished interviews at 3:00 p.m. I then thanked the leadership of the organization for allowing me to conduct the research. Then I left the organization. I

recorded the interviews on a small recorder. Once I left the organization, the interviews were transcribed, and the recorder was locked in a file cabinet that only I had access to.

**Participant 1**

I arrived at the organization and was shown to a private, vacant office. The first participant arrived for the interview. I introduced myself to Participant 1. Participant 1 was given the release-of-information form to sign so I could proceed with the questions. Participant 1 signed the release-of-information form. I asked Participant 1, Question 1; which addressed how long had they been with the organization. Participant 1 stated they had been with the organization for 5 years. I asked Participant 1 the second question; addressing their position within the organization. Participant 1 stated they were the vice president of organizational excellence. I asked Participant 1 Question 3; addressing how they perceive the culture in the organization. Participant 1 responded; 'evolving" I asked Participant 1, Question 4; addressing what they thought makes this organization have a good or bad culture. Participant 1 responded;

> "I think we saw what a bad culture did for our organization for a long time and we have someone who is now in a leadership role that consistently advocated for those changes, and is able to hire the right people, approve the right things, and get everybody in the right seat, and to have the mindset of what we're doing and how we're doing things."

I then asked Question 5; addressing how the leadership contributes to the culture. Participant 1 responded;

"I think the biggest thing we can do is listen." "Right now, we have several

avenues for employee feedback and engaging employees' perception of things

that they want to see, what they don't like, also finding ways to get them out of

their workspace through events, activities, and then just testing and trial and error

and additional benefits and things like that too."

I then asked Question 6; addressing the ways they feel the organization can improve its

culture. Participant 1 responded;

"I think we've made a lot of concerted efforts; I think we must be more

intentional in listening sometimes." "We look at things in terms of well, that's not

possible because of XY and Z, when maybe our own mindset needs to not be that

these are the limitations in place, if this is what's being requested of us let's

respond, just like we do in our community." "Let's do the same for our

employees."

I asked Question 7; addressing how important they feel culture is in an organization.

Participant 1 responded; "I think it is the most important component of an organization."

I then asked Question 8; addressing what role they believe the employee plays in the

organizational culture. Participant 1 responded;

"I think the employee owns about 90% of that, and the only reason I say that is

because I think the other 10% you must have the decision makers and the

influence to be able to move those needles and identify those options." "A lot of

the times people say what they want and have no idea about the tactical or

practical application of those things, or the management of those things, I think

you must have that"

I ended the interview and thanked the participant.

**Participant 2**

Participant 1 left the office, and a few minutes later Participant 2 came into the office. I introduced myself to the participant and had the participant sign the release form. Participant 2 sat down, and I asked Question 1; addressing how long they had worked at this organization. Participant 2 responded: "4 years." I then asked Participant 2; Question 2 addressing their position with the organization. Participant 2 stated "I am the chief operating officer." I asked Question 3; addressing how they perceive the culture of this organization. Participant 2 responded;

"I think currently it's strong, especially given where we were to where we are

today." "We do a lot of things for our employees that we just didn't do, and I

came from another nonprofit agency that had a pretty strong culture." "It was nice

to see us do those things and more that really strengthened the culture of this

organization since new CEO took over."

I asked Question 4; addressing what they think makes this organization have a good or bad culture. Participant 2 said,

"What makes this organization have a good culture is the buy-in from the

leadership team. You know, you have heard of the old trickledown economics

system, well it is the same thing here." "It's a trickledown effect, I had heard from

another CEO that nothing changes until the leader changes and when the leader

changes everything changes." "Once the leader sets those expectations and

changes the way that the leader conducts business, then it just trickles down.

I then asked Question 5; addressing how leadership contributes to the culture.

Participant 2 said "when you say you're going to do things for the employees, then you

must do them, you must follow through and make sure that they get done and have

constant follow up." I then asked Question 6; addressing the ways they feel the

organization can improve its culture. Participant 2 stated,

> "I think everything is open for improvement, we can change our tactics all the
>
> time and we seek more of our buy-in and suggestions from our employees." "I'd
>
> like to see us do a little bit more of that, find ways to communicate with every
>
> single employee so that they get the same information that the leadership team
>
> gets."

I then asked Question 7; addressing how important they feel culture is in any

organization. Participant 2 stated,

> especially important. "We have historically had extremely high turnover in retail
>
> and although it is still high, it is not nearly having high as it used to be, and it
>
> continues to fall." "I think a lot of that is due to the culture change in the
>
> organization." "We can retain people." "Where other organizations, other groups
>
> around here, are just really struggling to retain people, and that is not our
>
> problem."

I then asked Question 8; addressing what role they believe the employee plays in

organizational culture. Participant 2 stated; "I think it's important to communicate up,

with concerns, ideas, suggestions that can help make the organization great, most of the best ideas usually in any corporation, come from line-level employees who are affected the most." I then thanked Participant 2 and released them from the interview. A few minutes later Participant 3 entered the room.

**Participant 3**

I introduced myself to Participant 3 and gave them the release of information to sign. Participant 3 sat down and signed the release. I then asked Question 1; addressing how long they had worked for the organization. Participant 3 stated "4 years, almost 5 years." I then asked Question 2, addressing their position in the organization. Participant 3 stated "leadership assistant" I asked Question 3; addressing how they perceive the culture at this organization. Participant 3 asked for clarification on "culture, what do you mean by culture?". I responded, "how people get along, how people feel about being here, how everyone fits in together." Participant 3 stated "I think the culture looks good, we all work well together." I then asked Question 4; addressed what they think makes this organization have a good or bad culture. Participant 3 responded; "I think the relationships, of course, our leadership staff, our executive staff, managers, and supervisors." I asked Question 5; addressing how leadership contributes to the culture of the organization. Participant 3 stated "I think they set the standard of how an organization is ran, how it's managed." I asked Question 6; addressing the ways they feel the organization can improve its culture. Participant 3 responded; "doing things to build morale". I asked Question 7; addressing how important culture is in an organization. Participant 3 stated "I feel it is very important." I asked Question 8; addressing what role

they believe the employee plays in organizational culture. Participant 3 answered, "I think they play a big role, a very important role in the growth." I then thanked Participant 3 and told them they could leave the interview room.

**Participant 4**

Participant 4 came into the room, and I introduced myself and gave the release form to the participant for review and signature. Then I asked Question 1; addressing how long they had worked for this organization. Participant 4 stated, "it'll be 6 years November 15th." I asked Question 2, addressing their position in the organization. Participant 4 responded; "I am the store manager in Belton." I asked Question 3; addressing how they perceive the culture at this organization. Participant 4 stated; "it's good." I then asked Question 4; addressing what they think makes this organization have a good or bad culture. Participant 4 stated; "the leadership, the mission, and the management." I asked Question 5; addressing how does leadership contribute to the culture of the organization. Participant 4 stated; "leading by example." I then asked Question 6; addressing the ways that this organization can improve its culture. Participant 4 stated; "just by continuing to strive to do better." I asked Questions 7; addressing how important they feel culture is to an organization. Participant 4 stated; "especially important." I asked Question 8; addressing what role they believe the employee plays in organizational culture. Participant 4 responded "leading, instructing, and organizing and being a role model to other employees." I then thanked Participant 4 and dismissed them from the room.

**Participant 5**

A few minutes later, Participant 5 entered the room. I introduced myself and gave the participant the release form to review and sign. Once this was completed, I asked Question 1, addressing how long they had been with this organization. Participant 5 responded; "almost 14 years". I then asked Question 2, addressing what position in the organization. Participant 5 stated; "District 3 Manager." I then asked Question 3; addressing how they perceive the culture of this organization. Participant 5 responded; "I think it is wonderful across the board." I then asked Question addressing what they think makes this organization have a good or bad culture. Participant 5 answered; "our employees, and our leadership team." I asked Question 5; addressing how has leadership contributes to the culture of the organization. Participant 5 stated; "through training, accessibility, positive leadership, and leading by example." I then asked Question 6; addressing the ways they feel this organization could improve its culture. Participant 5 answered; "I just think to continue recognizing employees, training, and leading by example." I then asked Question 7; addressing how important they feel culture is in this organization. Participant 4 stated "it is critical." asked Question 8; addressing what role the employee plays in organizational culture. Participant 5 responded; "everything." I then thanked Participant 5 and asked them to exit the room.

**Participant 6**

The researcher introduced herself to participant 6. The researcher gave participants 6 the release of information to reviews and sign, once this was done the interview started. The researcher asked participant 6 how long they had worked for the

organization. Participant 6 stated; "four and half years." I asked Question 2; what is your position in the organization. Participant 6 stated, "I'm in production." I asked Question 3; how do you perceive the culture of this organization. Participant 6 stated, "I think it's wonderful." I asked Question 4; what makes this organization have a good or bad culture. Participant 6 stated, "the leadership." I asked Question 5; how leadership has contributed to the culture of the organization. Participant 6 stated, "leadership has made it a very pleasant place to work." I asked Question 6; are there ways you feel the organization can improve the culture. Participant 6 stated, "no." I asked Question 7; how important you feel culture is in this organization. Participant 6 stated, "very important." I asked Question 8; what role you feel each employee plays in the culture. Participant 6 stated, "we all work as a team." I thanked the Participant, and the Participant left the room.

**Participant 7**

Participant 7 entered the interview room. I introduced myself and presented the release form to sign. Once the release was signed, I asked Participant 7 the first interview Question; how long have you been with the organization. Participant 7 stated, "seven and a half years." I asked the Question, "What is your position in the organization. Participant stated, "an assistant store manager." I asked Question 3; how you perceive the culture in this organization. Participant stated, "good." I asked Question 4; what you think makes this organization either have a good culture or bad culture. Participant 7 stated, "the leadership." I asked Question 5; how you think leadership contributes to the culture of the organization. Participant 7 stated, "leadership is instrumental in helping every person and this helps us to have a good culture." I asked Question 6; what are ways you feel that the

organization could improve its culture. Participant 7 stated, "I am unsure how we can improve our culture at this time." I asked Question 7; how important you feel culture is. Participant 7 stated, "it is very important." I asked Question 8, what role do you believe an employee plays in organizational culture. Participant 7 stated, "I think we play a big role in culture." I then thanked Participant 7 and they left the room.

**Participant 8**

Participant 8 came to the interview room. I introduced myself and gave the release of information to the Participant to review and sign. I then asked Question 1; how long you have worked for the organization. Participant 8 stated "seven years." I asked Question 2; what is your position at the organization. Participant 8 stated, "the mission services director." I asked Question 3; how you perceive the culture in the organization. Participant 8 stated, "I think we have worked hard to have a great culture." I asked Question 4; what you think makes this organization have a good or bad culture. Participant 8 stated, "I think investing in training opportunities, we are presenting people with opportunities for growth." I asked Question 5; how you think leadership contributes to this culture. Participant stated, "leadership is why it exists." I asked Question 6; are there ways you think that the culture can improve? Participant 8 stated, "I think that could be true for any place, I don't think anyplace is perfect." I asked Question 7; how important do you feel culture is to this organization? Participant 8 stated, "I think it's very important." I asked Question 8, what role does the employee play in the culture of the organization. Participant 8 stated, "everyone can impact the culture." I thanked Participant 8 and they existed the interview room.

**Participant 9**

Participant 9 came to the interview room. I introduced myself and gave the Participant the release of information to the participant to read and sign. I asked Participant 9 Question 1; how long you have been with the organization. Participant 9 stated, "five years." I asked question 2; what your position in the organization is. Participant stated, "lead vocational success coach." I then asked Question 3; how you perceive the culture at this organization. Participant 8 stated, "we have a good culture here, I don't see anything as being negative." I asked Question 4; what you think makes this organization have a good or bad culture. Participant 9 stated, "leadership and training." I asked Question 5; how does leadership contribute to the culture of this organization. Participant 9 stated, "leadership listens to you, takes the time to listen, we have meetings, and we give input." I asked Question 6; what are the ways you feel the organization could improve the culture. Participant 9 stated, "I am not sure at this time." I asked question 7; how important do you feel culture is to this organization. Participant 9 stated, "very important." I asked Question 8; what role you believe the employee plays in organization culture. Participant stated, "I have a voice and we play a big role in the culture of the organization." I thanked Participant 9, and they exited the interview room. I packed up my documents and thanked the CEO of the organization for allowing me to conduct the research.

<div align="center">

**Data Analysis**

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A thematic analysis was used to analyze the data. After transcribing the interviews, I used coding to label the information that emerged from the transcription.

The coding represented relevant statements from each interview. The coding was applied to sections of the transcription based on exposure, terms, and circumstances. These emerging codes were categorized. The categorized coded items were then analyzed for themes. Three themes emerged from the thematic analysis. These themes were leadership modeling behaviors that promote positive culture, leadership being open to regular feedback from employees, and investing in the employees by offering training/a learning management system.

  I became familiar with the data through transcribing the interviews and then reading the written transcripts. This allowed me to identify emerging themes. Within the transcript of the interviews. I circled any sentences or words that were relevant to the themes. The circled themes were then highlighted in different colored highlighters. Once themes that were prevalent were identified I did not use the other nonrelevant themes.

  The conceptual framework allowed me to ask questions to better understand leaderships' role in the organizational culture, to assess quality in the workplace, and improve workplace culture. The analysis of the study produced three themes. Table 2 shows the three themes that emerged from the Participants.

**Table 2**

*Themes Generated From the Study*

| Theme | Number of mentions by participants |
|---|---|
| Leadership models behavior to promote positive culture | 9 |
| Leadership accepts feedback from employees | 8 |
| Invest in employees through training opportunities | 8 |

## Findings

A qualitative case study was developed to interview employees at a nonprofit organization regarding culture. The organization used in the study had a reputation for a positive workplace culture. Eight questions were used to interview 9 participants. The findings of the study indicated to have a positive workplace culture leadership of the organization must be role models of positive culture, leadership should listen to their employees and accept feedback and suggestions from employees. Leadership also should invest in their employees through training/learning management systems. By making these changes the partner organization will work toward changing the organization from a negative workplace culture to a positive workplace culture. This will allow for a better working environment for the employees. When employees have a better work environment they can have better mental and physical health. These implications can also create a better work, home life balance. This study provides information that can be utilized both in nonprofit and for-profit organizations. The information for this study can benefit a broader community scope by providing information that can change the culture

in other organizations. Any organization that is struggling with their culture can use the information from this study to change their culture and the lives of their employees.

### Deliverables and Recommendations

The recommendations that were generated from the study primarily involved leadership. The Participants of the study indicated the leadership of the partner organization changed, especially the top-level leadership of the partner organization and then the culture of the organization started to change. The Participants of the study indicated a trickling down effect of a positive culture from the CEO to the other leadership of the organization to the staff of the organization.

Based on the study, for an organization to profoundly change, the change must start with the leadership of the organization. The leadership must listen to the feedback from other leadership members as well as employees from the organization. The information received from the feedback must be evaluated and considered by the leadership and if appropriate changes must be made. The research indicated that showing understanding of the needs of the workforce makes a difference in the culture of the organization. Employees indicated that having leadership commitment to the needs of the employees and striving to meet the needs of employees through training, employee recognition and through employee feedback, the culture can change.

The only unanticipated information that was gained through the study is one Participant had some difficulty understanding the questions in the interview. This Participant presented with intellectual deficits. The Participant appeared to have some difficulty answering the questions. Even with an explanation the Participant seemed to

have difficulty understanding the questions. I felt the answers of this Participant did not accurately reflect the questions that were asked.

Review of previous research indicated positive cultural change starts with the leadership of an organization. The implications resulting from the findings of this study validate previous research. The research from this study indicated for organizational culture to change there must be a commitment from leadership regarding the change in culture. Research from this study indicated the culture will not change unless the top leaders of the organization as well as the additional leadership are invested in the cultural change. This research indicated cultural changes involve investment in employees. An investment in employee training and an investment in employee opinions and feelings as well as employee recognition is needed for a positive shift in organizational culture. A positive culture change not only affects leadership, employees, and the organization, it also affects the communities in which the organization serves (Langer & LeRoux, 2017). Changing the culture of an organization changes employees, which then changes their family and could affect the communities they live in.

Positive social change can occur in diverse ways. Positive social change can start in an organization where the culture of the organization creates a positive impact on employees. When employees are valued, trained, and treated with respect, this then can have a positive impact on employees' families as well as close friends. The positive social change is unmeasurable as the effect trickles down.

The recommendations from the results of this study include a 100% investment from the leadership of the organization. Leadership, especially the top leadership of the

nonprofit must be invested in the changes in culture. The leadership must convey the changes both verbally and in their actions. The changes would include positive changes from leadership showing their concerns for the employees' life and their wellbeing. Leadership must be willing to listen to feedback from employees as well as invest in the training of employees and recognize employees when appropriate.

An organization seeking culture change should consider a learning management system. This system would allow employees to have a structured learning system that would allow them to better learn and invest in their current job as well as advancing in an organization if they so desire.

In addition to a learning management system, leadership should consider employee recognition and employee feedback as a regular part of the culture in the organization. Understanding what employees need to feel a part of a team and to feel satisfied with their job is essential to creating a positive workplace culture.

## Evidence of Trustworthiness

I was diligent to ensure trustworthiness and data integrity. When conducting research, it is critical to ensure there is credibility, dependability, confirmability, and transferability (Cope, 2014).

### Credibility

All research Participants answered all interview questions. The integrity of the data was maintained because I ensured the coding was accurate. Evidence of rigor must be presented in a research document (Amankwaa, 2016). I examined prior literature and ensured there we no bias in the research documentation. The Participants' consent was

obtained prior to starting the interviews and Participants were made aware they could leave the study at any time. Results were shared with Participants to ensure accuracy and with the organization.

**Transferability**

The study has transferability because the data from the study provided relevant information regarding how to create a positive workplace culture. All organizations whether they are for-profit, or nonprofit have workplace culture. A positive workplace culture allows organizations to function better and creates positive social change (Geisler, 2019). The study also has transferability because the responses from the participants were similar so the results of the data may be used in other nonprofit organizations.

**Dependability**

Dependability is important in a study to ensure the data is consistent and repeatable (Amankwaa, 2016). The interviews were recorded and then the interviews were transcribed. The transcription was reviewed, and themes were coded.

**Confirmability**

I felt no bias when conducting the interviews, when transcribing the interviews, when reviewing the transcription for themes, or when coding the themes. I examined my own beliefs to ensure the beliefs did not interfere during the interview process, transcription process, or coding process. I had a working relationship with the CEO of the organization where the research was conducted, but the CEO of the organization was not involved in the coding of data of the research. I evaluated myself to assure that my

relationship with the current CEO did not affect my coding and evaluation of the research data.

## Strengths and Limitations of the Study

The study project contained many strengths. The strengths included receiving feedback from different Participants in various positions at the organization. Some of the Participants had been with the organization before the culture was a positive culture and the Participants had the opportunity to see the changes taking place first-hand. The Participants were very relaxed during the interviews and the information obtained from the Participants was genuine. Since the Participants held various positions in the organization where the study was conducted the perspectives of the Participants covered Participants in leadership as well as hourly store employees and production employees. The data gathered in the interviews were direct information and contained information that was related to the study. Themes emerged during the interviews and were made clear during the coding and analysis. These themes lead to the recommendations provided to the organization. The information and recommendations obtained in the study are transferable to other nonprofit organizations as well as for-profit organizations.

Regarding limitations in the study, one Participant had some difficulty understanding the questions. There is always the potential for Participants to not answer questions fully, because they may not want to say anything negative about the organization where they are employed (Roulin & Krings, 2020). Another limitation of the study was the Participant pool of employees was limited. However, the themes that

emerged from the data were consistent with each Participant of the study. I believed the answers were genuine.

## Summary

The results of this study indicated for an organization to have a positive workplace culture the organization must have leadership that models the positive culture, leadership who are open to receiving feedback from employees, and to invest in employees through a learning management system. Section 4 included an introduction, data collection, data analysis, findings, deliverables and recommendations, evidence of trustworthiness, strength and limitations of the study and a summary. The findings of the study were discussed in detail. Based on the findings of the study deliverables and recommendations were provided. The trustworthiness of the findings and the strengths and limitations of the study were discussed. Section 5 of the study includes a dissemination plan and a conclusion as well as a summary.

Section 5: Dissemination Plan and Conclusion

**Dissemination Plan**

The findings for this study will be disseminated through a Power Point presentation to the chief operations officer, the chief compliance officer, and the remaining leadership team of the organization experiencing the problem. The leadership of the organization experiencing the problems will meet with me. I will present the information gained through the study. The information obtained from the study showed that culture changes must first start with leadership. The leadership can model these changes. Other things that leadership can do is to listen to their employees, obtain feedback from employees though surveys, provide better training to employees through a learning management system, and invest in their employees through different meetings and activities that promote teamwork and unity.

The outcomes of this study can be valuable to other organizations. The information gained from the study does not apply to specific nonprofits. All organizations, both for-profit and nonprofit, have cultures. Creating a positive workplace culture is essential in nonprofits and for-profits. Workplace culture can affect the production and financial standing of any organization (Langer & LeRoux, 2017).

The implications for positive social change based on the results of this study are numerous. One implication for positive social change is a better work environment. Through positive leadership, employees can be influenced to be a part of social change. A positive work culture improves the human condition. Learning in a positive work

environment improves the human condition. A positive workplace culture allows employees to better give back to their community.

## Summary

Positive workplace culture can lead to long-term sustainability. Positive culture changes must start with the leadership of an organization. Leaders need to model the desired culture through their words and actions. Investing time and training into employees allows employees to view culture in a positive way. Creating a positive workplace culture allows an organization to create long-term sustainability. A positive workplace culture also allows employees to have better job satisfaction, which can change the lives of those employees and their families. Positive social impact is related to a positive workplace culture.

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Appendix A: Scope of Work for PAS

| 1. Client Information | |
|---|---|
| **Name of Client Organization:**<br><br>. | **Name of Student/Researcher:**<br><br>*Katrina Coffman* |
| **Name of Client Contact Person** | **Email of Client Contact Person** |
| **Client Contact's Mailing Address** | |

| 2. Project Description |
|---|
| *A nonprofit organization has suffered from a negative workplace culture for several years. Employee surveys and exit employee surveys indicate a negative culture. Employees state they feel undervalued and unappreciated. Employees have also stated they feel they could be fired at any time without just cause. The leadership of the organization has made many changes to try to have a better workplace culture. Despite these changes the organization's employees still report a negative workplace culture.*<br><br>*The project is focused on changing the negative culture to a positive culture in a nonprofit organization. Information regarding best practices will be gathered from another nonprofit that has a reputation for a positive workplace culture. The information gathered will be provided as recommendations to the nonprofit with negative workplace culture.* |

| 3. Tasks to be completed by Researcher |
|---|
| *The researcher will conduct a qualitative case study to determine how leadership in a nonprofit organization can change their negative culture to a positive culture. The Competing Values Framework will be used for this study. The researcher will develop questions for the nonprofit organization that has a reputation for positive culture and employee surveys that confirm a positive workplace culture. These questions will center around the organization's positive workplace culture and how this culture was achieved. These questions will be administered by the researcher to employees at the nonprofit organization with a positive workplace culture. This is a separate nonprofit that has no* |

*direct connection to the nonprofit with negative workplace culture. Once all the data is gathered the researcher will provide information to the leadership of the nonprofit with negative workplace culture so that best practices can be implemented at the organization. The researcher will ensure that all participants of the study have consented, and the researcher will ensure the privacy of the participants is maintained. The researcher has obtained approval from the nonprofit with positive workplace culture to conduct the research. The researcher will seek IRB approval. The researcher will record all interviews. The researcher will use thematic coding for the analysis procedures. The researcher will maintain data integrity by ensuring accuracy in coding interview answers.*

## 4. Assistance (including data) to be provided by Client Organization

*The client organization will allow the researcher the space and time to meet with participants and collect the data. The client organization will allow the researcher access to data that has been collected regarding the organization's culture.*

## 5. Deliverables for the Client Organization

*The results of the study will be presented to the organization in a written report as well as in power point slides. This information will address the public administrative problem.*

**Terms of confidentiality and compliance:**
In all reports (including drafts shared with peers and faculty members), the student is required to maintain confidentiality by removing names and key pieces of information that might disclose an Institution's/individual's identity or inappropriately divulge proprietary details. If the client organization wishes to publicize the findings of this project, that is the organization's judgment call.
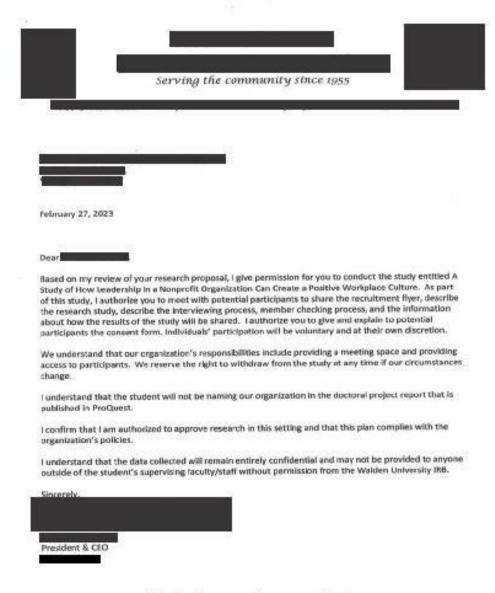
The student will publish the study in Proquest as a doctoral capstone (with site and participant identifiers withheld). The study is based upon the academic research completed by the student as well as the data provided by the Client Organization and/or collected by the student as outlined in the above agreement. If the data collected include interviews, interview recordings and full transcripts will be shared with any interviewee (upon request), and the student will provide opportunities for clarifying previous statements. Transcripts with identifiers redacted may be shared with the doctoral student's university faculty, peer advisors, and site leadership (upon request).

The student will not use these data for any purpose other than the project outlined in this agreement. The doctoral student is responsible for understanding and complying with all of the Client Organization's policies and regulatory requirements.

The Code of Conduct in the current Walden University Student Handbook and the ethical requirements for IRB compliance will also govern the research completed by the student. Students are required to uphold professional principals in fulfilling their roles as consultants to client organizations. In addition to confidentiality requirements and protections as outlined above, students also will protect the integrity of the Walden University and the Client Organization and exhibit professional conduct at all times.

### 6. Project Approval & Signature

| | |
|---|---|
| *Signature of Client Contact Person* ▉ | *Date* 02/27/2023 |
| *Name of Client Contact Person* | ▉ |
| *Title of Client Contact Person* | *PRESIDENT & CEO* ▉ |

Appendix B: Approval Letter From Organization

*Serving the community since 1955*

February 27, 2023

Dear

Based on my review of your research proposal, I give permission for you to conduct the study entitled A Study of How Leadership in a Nonprofit Organization Can Create a Positive Workplace Culture. As part of this study, I authorize you to meet with potential participants to share the recruitment flyer, describe the research study, describe the interviewing process, member checking process, and the information about how the results of the study will be shared. I authorize you to give and explain to potential participants the consent form. Individuals' participation will be voluntary and at their own discretion.

We understand that our organization's responsibilities include providing a meeting space and providing access to participants. We reserve the right to withdraw from the study at any time if our circumstances change.

I understand that the student will not be naming our organization in the doctoral project report that is published in ProQuest.

I confirm that I am authorized to approve research in this setting and that this plan complies with the organization's policies.

I understand that the data collected will remain entirely confidential and may not be provided to anyone outside of the student's supervising faculty/staff without permission from the Walden University IRB.

Sincerely,

President & CEO

Our business works, so people can.

a non-profit agency • Contributions are tax deductible

Appendix C: Interview Questions for Nonprofit Organization

**Introduction**:

I am conducting research regarding positive workplace culture. I am seeking to gain information to create a positive workplace culture in a nonprofit organization. I, as the researcher, will be the only person with access to the interview. When interview information is not in use it will be stored in a locked cabinet. All information is confidential and there are no right or wrong answers to the questions. You can stop the interview at any time. Are you comfortable with the interview being recorded? Do you have any questions before the interview begins?

1. How long have you worked at this organization?

2. What is your position?

3. How do you perceive the culture at this organization?

4. What do you think makes this organization have a good or bad culture?

5. How does leadership contribute to the culture of the organization?

6. Are there ways you feel the culture of the organization could improve?

7. What role does culture play within the organization?

8. What role does the individual employee play in the organization's culture?

Appendix D: PowerPoint Deliverable to Partner Organization

*A Study of How Leadership in a Nonprofit Organization Can Create a Positive Workplace Culture*

2023

# Professional Administrative Study

- A study was conducted in a nonprofit organization. The organization in the study is known for its positive workplace culture.
- Nine employees from the organization were interviewed regarding the culture of their organization.

# *Findings*

- Information from the study indicated for an organization to have a positive workplace culture all leadership in the organization must be committed to creating a positive workplace culture.

- All leadership must be modeling the positive workplace culture.

- Leadership should be willing to receive feedback from employees and possibly act on that feedback when deemed necessary for cultural change.

- The nonprofit organization should consider implementing a learning management system to ensure all employees are trained so they can perform their jobs successfully.

# Executive Summary

Positive workplace culture can be attained. Having leadership committed to the change and lead by example is one way to make positive changes. Obtaining employee feedback and making changes when appropriate is another way to create a positive workplace culture. Additionally, implementing a learning management system can create positive workplace culture.

# Executive Summary Continued

There are many different learning management systems available in the nonprofit sector.  Research would need to be conducted to determine the learning management system that best meets the needs of the specific organization.

Organizations can also create their own learning management systems.

Thank you,

Katrina Coffman, Research Student