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Overcoming the Adverse Impact of Internal Subculture Communications within Organizations

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Abstract

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MSS, U.S. Army War College, 2005

MBA, Regis University, 2001

BS/BA, University of Arkansas – Fayetteville, 1989

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

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Abstract

The need for clear and organizationally effective communications is necessary to maintain sustainability as competition increases. Current research has not addressed problems associated with senior managers' clarity and intent and the misinterpretation by midlevel managers of that intent, causing division managers to misinterpret the company plans. Unresolved miscommunications may lead to destructive subculture development. This mixed methods design focused on how to minimize the confusion that manifests between senior and midlevel management within diverse and decentralized decision support structures. The secondary purpose was to advocate for the identification of divisional misalignment and provide information for a tool to help senior level managers identify possible misalignment. Leader-member exchange theory and decision theory guided the research design associated with the study of middle-level managers *(N = 220)* whose companies were members of the local Rotary clubs and selected individual businesses in South Carolina. Results were analyzed with correlations, ANOVA, and regression. Results indicated that the independent variables of clarity, information delivery tools, mental frame, and the form of message did not statistically affect the decision-making processes of middle level managers in similar-sized businesses. However, the qualitative results suggested that the senior manager's clarity is related directly to the distinction between FYI and FYA forms of communication. Positive social change may result from the findings. The results could be used to improve decision makers' ability to communicate their organizational strategy to other managers, thus promoting sustained businesses success and employment in a community.

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Dedication

This study is dedicated to my parents, Lee and Erma Farrier, who never gave up on me and taught me early that perseverance to achieve is a laudable habit. I also dedicate this work to my uncle, Roy Farris, who instilled in me a love of learning; and to my daughter and son, Stephanie and Jeremy, who often endured not having a dad to enjoy their many activities because of my civilian and military educational requirements. Additionally, I dedicate this study to the myriad mentors, peers, and friends who supported me throughout this journey. Without their combined support, this study would not have been possible.

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"We are not human beings having a spiritual experience; we are spiritual beings having a human experience."

—Pierre Teilhard de Chardin
French philosopher

I would like to acknowledge the following people whose guidance and support enabled me to complete this milestone:

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Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

In this study, I focused on how leaders can overcome the adverse impact of internal subcultures within organizations. Although decentralized organizations may lend themselves to flexibility, they are subject to emergent subcultures that diverge from the company's goals and rob the necessary resources that provide continuity and sustainability for competitive and profitable direction (Engle, 2013; Herrara, Duncan, & Ree, 2013; Karanges, Beatson, Johnston, & Lings, 2014). Identifying these internal subcultures is necessary to capture positive lessons learned or to realign divisions that have strayed from company goals.

Thus, the need for this study was preemptive. No known research was available that focused on the clarity of the senior manager's directions, the tools made to deliver them, the mental states of the middle-managers, the forms those directions come in, and their combination to see how such issues affect the overall decision making of the middle-managers who drive organizational competencies. Literature on the act of ethical decision making and how those decisions come about is lacking (Pitesa & Thau, 2013). Companies will continue to ignore the lessons learned and the profits or losses not realized because of the power of decentralized subcultures without understanding how these variables interact.

Subcultures, when identified through the analysis of senior to middle management communications, might provide senior management the how and why those miscommunications occur. Through that understanding, further and subsequent analysis might help sustain the organizations that supply employment within communities.

Ultimately, this study was designed to improve company communications so that middle-managers make decisions that help support effective sustainability to overcome competitive pressures and remain in business.

Major sections of this chapter include the background, the problem and purpose statements, the research questions and hypothesis, theoretical framework, nature, assumptions, and summary for the study.

Background

Competition among corporations will continue to increase in the near future. As competition increases, the need for more flexibility within corporations will follow. Macro information provided to all in the company differs from the micro-directions provided by senior management to internal division managers. Micro-directions refer to how those communicated to think and how they might likely respond (Hermann-Nehdi, 2013). Those divisional directions from senior managers need to be more precise to so that midlevel managers can complete the tasks.

The gap in the current literature reflects the absence of studies that tie the independent variables concerning the clarity of senior managers' messages that are discerned through middle-managers, the information delivery tools utilized to disseminate that information, and the current acceptance of any previous directional inputs to the decision makers in a comprehensive manner as compared to the dependent variable of internal decision making. Carroll, Horowitz, McKeever, and Williams (2014) observed the need for studies on communication matriculation within organizations, managing those resources, and the social impacts of internal communications. The

possibility of positive social change exists as the study provides for the future development of a tool to identify misaligned decentralized middle-management decisions. Those misaligned decisions might lead to new subcultures within the organization that may rob resources that were intended initially to sustain the parent organization's profitable and sustainable futures. If more organizations remain viable within communities, the financial health of the community might be sustained by employing more individuals.

Problem Statement

The general problem concerns the decisions made by middle managers and how they interpret directions from senior managers. The specific problem is associated with the misinterpretation of those messages and how those misinterpretations affect middle-managers' decisions affecting the company's overall direction because of subunit misalignments. Gobble (2012) and Shivakumar (2014) believed that each operational division should strive to support the company's differential advantage over competitors. Providing that support requires clear communications and decisional alignment. Those misinterpreted directions cost the company resources they may not have. Also, those interpretations affect the middle-manager's decisions and how they operate within their level of company responsibility. The clarity of those senior management micro-operational directions and the vehicles used to deliver that information, the mental states of the middle manager, and the forms of the messages when delivered may not be as clear as needed to support diverse and decentralized organizational decisions to encourage future success. Absent the senior leader's clarity and the directions interpreted by middle

management from those directions, organizational misalignment can occur. Guay (2013) and Hopp (2016) posited that both the managers and leaders must align their efforts to be effective. Ineffective communications could divert the middle managers' decisions from the intent of the company plan.

Measuring the clarity of a communication process may differ between companies, but how those variations affect the decision-making processes could be important (Silic and Back, 2016). Unclear decision-making communication processes might lead to internal subcultures that subvert the organizational vision through segmenting a unified focus meant to provide a profitable sustainability for the company (Malbsic & Brcic, 2012). For example, Hall (2013) found uniting the internal culture on narrower credit union directions increased membership in the organization. How aligning the communication to affect the uniting of culture may lead to further profits as concentrations of decisions begin to emerge.

Segmented decisions, which have little to no oversight, might negatively influence other divisional areas of the organization. Future management professionals must find ways to communicate better to align internal decisions within their organizations, but connecting company divisions to one another requires strategy (Thomas & Stephens, 2015). Meister and Willyerd (2010) stipulated that the 2020 workplace must provide a social know-how that makes people want to become part of an organization, trains them, and involves employees across age groups and cultural characteristics. Francioni, Musso, and Cioppi (2015) explained that many different operational communication considerations compose a strategic decision-making process.

In this self-designed mixed method explanatory study, I endeavored to test how the independent variables of micro-operational information, the mixture of communicative efforts (management meetings, face-to-face with the supervisor, and telephone, email, and company newsletters), the mental frames of the decision maker, and the form of the information itself affect the dependent variable of the middle management's decision-making processes. The pilot study consisted of one South Carolina company that fit the criteria of the main study. I used the mode of employee numbers of size for this study, even though small and medium-sized businesses are generally categorized by varied constructs of annual receipts and employee sizes of their independent industries and averaged by North American Industry Standards (NAICS). The participants for the main study represented small- to medium-sized South Carolina companies as defined by the U.S. Small Business Administration (2014), with one to 500, and 501 to 2,000 employees respectively. To meet the selection criteria the participants needed to have worked for businesses that contained at least three internal divisions, and were larger than a micro-business consisting of fewer than 50 employees.

Contemporary theorists believe that future business successes rely on the executive manager's knowledge of the importance and utilization of internal cultures. Accessing the ability to remain strategically competitive derives from the ability to communicate well as explained in Meister and Willyerd (2010), Clifton (2012) and Herrara et al. (2013). My objective for this study was to improve senior to middle manager communications by developing an instrument that identified communication errors so that senior management and stakeholders might modify those adverse

influences. The goal associated with that objective was to provide a positive impact on the directions of management and the organization's vision. In addition, as companies increase their competitive postures to survive, understanding the internal culture may become more significant (Akbari & Shahnazari, 2014). Internal cultures can work against an organization's decision making and can affect both profits and long-term survival (Perri, 2013). The focus was on those cultures that do not necessarily follow the prescribed rules of the corporation, and therefore, become misaligned in their efforts.

The need to understand the effects of misaligned decisions made by middle managers may become even more important as business competitiveness increases. Those decisions must relate to those misaligned perceptions between the company's senior and middle managers to understand the effects the decisions have on misaligned cultures. Finding those possible misalignments means companies must identify possible communication misinterpretations first (Mazzei & Ravazzani, 2015). Further, those misaligned divisions may result in the inability to improve communications and decision making within decentralized organizations that help to sustain them economically and competitively (Escobedo Jett, & Lao, 2012; Kumar, 2014). This gap in the literature does not provide sufficient managerial guidance to find misalignments without causing too much adversity in the organization. This study endeavored to improve the efficiency of communications through the identification of possible misinterpretations between the senior and middle managers within companies. Misinterpretations that result in subculture can be determined through a cross-sectional study of the communications and decision-making processes. Although both Escobedo et al. (2012) and Kumar (2014)

discussed that decentralized decisions benefit the organization's ability to sustain themselves and compete better in the future, neither considered misaligned divisions in their discussions. This study provides future business leaders with a way to maintain their companies without committing vast resources to help identify internal misalignments.

Better business sustainability can result from understanding the need, identifying those divisional subcultures, and providing a possible way to enhance the positive benefits provided by subculture creativity while realigning negative misalignments. LePla (2013), Yohn (2014), and Leal, Marques, Marques, and Braga-Filho, (2015) explained that internal marketing creates clarity, creativity, and commitment that starts with communicating the branding and alignment of values. These uncaptured benefits that might prove identifiable through the information available within the organization's communication system and may bolster profits and provide barriers to competition.

An organization's informational efforts may reach some divisions that have strayed from the original intent of the hierarchical organizational thought. Misinterpretations of that information can lead to organizational misalignments. Groups who do not follow the organizational plan do not interconnect and share communications with their peers (Engle, 2013). It is up to senior managers to decide how that information disseminates throughout the company. It is up to their subordinate decision makers to champion, or decide not to champion, the processes to perform the work as originally intended by the information provided through the organization's communication system. Finding out if the middle manager follows, or decided not to follow the information purposely or due to misinterpretation, may provide improvement or sustainability

direction for the whole of the organization. Misaligned decentralized divisions, when represented by internally grown subcultures, can work for or against an organization. Senge (2006) explained that without the identification of internal cultures within an organization, senior managers might inadvertently lead their corporation toward destructive outcomes. Divisional managers have a stake in the company and their individual futures as managers and associatively do not want to make poor decisions. How company communication disseminates and becomes understood may influence how divisional managers process that information to sustain his or her division. Sustaining his or her division may or may not be in the best interests of the whole corporation.

In this study, I addressed the ability or willingness of people within subcultures who do not follow guidelines when company miscommunication is present. Engle (2013) discussed that the acceptance of divisions to follow company guidelines is crucial to sustainability. However, subcultures that stray from the company vision within the organization may result in conflicts for senior management. Discovering where and why those divergences exist and where they may become exacerbated through the decisions made by mid-level managers is important. Senge (2006) discussed the necessity to align decentralized divisions or groups within organizations. That alignment may lead to a better allocation of resources and could produce increasingly profitable organizational outcomes or produce barriers for competitive footholds in the marketplace. Misaligned divisions may have developed different processes that might surface through the analysis of the communication process and their decision-making actions. Finding out why those

differences occur may point to misalignment, which when corrected may prevent the loss of organizational resources.

The gap in the current literature is its failure to address how these particular inputs directly or indirectly affect decisions made by the company's internal division manager. Aritz and Walker (2010) and Hopp (2016) examined how intercultural dissimilarities occur as a consequence of divergences in cognitive patterns. Cultural assessments are not sufficiently scrutinized in the existing literature. If upper-level managers cannot identify these cultural misalignments, they may not have the tools they need to address them.

Purpose of the Study

The primary aim of this research was to provide a way to identify these misalignments so that management may realign them. This study revealed the level, clarity, and subjectivity of the senior management information and how that information relates, or does not relate, to possible misalignments in divisional rationale compared to the company intent through a mixed methods explanatory form of research. Learning how those inputs affect the organizational decision-making processes must begin with identifying where those communicational breakdowns occur. Those identified miscommunications require additional research that may involve fewer organizational resources to take advantage of the realigning those misalignments. This study represents how to increase effective communications by identifying those misalignments as the first step in that process.

The information needed some of might have resulted in misaligned decentralized cultures fracturing the company intent in the decision making, which can be positive or

negative. Poor decisions of peripheral divisions can cause catastrophic losses within organizations. Albert, Kreutzer, and Lechner (2015) believed the awareness of the disruption of directions or procedures increases the requirement for adjustments between satellite and core operations and finding the source of that disruption was critical. As the rules, or environments, change rapidly, so do the requirements to know how each division manager reacts to the senior manager's information provided to them.

When those rapidly changing environments overwhelm the clarity and purposeful direction within companies, they must respond quickly to stay competitive. That strategic competitive stance requires organizations to constantly inform and redirect, if necessary, the core abilities of the organization. Engle (2013) described several companies that underwent extraordinary changes to survive, including General Motors, Chrysler, AIG, and Citibank. Managers do not intentionally make bad decisions, as it would negatively affect their futures. Internal cultures that contribute to poor decentralized decisions may develop without their knowledge and can be due to several factors. As discussed by previous theorists such as Honeycutt, Tanner, and Erffmeyer (2008), managers should ensure that subcultures do not impede organizational efforts, but their development may escape detection. The identification of subcultures is important because the customer represents the company's external cultures that shift over time and can affect positive communications efforts (Oliveira, 2013). The organization could falter without a concerted effort to maintain competitive postures. Internal problems associated with poor resource allocation, underperformance of profit centers, and so on might occur due to miscommunication or misuse that leads to the misalignment.

Middle managers might subvert the organizational vision by taking actions that maximize their part of the organization, but is a detriment to other areas of the organization if the directions are unclear or misunderstood. Senior executives draft and disseminate micro-operational information to division managers. The micro-operational information requires the accomplishment of specific acts in the individual division. While attempts might ensue to clarify that direction, the information may or may not be clear enough. Senior middle-level managers discuss the business openly with senior management because the employees are closer to the customer (Koury, 2013). Macro messages from senior managers do not represent individualized directions and are not part of this study. Senior managers typically do not pass on confidential, sensitive, or erroneous information; they intend that micro-information for individual middle managers, who must pass it to their subordinates.

Identifying misaligned communications must occur to increase the effectiveness of communication within the company. Improving the micro-operational directions to divisional managers via the senior manager represents the primary orientation of this study. Identifying misaligned cultures focuses on the independent variables of the operational information supplied to internal division managers and addresses the adequacy of that guidance and the tools used to deliver them, the mental frame of the decision maker to the dependent variable of the middle managers' decision itself. The independent variables were juxtaposed individually to the dependent variable to find out how they triangulate to direct those who must ensure the tasking completes. Additionally,

the combined independent variables may have a different impact on the decision-making process.

In this research, I addressed how clear and effective was senior managers' direction to their subordinate middle managers. The independent variables were screened through a process of analyzing the results of the clarity of direction, information delivery tools, mental frames, and the forms of the messages those middle managers were subjected to and may have adversely impacted the decision-making process.

I analyze the information and the tools separately and then combined them along with how the information propagates decisions made by the company's division managers. Management teams exert a logical conclusion when they accept they cannot improve knowledge of the inner workings of the corporation without the inclusion of two-way and open communication. Herrmann-Nehdi (2013) and Espinosa et al. (2015) believed workers who share knowledge to complete business transactions must be sustained by management's understanding of what promotes the team's performances at the core level. The gap in current literature existed because it had not addressed how micro-operational information directly affects decisions made by the corporation's internal division manager. Through a mixed methods methodology, the primary purpose of this research was to reveal the level, clarity, and subjectivity of the information and how that information relates, or does not relate, to possible misalignments in divisional direction, compared to the company intent.

Research Questions and Hypothesis

The principal research question identified for the study aligns with the goals of a mixed methods design and is, as follows:

Central Research Question

What is the extent of the relationship between micro-operational direction clarity, its information delivery tools, the mental frame of the division managers, and the form of the information when given to the division managers to the decision-making process?

Null hypothesis: Clarity, information delivery tools, mental frame, and type of information are not related to utilizing a rational or intuitive decision-making process.

Alternative: Clarity, information delivery tools, mental frame, and form of information are related to utilizing a rational or intuitive decision-making process.

Note: A multiple regression model was used to test the hypothesis associated with RQ1, and the independent variables were the same as in RQ2, RQ3, RQ4, and RQ5.

Specific Research Questions

RQ1: What effect does the organization's micro-operational direction, its clarity, have on the division manager's decision-making processes?

Null hypothesis: Decision-making process is not associated with clarity of information.

Alternative hypothesis: Decision-making process is associated with clarity of information.

Note: I presented one question that asked how clear the division manager believes the messages from the senior manager is clear or understandable, and a question on the

proportion of time the division manager uses a rational or intuitive decision-making process when compared to the clarity of the senior manager's direction.

RQ2: What effect do the information delivery tools have on the division manager's decision-making process?

Null hypothesis: Decision-making process is not associated with the information delivery tools.

Alternative: Decision-making process is associated with the information delivery tools.

Of note, I offered one question that asked for the percentage of time an ID was used to complete the decision maker's job, and, as in RQ1, a question on the proportion of time using a rational or intuitive decision-making process.

RQ3. What effect does the division manager's mental frame have on division manager's decision-making processes?

Null hypothesis: Decision-making process is not associated with the mental frame.

Alternative hypothesis: Decision-making process is associated with mental frame.

Of note, the survey instrument incorporates a question that identifies the mental frame of the decision maker and as in RQ1 and RQ2 a question on the proportion of time using a rational or intuitive decision-making process.

RQ4: What effect does the amount of for your information (FYI) and for your action (FYA) have on the decision-making process?

Null hypothesis: Percentage of either FYI or FYA information from the senior manager(s) is not associated with the decision-making processes.

Alternative hypothesis: Percentage of either FYI or FYA information from the senior manager(s) is associated with the decision-making processes.

Note that the survey instrument promoted one question that identified the percentage of time FYI and FYA information as given to the decision maker. As in RQ2, RQ 3, and RQ4 it was compared to the proportion of time that a rational or intuitive decision-making process is used.

Theoretical and Conceptual Frameworks

These questions were derived from research utilizing the leader-member exchange theory, decision theory, leadership message clarity, the tools used to disseminate the information, the mental and cognitive states of decision makers, concepts of division or company focus, and inferences drawn from studies that include inter- and intracultural differences.

LMX Theory

The study hinged on leader-member exchange (LMX) theory and decision theory. The LMX theory historically described by Graen (1976) emphasized that the processes and interactions between both leaders and followers are needed to achieve a successful outcome. These theorists' work remains viable and contributes contextually as a baseline for continued study. This research contributes to a positive social change as it could increase the number of businesses that survive future competitive challenges, thus providing for more economic stability of communities.

Leader and follower and company informational directions may be correlated with the division manager's decision processes. Herrara et al. (2013) posited there are

two leader and follower relational groups associated with the LMX theory: the parent

corporation and the operational divisions. In this case, the parent company and the

operational units are represented by the in and out groups respectively. Herrara et al.,

along with Pacheco and Webber (2016), predicted that employees who feel they were

aligned with their corporation received more provisions to accomplish their tasks and

more decision-making authority than those who did not feel part of the organizational

system. Effective decisions without clear and effective communications are harder to

achieve. The middle manager decisions made either support or do not support the goals

of the organization without the alignment of the communications effort.

The possible confusion between the senior management's communications are

precursors to decisions, especially when decentralized subcultures exist. That

miscommunication can be both divergent and costly. Gilbert (2005) explained the

confusion of authority leads to substandard performances. If individual managers do not

work with a fluid understanding of where they should be, or where they are going,

continuity of effort and the sustainment of those resources to supply the organization's

direction may not occur. Such discourse might not be intended, although possibly began,

through communication channels.

Misalignment of purpose and divisional direction might lead to management

confusion, exacerbated by different communicational understanding or acceptance within

the organization, and can cause or exacerbate further disharmony. Jabs (2005) believed

management's recognition that communication standards subsist and may substantially

affect decisions had the prospect to advance company decision-making sequels. The

resulting divergent communications may cause decisions that disconnect with organizational goals should the recognition of those standards vary from one division to another. The senior manager may be the one to realign such disconnections, which can alter work processes that could negatively affect the corporate bottom line. Fact finding within the organization can begin with leaders' understanding of the standardization of communications policy and the awareness and attitudes among managers to follow those directions. This communicational awareness may form a baseline for managerial decisions made, or not made, for the organization's future success.

Senior managers who develop and disseminate information might also communicate secondary decisions made by subordinate managers and may need that factual baseline to compete in the future. Informational overload and pressures from the stakeholders can be overwhelming. Leaders face continual tensions to create clear and uniform decisions associated with alternative approaches so that the allocations of assets are manageable for the organization (Smith, 2015). It is hard not to accept that logic. Managers seek information before decision-making and then, based on their experience and gut feeling about the interpretation of those facts or opinions, they make decisions. Those facts should make sense to support the organization's headquarters. As organizationally aligned decisions culminate, the resources that make them achievable should follow.

Decision Theory

Decision theory has been studied by many different theorists and includes Bayesian, psychological scaling, normative, descriptive, and natural. The accuracy of

each decision depends on its correct implementation and is associated with the environments sampled and how they are analyzed. Understanding the scope of the decisions and the application of alternatives available to the decision maker provide discernments otherwise overlooked without decisional characteristics such as clarity, information delivery tools, mental states of the decision maker, and the forms of the messages from the senior manager before decisions are made are important. Leschke (2013) suggested that business model samples help to provide discernments and lessen guesswork. Each decision sample can provide insight into the decision-making process. Mi-level managers typically experience individual hurdles while making divisional decisions, which can take time. Each version of decision theory represents a communicative piece along with several considerations for decisional rules when applied directly to the decision in question. Decisions are supported by communication and the perceptions that those communications cause.

Decision theory, when discussing management decisions and modeling perceptions, denotes such possibilities. Gluck, Jacobides, and Simpson (2014) argued that management should pursue the most modern applications available to reconcile changes to the business settings and that they should emphasize the use of the tools as much as the frames for the planning to reach those goals. These theorists provide discussions concerning connections between the managerial background of leaders and the organization's flexibility. This self-designed mixed methods explanatory study is to test how information contained and the methods of how that information within communications systems influence the internal decisions within the organization.

Secondary effects include the possibility of allowing flexible and creative solutions that may be necessary to compete in the future. The connection between organizational information and how that information materializes at the middle manager level of responsibility can reveal the subordinate manager's flexibility for contributing to creative solutions. This conceptual realization requires an understanding that management creativity, with an organizational focus, can be paramount to successful organizational strategy.

Conceptual Framework

This study attempted to address business communications between the senior executive to the middle level managers, so the decisions those middle level managers support effective communication defines the problem statement. Improved communication might occur through an analysis of how the communications reach and become understood by middle level managers when formulating their decisional outcomes. A pragmatic exercise resulting from that process is an instrument that may help senior managers and stakeholders identify misalignments before more organizationally invasive techniques are considered.

This study provides a way to improve effective communications and consists of five total variables. There are four independent variables: (a) clarity of message from the senior executive, (b) the choice of the information delivery tools, (c) the mental frame of the middle manager who is making the business decision and the form of the message itself, and (d) meaning is the message in the form of for your information (FYI) or for your action (FYA). The fifth variable is the dependent variable represented as the

decision-making process used in making the middle manager's decision. A set of seven

quantifiable and three qualitative questions are juxtaposed against one another to find out

how communications between the senior executive and mid-level managers. The

explanations of the independent variables follow.

Clarity or Divisional Centralism

As quickly as competitors change to adapt to new customers and technologies, an

organizational decentralized management team structure may result in an enhanced

ability to creatively out-focus its competitors providing a successive and unitized

strategic direction. That does not mean that decentralized managers should have too

much flexibility allowing decisions that could distress the organization. Too much

flexibility might lead to subculture misalignment. Alternatively, following the standard

information offered by the company headquarters might not provide the best decision

solve. Senge (2006) discussed this situation when he surmised that managers of

decentralized (internal and subcultured) divisions must not unilaterally decide to focus

their time, resources, and people to efforts outside the organization's vision. Senge

continued to posit that the manager should make these decisions only after a pragmatic

study of the environment. It takes a flexible structure with an organizational management

style to achieve a successful strategic information system that supports decision-making

alignment. That flexibility may have to measure organizational successes or failures of

their decentralized divisions while not damaging organizational vision. The

organization's vision may require updating to meet the needs of future customers.

Further, strategic communications can reflect how someone's characterizes given topics

and may reflect the value they put on what they develop, and that may change associated with the different levels within the organization (Henderson et al., 2015).

Scholars do not accept a singular theory or decision without proof, or a way to decide the truth, without analyzing the opposing view. Mantere and Ketokivi (2013) posited that there exist different views and theories among people and analysis of both are necessary to acquire and accept those different views from peers to provide for an informed decision. Divisional managers might know their individual environments better than their organizational headquarters know them. The revelation of how those different viewpoints between senior managers, peer division managers, and the division manager in question become decisions might prove insightful. Therefore, it is relevant to review the mindset of the divisional managers to see what and how they perceive the organizational communications that support what they must do to stay competitive. The perceptions of some managers may or may not be the reality of the managerial many.

The quality of that data transferred from a centralized data stream to a decentralized management team, and vice-versa, identifies the usefulness of that data and provide senior managers with a tool that identifies informational weaknesses. Herrmann-Nehdi (2013) and Wood (2016) promoted learning associated with each individual on the team and how each think so additional unforeseen benefits would become apparent while decreasing the judgments of each other. The secondary purpose of this study was to advocate improved clarity and divisional use of that properly aligned shared information to help senior managers harness that creativity to affect a positive and more sustainable

profit stream within the organization and the economic sustainability of the community in which it exists.

Problems occur when organizations have misaligned decentralized decisions. Engle (2013) summarized these problems as the loss of resources in the form of finger pointing and hiding mistakes. These activities would improve through the development of strategic plans made by the organization's headquarters and profit maximization through the cross-pollination of actionable information. A decreased ability to forge internal cohesion and to build operational relationships that can provide competitive barriers and profitable advantages for the organization might result within the company if cross-pollination supporting company vision does not occur (Mayfield, Mayfield, & Sharbrough, 2015). If senior managers accept the possibility of change, they must first identify what needs to be changed. As Boaz and Fox (2014) explained, identifying the and affecting the change must be iterative but organizationally appropriate. Leaders must exercise self-developing strategies throughout the organization to successfully articulate and follow organizational goals. Identifying divisions that do not follow the company plan or vision represents the first part of that requirement. This study provides a better understanding among organizational communications policy makers, small- and medium-sized business owners, and divisional managers concerning how to increase the probability of long-term survival through the application of effective communication. How to analyze that preliminary requirement is representative of this study.

I contacted the individual companies and their middle management participants through the membership lists of the local Rotary and through businesses I reached via the

Internet. The research focused on the operational and financial health of approximately

74 small to medium sized South Carolina organizations that had at least three internal

divisions within them and more than 50 employees. The sample size of 357 participants,

of which 220 qualified for the survey, provided statistically significant data for the

research. I discuss the basis for the critical analysis of the independent variables below

with further examination in Chapter 2.

Information Delivery Tools

Several information delivery tools (IDT) are available in many organizational

forms: telephone, email, the Internet, face-to-face, and company meetings. Just as the

type of information delivery tools vary among organizations, so shall the amount of the

information provided by the organizational headquarters. Fifty-eight percent of

corporations continue to expect employees to choose how to use the provided

organizational guidance (Kahn Consulting Group [KCG], 2011). That also means that

same number of mid-level managers who lead that 58% might have varying degrees of

confusion with those directives and might need efficient information to disseminate

further directions to all of his or her subordinate managers and employees if one assumes

KCG is correct.

Senior level managers and stakeholders have a decision to make prior to

disseminating the information itself. They must ask at what point and time, or during

what phase of the communication processes, do the strategic, operational, and emerging

technology ownership change (Andriole, 2015). Although there is little disagreement that

communication and decisional dialogue from upper management must take place to ferret

out further miscommunications, how that communication takes place and develops into fruition is important.

The type of shared information to middle level managers requires a means to disseminate it. The information within regulated industries alone will increase tenfold from 2013 to 2020 (OpenText, 2015) overall. Thus, communication information officers (CIOs) will need to do an increasingly better job of screening and sharing discretionary information to its middle managers. Twenty percent of corporate CIOs will lose their jobs because of the failures associated with information governance according to OpenText (2015). How that information disseminates and who uses what information may be important to the successfulness of the organization (Zhao & Xia, 2014) and Leonardi (2015). This study focuses, at least in part, on how that information transfers and if the accurate understanding of that information affects the decision maker in the manner intended so that the possibility for misalignments are diminished.

Mental Models and Cognitive Frames

Locating misaligned decentralized cultures (represented by internal divisions) within the organization is not easy. Senior management's denial of possible misaligned operations could destroy any positive aspects of any information gained or lessons learned gained from them. Each group may interpret and use information differently and those groups apply the information to support their particular perspective (Kecmanovic, Kautz, & Abrahall , 2014; Lucke, Kostova, & Roth (2014). Senior managers should have the opportunity to identify, gain an understanding, and provide the guidance required through an increased awareness of divisional management's mental perspective

associated with the organizational communications to those divisions. Gary and Wood (2011) stated that management needs to advance their knowledge about mental models to help recognize and recognize the indications from business situations that should provide management with enhanced strategic and execution results. Identifying decentralized managers' decisions that misalign with the strategic goals of the corporation requires identification before they realign to support the company's vision and resource allocation, which is a focus for this research. Although much research is available focusing on the international and ethnic culture differences within companies, little has been published on internally grown cultures. Management studies have not increased the knowledge in the area of decentralized internal cultures. This oversight supports the establishment of resource robbing independent, decentralized decisions within their companies and reduces the cross-pollination of division manager thinking.

The integral part not discussed in how communication affects the internal division managers during any cross-pollination efforts. Carnegie (2012) stipulated the more people are involved in the organization's processes, the more loyal they become. Associatively, decisions culminate based on engagement from information received and understood in the minds of those divisional managers who may or may not align with the company vision and direction. The mental and cognitive perceptions of those divisional managers matter.

Those perceptions, shaped through communication channels, depend on how the information contributes and then affects their decisional thinking. Thinking styles influence the processing of communication and the way all of us process decisions

(Hermann-Nehdi, 2013). Gary and Wood (2011) surmised that decision makers who had accurate mental models make better decisions and perform better.

Finding out how much those mental models, influenced by micro company operations information, or not, is important. The secondary purpose of this study is to advocate the identification of misalignment to affect a positive and more sustainable profit stream within the organization. I weave micro company operational directives and the informational contexts in which it disseminates and the decision-making outcomes in efforts to reveal where misaligned subcultures exist as an effort to accomplish that secondary purpose. This study supports the need for the scrutiny of internal micro-operational information and decision-making process improvements of those independent subcultures to advance change.

The more aligned the internal divisional decisions with the overall organizational direction or plan, the better. Senior management may use this knowledge to benefit the organization's current and strategic operations. Gary and Wood (2011) revealed knowing accurate managerial mental models associated with causal relationships that connect action to performance are important. Faught (2016) exuded that the language, perceived intent, and lax attitudes in operational communications deter better performance. Gavetti (2005) further explained that those connections enhance strategic outcomes. Contextually, these early theorists pointed toward alignment issues reflected as sound tenets of organizational health especially strategic ones. Alignments themselves do not have the ability to self-regulate or monitor processes, but management does. Monitoring divisional alignments that support the company vision rests with senior managers or

stakeholders to become or sustain profitable organizations. Senior management cannot be

everywhere all of the time to inspect communicative alignment or how effective the

communication is to mid-level managers and interpret divisional managers who make

those operational decisions. Sometimes a divisional manager may be serving customers

better than the original intent. When divisional managers support customers better than

the company's intent, senior managers and stakeholders have the opportunity to capitalize

on that information for the good of the entire corporation.

Information and Message Forms

Current literature does not seem to exist to compare how FYI exists in the

company before the FYA micro-directive from senior managers are available to middle

level managers. It is logical to assume that some FYI organizational pre-decision reports

are available to middle managers before FYA direction commences. How much, or how

little, those two directives are associated with one another may be important especially if

either form of the message is misunderstood. Future losses associated with decisions

made which exclude internal subculture reporting represent building an organizational

culture that might support incomplete information and subsequent losses. It is also logical

to assume that at least some management, unfortunately, gets used to ignoring secondary

inputs to the primary organizational culture.

<center>**Internal Cultures Versus International Cultures**</center>

These cultures can be either beneficial or harmful to the company plan and could

promote or hinder decisive moves to counter competition, whether managers or

academics speak of international cultures abroad or internal cultures within local

organizations. International studies have concluded there is a connection between the supervision of cultural variety and the promotion of organizational efficiencies and competitive improvement (Sultana, Rashid, Mohiuddin, & Huda, 2013). These recent theorists extrapolated information that addressed substantial business implications that point to the importance of international culture understanding within organizations. They posited the advantages of managing diversified cultures and diversity enhanced decision-making, provided increased creativity, supported successes within international promotions and indigenous groups, and furthered the spread of economic opportunities. These past studies conclude the benefits of parallel decision making as a major contributor to cultural harmony and creativity leading to more profits. However, the emphasis did not provide guidance on how those similarities affect decentralized subcultures within organizations.

Overcoming these different thought patterns and bringing each subculture into a functioning, workable, and cohesive construct is essential to productive organizations. Focusing on communications challenges managers encounter as they develop provides management with a venue for predicting problems and affords executives ways to support them better (Turnage & Goodboy, 2016). A rubber-stamp solution is typically not the solution. Organizational structures vary and so do the ways they conduct business operations. Exacerbating the challenge of culture cohesiveness may be the structure of the organization. Organizational charts may show what should occur within the organization, but they do not show how the work progresses and what decisions support the work that may affect the organization strategically. As an example, functional

organizations led by middle managers change to compete with their competitor's like

functionalities to stay competitive. Senior management may withhold information from

divisional managers by design. While some of the guidance to divisional managers from

senior managers may be precise in scope, that is, clear information so that divisional tasks

provide meaningful and actionable operations, it may not be enough in every case. The

followership of information is either positive or negative depending on the divisional

manager's understanding of that micro-operational guidance and his or her mental or

cognitive frame. The clarity of the information and the perception of that information

associated with the divisional manager's mental frame can be significant determinants to

operational follow through.

Comparing how international cultures seems to correlate with the benefits derived

with decentralized subcultures within organizations. Cultures encompass ideologies and

those assessments are voiced. They provide comparisons to other cultures that can create

conflicts for productive learning (Sultana et al., 2013). To remain competitive, many

firms that were once national have become international, resulting in many intercultural

studies but fewer internal cultural studies. Cultures develop as groups following

particular sets of adopted practices over time, but whether international or internal

cultures, differences exist. The parallels between international and national cultures blur.

It might prove likely that top managers could find internal cultures growing within them

once they drill down into their companies made up of discrete internal divisions.

I explored how to improve the effectiveness of communications between the

senior and middle management through an analysis of the micro-operational directions

given by the senior manager to the mid-level manager. I also studied how those further effects of miscommunications might provide indications of the possibilities for misalignments of the separate divisions within companies. These organizations undergo communicative change continually (Turnage & Goodboy, 2016), and the variations include both management and technology changes. All of these need constant review to help establish continuities with the corporation (Malbsic & Brcic, 2012). Each corporation experiences differences in how little, or how much, their internal micro-operational information affects managerial decisions. The divisional decisions made from misunderstood or subsequent misaligned actions could jeopardize company intent. Senior managers can improve informational clarity and capture positive direction through a focus on the misaligned divisions that drain company resources once they become aware of those effects.

Change, in this case, advances through a slow cultural awareness of the need for this study. The sustainability of the future organization is becoming more apparent. Senge (2006) and Scott, Allen, Bonilla, Baran, and Murphy (2013) supported management's appraisal of internal cultures and the importance of sustaining the alignment of divisional effort with the intent for them to follow the organizational plan. The middle managers of decentralized subcultures, who make decisions based on un-scrutinized information that do not align with the organizational plans, can hurt company team efforts to maximize profit effectiveness.

The awareness of internal misaligned decentralized decisions due to cultural misalignments may affect the future sustainability and benefits of the organization.

Championing the alignment of internal area direction and leadership, disseminated

through a white paper completed by Blanchard (2009), wherein the Blanchard Group's

authors agreed that strategic leadership and corporate management align. The Blanchard

Group's authors further discussed that the highest customer satisfaction rating, compared

to the average customer satisfaction score is 85% and 75% respectively was due to no

small part of that alignment. The discernment to align company policy and vision to an

organization's decentralized decision-making is necessary given those statistics.

The intensified need to review cultural differences presents itself by the necessity

to compete globally. Sandri (2014) and JPMorgan & Chase (2014) believed that in the

recent past small and medium-sized businesses could survive without an understanding or

practice of management's strategic cultural direction, but no longer. Small to medium-

sized businesses must learn to see and accept the need for that training and rely on middle

managers to help carry the load. Further, the division alignment may be significant

competitively. Fewer available funds will exist than before to support the cash-cow

operations, if the misuse of the parent company's resources sustains misaligned divisions.

That misallocation might lead to the unattainability to follow product or service

opportunities to obtain more customers and associatively leaving possible inroads for

competing firms to supply the customers they could have.

The efficacy of this study promotes the alignment of the micro company

operations information provided by the senior manager, the information vehicles used to

deliver that information, the mental frames of the divisional decision maker, the forms of

the message itself, and their combined effects on the decisions made by an organization.

How and how much that information combines may be meaningful if internal decisions, influenced by those combinations of communications, unite within the organization. Social theorists Senge (2006) and Hamel and Prahalad (1994) have advanced that communication and operational parity belies harmony. The prevalence that internal cultures protect themselves resides in their literature. Further, both theorists agree that appropriate to move the organizational schema forward to compete in the future. These currently unidentified decentralized divisions might produce either positive or negative contributions that could enhance profits or drain the needed resources respectively and which may decrease the company's abilities to build barriers thwarting competitors. Also, although misaligned subcultures are not new to organizations, they are not easy to correct.

The organizational risk to correct misaligned subcultures is political. Engle (2013) discussed the divergence from the original corporate intent may exist as part of the culture. This likelihood of divergence provides for an iterative study for the provisioning or associations between the internal division managers, the communications they receive preceding their decisions, and how their decisions culminate. Associatively, a review based on the organization's communication efforts and the organizational reward of identifying disparate decisions that do not follow the intent of the company vision may be necessary. At that point, senior management might see, and possibly agree, with the change required to rectify misaligned subcultures, and that acceptance might help support further research. This study centers on effective communication and a possible tool to help identify misaligned divisions due to ineffective communications. As stated, the

resulting decisions affect company profits. How much, or how little, those profits are affected depends on the proliferation of independent subcultures within the organization. Future research providing more depth to this phenomenon was needed to advance an iterative management cultural change and are further advanced in Chapter 2.

Nature of the Study

I utilize a mixed methodology using both qualitative and quantitative methods to triangulate inferences from the collected data. A qualitatively coded design was developed using an Excel spreadsheet to reveal inferences that might be obtained through the respondent's comments and compare them with quantitative correlational inputs to ascribe possible strengths and the probability of the meta-inferences obtained from the data output. Recent theorists including Venkatesh et al. (2013) and Zachariadis, Scott, and Barrett (2013) believed mixed methods promote insights far better than either the quantitative or the qualitative can alone. Moreover, Venkatesh believed the mixed-methodology provides an enhanced understanding of the quantitative supporting numerical data and the participant reasons for their qualitative answers. Further, he posited a combination of the qualitative and quantitative methods increase meta-inferences.

The explanations of the interfaces between the qualitative and quantitative methods helped the understanding and delivery of those meta-inferences. Guest (2012) and Hashemi (2012) suggested both the timing and the purpose associated with the use and understanding of the qualitative and quantitative interface is important. The intent is

to build upon Guest's supposition in a two-part concurrently gathered and sequentially analyzed study.

The research methodology for this study was a mixed methodology designed in two parts (pilot and main). The pilot study represented the only convenience sample in the study. It provided the feedback for the verification of the questions asked in the main study. This pilot study helped identify adjustments to the draft questions to ensure that the main study questions provided understandability and in line with a consistent, logical, and transparent design (Newman & Covrig, 2013). The design supported how an organization's communication efforts and the mental frame of the decision-maker effects the decision-making of managers within the organization. It identified how much of which form of communications, management information including management meetings, direct from supervisor, and informational delivery tools including telephone, email, and company newsletter, etcetera, is used by the internal managers and how effective each contributes to daily operational decisions they make.

The decision-making processes within small to medium-sized decentralized organizations suffer or are enhanced depending how the communication matriculates through the organization and utilized by internal cultures. Identifying those decentralized cultures through the organizational lines and utilization of the communications offered a way for senior managers and stakeholders to professionalize and enhance profitability. The intended outcome of this study was to help modify future communications efforts that may affect managerial decision-making and help to align internal managerial objectives to provide better decision making that enhance the organization's profits. The

constructed data sample, characterized as a restricted population, used the Internet to collect the sample.

The goal of the study was to solve or shed light on how to address the problem statement. Improving organizational communication requires an analysis of the common thread of management information and the overall decisions made from that communication. That analysis, embodied through an examination of the clarity of the information to the decision maker, the understanding of how the information delivery tools are utilized, the mental state of the decision maker before making decisions, and the type of information received in forms of for your action and for your information, follow. Identifying how each internal division's management uses or does not use company information to make decisions may point toward misconnected directions that strategically affect the corporation. Once the organization enacts research that identifies the reason for disconnected divisions, senior managers might have the opportunity to realign and profit from that discovery. Those senior managers and stakeholders might gain insights they did not originally have to profit from the internal division manager's decisions. Also, they might cross-pollinate the new internal management lessons learned to increase profits and provide barriers to competitors who have not yet taken those possibilities into consideration.

Participants for this study were small-sized to medium-sized South Carolina companies with at least three internal divisions. I contacted companies through the local membership lists of the local Rotary clubs. This process garnered 220 usable participant surveys, providing more than enough samples to be statistically significant to obtain a .80

confidence interval. I hoped to understand the divisional managers' mental frame and how they must traverse the commitment of company directives associated with their organization's communications, which affect their individual business decision processes.

In this study, comparisons between the divisional manager's decision-making processes were juxtaposed against one another and then compared to other companies to generalize decisional outcomes. The differences might especially be important in the near future when focused organizational communications and adherence to competitive posturing becomes absolute to company success. The communications that support decisions made by internal managers, which focus on the effective promotion of company or business strategic goals – or does not, might require identification now.

The focus of this study was to improve the organization's communication effectiveness. This research was the first step to introduce a possible framework to probe the inner workings of companies to find those internal misaligned decentralized divisions that do not follow the strategic goals of the enterprise. The effort was designed to find out objectively if organizational units follow the company's vision.

The decision-making process was the dependent variable and communication inputs represent the independent variables. I reported mathematical outcomes of closed-ended survey questions and then report open-ended questions separately. I then drew associations between closed and open-ended responses. Those measured associations between open-ended and closed-ended responses provide quantified data using a six-point Likert scale. These associations revealed differences in survey treatments to obtain meta-data for future tests on this topic. The broad company lists existing from the local

Rotary clubs, combine and associate with the businesses contacted via the Internet within

South Carolina. The combined associations provided contacts for 220 usable responses

from participants in this study.

Appropriateness of Design

Mixed method research (MMR) was the most appropriate design for this study

because it required juxtapositioning and cross-referencing of information to find

relevancy between the data and comments from respondents. Based on Doğan, Atmaca,

and Yolcu (2012), correlation research was relevant for examining associations between

the five variables: the senior manager's micro-directives, the information delivery tools

used, the mental frames of decision makers, the form of the message itself, and the

decision-making process. The presumption associated with this model was the

independent variables would have a relationship with the dependent variable. How many

of those variables and how much those variables impact the relationship with the

divisional decision-making processes in organizations were the questions. These

relationships can suggest ways to improve communications between the senior to the

company middle management.

The mixed methodology is used to enhance the understanding of different

viewpoints that provide meta-inferences. Venkatesh et al. (2013) posited that researchers

who fail to deliver and elucidate meta-inferences also fail to contribute towards the

tangible reason to use MMR. Without the combinations of both quantified and qualified

answers, the explanations and richness provided by those viewpoints may escape

detection. The support for the mixture of quantified and qualified combination is abundant.

Further, these methodological designs develop through baseline conceptualizations of the ways to think of how design for analysis should form. These adaptations serve as foundations for further analysis. Venkatesh et al. (2013) posited an epistemological foundation including the rational, transformative-emancipatory, and a vital practical version of conceptualizations. They explained that pragmatism was associated with movement between both the deductive and inductive reasoning.

Mixing open-ended and closed-ended questions provided salient to help senior managers and stakeholders understand the depth of how communication affects the organizational decision-making processes. Herrmann-Nehdi (2013) discussed the relevancy of effective knowledge transfer to employees is due to good communications, or the lack thereof. How their micro-operational directives are understood and made actionable through the middle managers' decisions is necessary for the organization to provide information that is actionable for an organization's senior management staff (Herrmann-Nehdi, 2013). Communication has many forms and transfers differently, meaning each communication element requires a thorough review and analysis.

Representations of organizational communications have many forms—written communication, communication heard through company meetings, communication expressed by leaders, or, if perceived, as regulation. Information gathered by the recipient might act as the mediator in social settings. Some social settings are compartmentalized; others are not. Herrmann-Nehdi (2013) asserted that both buying and selling occur during

thinking, not in behaviors. In these social settings, pre-decisional support occurs in the form of how decision makers understand communications. How the communications are understood represents the predecisional thought, and that communication becomes actionable during the decision-making process.

The organization's communication systems require review if managers are to understand how communication promotes informational perceptions between senior and middle managers. Organizations have several information delivery vehicles by which others understand the current goals and aspirations of the group, including telephone, email, Internet, and so forth. As an example, if a senior manager uses one form of information delivery tool more than another manager does, that particular information delivery tool becomes a tangible part of his or her decision-making guidance to subordinate managers. Some information considered intangible for the decision maker may become tangible for the subordinate division manager, if his or her supervisor uses one form of information delivery tool over the other and that might require decisions. Thus, these perceptions enhance or detract from the organizational decision-making processes once grasped.

Also, this codependent atmosphere, between communications and the decision-making process, permeates the senior leadership's effectiveness. Communication is a social business requirement to begin decision-making processes, and it is vitally important to the manager. Hermann-Nehdi (2013) believed that managers who can apply team concepts and psychological awareness to benefit the organization are far more successful. Goodapple (2015) contended that understanding the culture connects the

decisions and direction of the organization. These interactive skills, determined by the interplay between top management's and middle management's personal social ability, training, or leadership proclivities, support or detract from effective communications and the subsequent decision making requirements of the company.

When independent stove-piped cultures begin, grow, and thrive in an organization, they detract from and undermine the organizational vision to varying degrees (Engle, 2013). How much or how little that detraction depends on the depth of the differences the stove-piped culture uses to produce or support their individual environments—that is, their technical requirements, the customer base, and their specialty and how different their individual needs are from the parent company. Organizational knowledge and the shared schema of the group begin with communication. The subsequent decision making resulting from that communication affects everyone across all subcultures (stovepipes) within the organization.

The phenomenon studied consists of differing environments to consider. Venkatesh et al. (2013) posited that the researcher should reflect upon the questions presented, the reason for the research, and how the research enables context before choosing the mixed methodology. However, how those questions, derived from the researcher, might represent a particular perspective of the researcher does matter. That view is the researcher's worldview.

The worldview the researcher brings to the MMR methodology is critical. As described by Creswell (2014), researchers bring their particular post-positivism, constructivism, transformative, and the pragmatic worldviews to the study. Those who

believe in the post-positivism worldview believe in determination, reductionism, empirical observation and measurement, and theory verification. The constructivism worldview focuses on understanding, the multiple participants meaning, social and historical construction, and theory generation. The transformative worldview focuses on the political, power and justice oriented, collaborative, and change-oriented. The pragmatism worldview focuses on the consequences of actions, problem-centered, pluralistic, and real-world practice oriented. All affect how the information is gathered and reported.

The results of this study help identify misaligned decentralized (internal subcultured) decision groups within the organization by using the company's micro-operational information available to all divisional participants. Finally, in addition to the proposed instrument development, and the data from secondary resources form integrations to support the findings of the study. For instance, I noted that the information obtained during data collection helped to promote several different ways internal communication was apparent, and how micro-operational information reaches into the divisions that either deny or enhance decision-making through various media (see below).

Sources of Information or Data

1. Existing company management questions associated with internal communication efforts or strategies.

2. Communication videos that described methods of organizational or company information effectiveness.

3.   Secondary resources that supported the research or analysis of internal

management.

Definitions

The following terms are operationally defined as follows:

Division/middle management decision-making process: Operational decisions made by

divisional/middle managers after they have received guidance from senior

managers (Herrmann-Nehdi, 2013).

For your action (FYA) is the focus for the micro-operational direction and is

differentiated from *for your information* (FYI) (Karhade et al., 2015).

Internal subculture: Any internal culture that has grown or is growing within an

organization that differs from the original focus of the organizational headquarters

(Engle, 2013).

Mental frame: Perceptional attitudes that result in differences in message scanning,

direction interpretations, power and subject influence, and strategic support (Gary

and Wood, 2011 and Herrman-Nehdi, 2013).

Micro-operational direction: Different from macro information. These are directions

given by senior managers who direct divisional/middle managers to accomplish

specific divisional job within the divisional/middle manager's responsibility

(Herrmann-Nehdi, 2013).

Assumptions

Several assumptions were necessary as I undertook this exploratory study:

1. Small- to medium-sized business owners participating in the survey would be acquainted with individually administered social and business media surveys and would share their opinions related to the research topic.

2. The survey approach for mixed methods analysis would provide an explicative understanding of both correlative and cause-and-effect relationships between company micro-operational information and the vehicles to deliver that information and the effects they had on middle manager's decision-making

3. Data analysis would be explicit relating to how those communications affect middle management's decisions

4. Participants would have Internet access to Internet capabilities, including email addresses.

In this mixed method analysis, all probable Internet participants received an email that explained the survey and conditions for inclusion and guarantees of their anonymity to encourage honesty. The survey instrument was self-designed and contained both quantitative-closed and qualitative-open questions to allow for interpretive results. The 220 responses gathered through the local Rotary clubs and businesses contacted individually helped me obtain a representation of generalized information for the total population of companies in South Carolina.

Scope and Delimitations

The mixed methods study was designed to address effective communications through an understanding of how communications affect the decision-making of middle

level managers. The analysis of survey information, consisting of the individual and collective questions, provides some fidelity to a future survey that might help to identify subculture development due to miscommunications and an organization's subsequent harmful decisions. Also, the outcome of how communications affects the decision-making processes associated with the possible development of a tool that could increase the effectiveness of communications between the company's senior and middle-level managers.

The target population was small to medium-sized businesses in South Carolina with three or more divisions within them. The study excluded organizations outside of South Carolina. The research, once approved by the IRB, began during the spring of 2016; consequently, the data collected only reflect middle managers who served small- to medium-sized business owners who were members of the local Rotary clubs, and businesses I contacted directly during that time. I included a quantitative inquiry and qualitative method involving self-administered Internet surveys to gather information concerning how the communications within the organizations affect the decisions of mid-level managers.

The mixed-method survey approach was the appropriate design for assessing the predictive individual relationships between multiple independent variables' concerning the effects the senior manager's information, the information tools used, and the current mind frame of the decision maker have on the dependent variable (decision-making) of the organization's internal management. A quantitative method would only supply the measurement of management's use of the company communication, but not the reasons

they may decide to use the communication information. A qualitative method would highlight the why they would decide to use the information, but not how much they believed in their commitment to the use or not using the information. The mixed methods approach combines both of these qualities providing a better understanding of how internally decentralized managers use the communication and the reasons why or to what degree they might use the information. Knowing how much and why middle managers use the information gave me the opportunity to cross-pollinate through coding and provide meta-analysis that either method alone could not provide. The primary focus of a data analysis is to understand and assess predictive relationships. I used a restricted sampling method including small- to medium-sized businesses with three or more internal divisions. I then compared and contrasted responses from those organizational participants that fit the stated parameters.

Limitations

I used a restricted sampling method based on company membership lists of the local Rotary clubs and individual companies contacted directly all within South Carolina. Small- to medium-sized businesses outside of South Carolina were not targeted. Although 220 participants gave their responses to the survey instrument, the restricted sampling method uses participant self-selection to participate in the survey. Because of the unpredictability of the self-selection process, I could only assume population generalization. Further, to reduce the appearance or actuality of bias, no organization with which I was ever affiliated participated in the study.

Significance of the Study

The purpose of this self-designed, mixed methods explanatory study was to test how micro-operational information, the tools used to deliver that information, and the mental state of the middle manager, impact internal decisions within the organization at the division manager's level of authority. Craig and Allen (2013) argued that individual discourses can encourage and sustain dissimilar goals, leading to negative consequences or positive implications for the company if misaligned subculture actions are identified early enough. The goal of this explanatory study was to ascertain how to improve organizational communications effectiveness by analyzing what effects exist within the reach of the organizational communication efforts and the resulting internal decisions made in the developed or developing misaligned decentralized cultures with the organization.

There can be significant barriers to subculture information-sharing in organizations, in part because of their leaders' reluctance to change or the ignorance of differing competitive environments. Fragale, Sumanth, Tiedene, and Northcraft (2012) and Christensen (2014 noted the uncertainties related to the advantages and disadvantages to change initiatives. Individuals may be fearful of position loss and the disturbance of their position in the company hierarchy. Ignoring inconsistencies is easier than open debate. However, the ability to compete relates to profit maximization and communications improvement that support that end. Part of the ability to compete strategically might be the organizational skill sets and the clarity associated with shared

information. Associatively, the decisions supporting improvement initiatives might be significant.

Change should happen in a way that improves situations rather than wrecking the organization. Change from this perspective might be accomplished when parallel changes supported by policy or protocol within organizations occur. Kolman et al. (2012) believed all the constituents in an organization should understand the standard of change and then apply those standards equally throughout the organization. Senior management must help write and deploy communications and supply the same rules for decision criteria for their various divisions within the company. This research provided an initial step toward helping to develop a process of internal subcultures currently outside the consciousness of senior management and stakeholders. The company communication system can provide guidance when used as a tool to identify those subcultures. Knowledge of misguided or misunderstood communications might refocus strategic decision making, disentangle challenges, and advance company effectiveness. Misaligned decentralized cultures might continue to rob the necessary resources for organizations to compete in the near future without improving effective communications.

Independently made divisional decisions must be identified for the senior manager's review and discernment to advance profits and sustainability. When cultures are analyzed from an internally developed lens, instead of a multinational or multi-ethnic viewpoint, the observation may increase the tools available to management for change and improvement processes (Jabs, 2005; Ivey, 2013). Jabs (2005) focused on language barriers that were associated with the difference in divisional abilities; Ivey focused on

governance cementing the need for communications efforts to access all divisions. As such, communication enhances the ability to complete work efficiently and provide for the better socialization of the company. Both theorists' work suggests that the more diverse a corporation, the more understandable and manageable the information communicated to streamline effort may be necessary.

The resources to complete communicational alignment analysis may be too costly in resources or time. However, misalignments can be costly, too. A secondary function of this study was to identify those misalignments before unacceptable company resources are depleted from misaligned direction. I assumed that the majority of large organizations have three or more subdivisions within them and the resources used to identify those misalignments be cost-effective. Once decentralized divisions become identified, senior managers can reign in and use the positive lessons learned or to realign the focus of those individual decentralized cultures so that the organization might remain competitive in their business environments.

To stay competitive in the future, senior managers must promote creativity by allowing divisional managers to establish new ways of serving customers without diverging too far from the company's mission. Attempting to reach out to or develop new customers sounds rational, but division managers may not realize how much they may have strayed from the company's ability to support their efforts. Meister and Willyerd (2010) explained their support for a flexible and creative decision-making team when they asserted that the 2020 workplace requires companies to garner an individualized social involvement that causes employees to want to stay, train, and engage themselves

regardless of age or cultural characteristics. A requirement for businesses to compete in

the future will involve improvements to communicate more efficiently to support

accurate and timely information that permeates across the organization leading to more

proactive managerial decisions.

Allowing creativity while maintaining operational control may not be easy for

some. Herrara (2013) presented a both a positive or a negative outcome if middle

managers stray too far from the corporation's ability to support creative customer

acquisition. Simply waiting for an internal subculture to develop and affect the

organization is not practical in modern situations. Both profits and policies that increase

competitive barriers should get better if companies are to be financially sound and

successful. Subsequently, what communications permeate the company, and the reaction

of that communication, what divisional managers say when, and to who might spell

disaster? Herrara posited that this communication requires senior management to be

cognizant of the need to focus the corporate intent while still allowing some flexibility for

middle managers.

This study built on two fundamental theories, LMX and decision theory. Because

the dependent variable was the decision-making process, I expand on it here. Several

types of decision theories and decision processes support innovation or change. Jain and

Singh (2013) discussed both emotional and rational decision makers, like and diverse

types of decision makers, along with those who affiliate strongly with the culture, and

those who do not, and then juxtaposed one against another. Jain and Singh focused on the

emotional and social opinions of participants with results depicting the individual views

and social combinations of those opinions after hearing other management input. Jain and Singh posited the need to identify comfort levels concerning static cultures and introducing foreign cultures within multicultural or multinational organizations. Internal cultures within corporations face many of the same challenges. The scope of communications and cultural differences that effect decisions should broaden outside only the multinational (Arefina, 2014). Also, new research and information is valuable, especially if the willingness to communicate across divisions impacts the decision-making process. Juxtaposing differing internal groups might inform us of a process providing the identification and challenges divisions face within the corporation. Some internal cultures may feel they fit into the social scheme of the corporation while others may not.

Cultures, and how people see themselves in them or outside of them, do not seem to be the only determinate of how decisions initiate within the corporation. Pitesa and Thau (2013) argued that power affects ethical decision making within organizations; as such, scholars might conclude those in low power positions whether they believe it is so or if organizationally structured as such, make decisions that are most likely to be normative. Pitesa and Thau posited that those who have high power most likely make moral decisions from a self-directed modicum. Such information could influence group or organizational decision making and require a review of the situational power both individuals and management apply. This information could prove significant if coalescence within decision making is the goal of an organization's senior managers. Scholarly implications represent explanations within organizational decision making,

which might utilize such findings as ways to understand differing opinions from management and employees. The information helps explain other organizational positional facets and predisposed ideas before and after developed and sophisticated studies presented and completed for further questioning; in this case, I used a mixed methodology.

The social impact of this study rests on its ability to further the knowledge concerning how to help senior managers identify discourses in communications that may impact middle management decisions, which may further lead to misaligned decentralized divisions within their organizational responsibility. The results suggest the need for continued research to keep businesses competitive and help more individuals and communities stay employed. Company stakeholders should accept the warning from Herrara (2013) and Karanges et al. (2014) that follow-up actions on their parts are necessary. The economic stability of a society signals social health. Identifying creative avenues to gain, support, and to maintain future customer bases may enhance positive social change. Profit-maximizing decisions may not happen soon enough for many companies without an informational baseline for managers to align decentralized cultures with company strategic plans while formulating improvements supporting increasingly effective communications.

Summary and Transition

In Chapter 1 I introduced the need to better understand how a company's informational efforts may enhance or detract from the decisions made by internal managers affecting business outcomes. The ways to help structure organizational

communications improvement without derailing existing and ongoing organizational

continuities requires greater emphasis. The decisions made by divisional managers may

affect the strategic competitiveness of the organization, thus affecting its success.

Understanding how the communications within small- to medium-sized businesses affect

those decisions is critical for leaders and policy makers to align that communication with

the overall focus of the organization. The research responses that contrast the strengths to

help establish cause-and-effect relationships provide further understanding of the

communications effectiveness challenge within companies. Chapter 1 also included a

discussion concerning the nature of the study; the theoretical foundation, purpose, and

significance of the study; and the assumptions, scope, delimitations, and limitations. The

background information presented in Chapter 1 helps to establish a foundation for the

study and subsequent chapters. Chapter 2 contains a review of the pertinent literature

associated with the primary variables and concepts in the study.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Introduction

Senior management must deliver information to middle management clearly enough so that middle managers can adequately support the near-term survivability of the company. The problem is that inefficient communications that center primarily on the micro-operational direction developed by senior leadership and permeating through the organization to middle managers may require review. This review is orchestrated through an analytical process to decipher the clarity of the information communicated, the vehicles used to deliver that information, the mental frames of the decision maker, and the type of information sent to achieve a structure for the decision maker.

The primary purpose of this research was to improve communications effectiveness by identifying misaligned divisions. Senior managers may capture their positive benefits or realign them to prevent organizational disadvantages associated with resource allocation. This chapter contains information associated with the state of South Carolina's small- to medium-sized business failures and the possibility of improving those statistics.

The literature review comprises three sections. The first section provides foundation for the theoretical backbone, the leader-member exchange (LMX) theory and decision theories, how they relate to organizational cohesiveness and managerial decision processes, and the search strategy for the study. The second section of the literature review delineates possibilities of how the micro-operational directives, the information delivery tools, the mental frame of the decision maker, and the form of the message as

understood by the decision maker may influence the decision-making process. The third

section of the literature review comprises the baseline an explanation of the methodology

analysis and the social improvement implications. Also discussed in the third section are

the connected theories, future possibilities and interpretations of the research, the possible

outcomes for the research findings, and the conclusion.

Small- to Medium-Sized Businesses in South Carolina

National and individual company data confirm the importance of small- to

medium-sized entities. The U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA; 2014) found that

99.7% of all employer companies were small businesses. Further, since 1995 small firms

provided 64% of the original U.S. employment that associates, with 44% of the total U.S.

private remuneration (Brown, 2015). Also, JP Morgan Chase and Co. (2015) revealed,

"there are 28.2 million small businesses in the U.S., 63% of net new private sector jobs

since 1993 were in small businesses, and 48.5% of total private sector employment is

affiliated with small businesses" (p. 1). There exists only a one percent difference in the

SBA and the JP Morgan Chase and Company reports.

It is hard to conceptualize how the U.S. capital markets can survive to enhance,

improve, and sustain small- to medium-sized businesses without building a sustainable

economic structure. Federal banking systems monitor federal capital markets, and those

national responsibilities engender an overarching responsibility to sustain government

financial health. Individual states represent a part of that whole and have their own

economic challenges. Communities must remain financially stable and sustainable just

like federal and state governments do.

South Carolina's Information Highway (SCIWAY; 2015) showed that failing businesses in South Carolina account for 13.6% at the end of 2010, although there were no data available to show how many of these were small- to medium-sized businesses. The U.S. SBA Office of Advocacy (2014) reported the number of small businesses existing in South Carolina in 2011 was 376,491, employing 719,068 in the same year. Extrapolating the 13.6% failure rate as a mean and carrying it forward to the 2014 business figures suggests a failure rate of 51,203, and using the employment losses of 1.9 people per business associated with the 2011 figures it means 97,793 people lost their jobs in 2014 due to small to medium-sized business failures in the South Carolina.

Companies vary concerning how they operate, including the differences due to centralization, decentralization, a mixture of centralized and decentralized, functional divisions, and operational divisions that may coalesce or cross-functional lines. During economic stress resulting in company resource constraint, the value each division brings to the company intensifies as competition between companies increase. Divisional functions might continue to grow, and their foundations continue to develop value. To be successful, a process was needed whereby the divisional levels directly influence the combinations of organizational elements, continue provide the support for competitive organizational infrastructure (Drakulevski & Nakov, 2014). When management discusses how to help develop organizational structures—whether centralized, decentralized, or a mixture of both—some things are always present: communication, the informational tools used to move that communication across the company domain, attitudes of the

management teams, how to provide direction to middle managers, and the decisions that result from those interactions.

There are myriad definitions of management information system (MIS). However, questions associated with the decisional processes concerning the information system makeup and the rationale applied for IS portfolio prioritization of those initiatives disseminated to decision makers need review especially when it comes to the governance of IS systems (Karhade, Shaw, & Subramanyam, 2015). Those definitions represent varying degrees of integration as part of the enterprise MIS. The relationship between individuals, technologies, and companies define how MIS operates within a firm (Mays Business School, 2015). I consider the MIS functional piece as having two primary parts when it is associated with senior management during this research. The macro general information is available to everyone in the organization, and the micro-directions communicated to mid-level managers alone that direct the division manager what is to be accomplished by those divisional units.

Thus, the macro- and micro-environments are different. In this section I focus on the micro-directions of the senior to the division manager because there are varying definitions of MIS and its application within the various organizational groups. Given these parameters, senior managers and stakeholders can see the effects of the direct communications from the senior manager to get a particular task done and attributes of clarity, information delivery tools (IDT), mental state of the decision maker, and if the forms of the messages, FYI or FYA, convolute the message given. Karhade et al. (2015) made it clear that standardization of how organizational information disseminates

throughout the organization should be similar from decision group to decision group. The possible associations between both the independent and dependent constructs might provide associations connected to decisional outcomes, when compared first individually and then together. The Karhade et al. formulation of connectivity addresses the bridge for the information and the dissemination of that information to the decision-making process.

This bridge to the decision-making process could be critical. Karhade et al. (2015) posited a standardized communications policy. I consider the micro-directions and the division manager's decisions based on their affirmations. The individual divisional decision maker may be, or may not be, affected by the treatments associated with differing types of information from the senior manager. I parse each variable for analysis with the division manager's decision alone and then combine them for analysis last. The first consideration for analysis is the clarity or understandability of those micro-operational directions sent by the senior managers and then disseminated to the varying divisions (Malbsic & Brcic, 2012). Second, because MIS systems vary between the type of hardware and contexts of direct or indirect involvement, I analyze the information delivery tools (telephone, face-to-face, email, or company or social meeting) used as the vehicles that deliver those parsed messages. Third, how the division manager perceives the information, regardless of the delivery tool, may affect the decisions he or she makes. Further, how much of that information, irrespective of its clarity, is considered by the decision maker as FYI or FYA might matter. Decisions can be based on both structured and semistructured decision direction to division managers. Both FYI and FYA represent micro directions that are focused communication meant for the division manager. The

micro direction pairs directly to the division manager to complete a specific task, while the macro information pairs with all of the company.

Internal divisions go through life cycles just as their business parents do. The functionalities embedded in their operations require the same considerations for adapting as do the organizations that govern them. Division managers, encouraged to acquiesce for their divisional customers, may slowly diverge from their organizations throughout their individual functional life cycles. What once happened in the beginnings of those functional life cycles may not remain the same as they develop and mature within the organization. The company's middle management might overextend their reach as the company's growth becomes more complex. The tendency is to lose sight of the concerns most relevant to the company they are part of (Kunisch et al., 2014). Associatively, the communications delivered by senior managers to subordinate division managers must be clear and understood by the division managers to be efficient and reign in overextended support to customers that do not fit the organizational vision. A company may not survive without effective communications to support the organization and sustain competition against similar companies. The information tools required to deliver micro-operational guidance to the divisional manager via the senior manager must be easy to access by those divisional managers. The message provided may also incorporate the relationship experienced by the middle manager with the senior manager, and describes the mental frame the division manager may have as associated with that message.

In this narrative, I review how the communication leads to organizational decision making when analyzing how effective the organization communications to the divisional

manager are. Learning how the senior manager's micro-operational directions and the related information delivery tools, the mental frame of the decision maker, and the type of information received effect, or not, the decision-making processes of organizations' internal middle managers is a significant step. Engle (2013) believed internal cultures may exist in organizations, and those internal cultures face decision challenges. Thus, management must accept that improving decisions should begin with clear communication in light of Engle's concerns. Clear company direction may not occur without this communications analysis to identify ways to mitigate less lucrative directions that might escape the original identification or the intent by the senior management or the parent organization because of segmented silos. Costly resource expenditures might be associated with segmented decisions made by divisional managers going in differing directions, or when functional life cycles differ, causing misguided decisions that do not fit the plans of company headquarters. As an example, the company focus may be in a certain industry, but the divisions support an additional customer who could support a supplier outside the organization's purview, but within that industry. The company's senior management may not be aware of the relationship constructed through their internal divisions with those unknown entities when this occurs.

As divisional life cycles begin to diverge, those divisional differences can cause complications. As Kunisch et al. (2014) asserted, the operations or functionalities should help managers conceptualize linked actions to extract additional values and concentrate on interactions within the organization's management to enhance the importance of those

links, which may be hard to affirm corroboration to realign with the company's planning, and it may be costlier to reestablish when divergences occur.

These diversions may or may not be divisive, but ascertaining the degree of that divisiveness may be important. Engle (2013) suggested that silos represent a diversion from the organic intent of the company. Going in a different direction does not mean managers are inept, or intentionally unsupportive of their workplaces. It could simply mean that sections of the firm may have evolved differently due to customer pressures. These customer requirements might cause divisions to do more, or go in a different direction, than the company's initial intent. There is no existing research to address the topics of tying all of these inputs together and then analyzing them, to my knowledge. I believe it important to find out how the described variables may, or may not, affects the internal decision making of divisional managers and, if necessary, to help senior managers see the importance of that realignment to support company direction and survivability.

Literature Search Strategy

The principal resources for the literature review included articles from peer-reviewed journals, dissertations, and foundational books. Source locations of the journal articles were the Walden University Library search engines and databases, including EBSCOhost, Sage Premier, Business Source Complete, ERIC, Emerald Management Journals, SocIndex with Full Text, Health and Psychosocial Instruments, Military and Government Collection, PsycArticles, and PsycINFO. Database searches included the following keywords and phrases: *company culture, internal culture and management,*

internal culture and organization, cross-cultural management, leader management

decisions, executive management decisions, global and multicultural organizations,

decision-making theory, organizational decision-making, military communication,

military decision-making, change management, information systems and organizational

structure, management information systems, collective communication, cross-cultural

communication, and *leader-member exchange (LMX) theory.* The initial database

investigations using these keywords or phrases resulted in approximately 250 journal

articles.

Of the 250 articles, I cited 142 articles, 89% of which were published between

2012 and 2016 (see Table 1).

Table 1

Literature Review Sources

Source type	Number
Book	6
Unpublished manuscripts	0
Academic journals	128

To my knowledge, no research existed that combined internal communications

efforts consisting of the senior management's micro-operational direction, information

delivery tools, the mental frames of the internal decision makers, and the forms of

direction from the senior managers experienced by middle managers. I believed it

necessary to combine all of those inputs to understand the complexity of communications

improvement and the possibility for the development of a tool to identify subculture

development. Additionally, these individual variables and their combination have not

been associated with an analysis that promotes better decision making within companies.

Theoretical Foundation

The leader-member theory (LMX) and decision theory support the underpinnings

of this study of how to advance communicative policy in organizations. Graen (1976)

explained that the leader-member exchange (LMX) theory centers on the processes and

interactions between both leaders and followers and how each was needed to achieve

successful organizational outcomes. Second, decision theory has been studied by many

different theorists and includes Bayesian, psychological scaling, normative, descriptive,

and natural. Associatively, there exist myriad closely related studies that support both the

LMX and decision theories to the problem statement.

Most of those dated studies relate to multicultural challenges within organizations

but fail to examine the inter-relatedness of those multicultural challenges to different

internal subcultures within organizations. Current theorists who discussed multicultural

challenges include Caldwell (2015), who examined behavioral issues in multicultural

consumer groups; Chen et al. (2013), who discussed the relationships of different groups

based on identification with the parent company or lack thereof; and a dated discussion

by Aritz and Walker (2010) involving intracultural communications associated with

discourse analysis in decision making. This study centers on organizationally

decentralized subcultures that independently make decisions and contrast them with the

senior management's strategic vision and guidance. It may be a harder truth to examine

internal communications leading to profits. Individual communicative assessments

contributing to, or not, to company sustainment is challenging. It seems much easier to study the external "them" compared to the internal "us."

Change agents discuss internal changes but do not address the identification processes associated with independent subcultures existing and growing within companies. A fear top management may have for such actions may be that once the acceptance for the need for change becomes a necessity, the responsibility to make it happen rests on their future guidance. International cultures made up of multicultural groups have similar problems.

The correlations between international cultures and internal cultures exist because both examine diversity within the cultures. Identifying and managing diversified cultures positively influences the company (Sultana et al., 2013). Sultana et al. (2013) believed diversity enhances decision making, provides increased creativity, supports successes within international promotions and indigenous groups, and furthers the spread of economic opportunities. These correlations between the study of international cultures and the benefits that might derive from examinations seem to postulate a laudable position to compare those studies to the internal subcultures within the organization. Associative, but more in-depth examinations might result in the same beneficial outcomes of cultural harmony and creativity that lead to higher profits within the international culture research.

The value of identifying the need for adjustments or change early enough to improve organizational health, along with the choices of subjugating them or using them, might be overlooked. This oversight might be especially true concerning communication

differences. Miller (1994, 1995), an historical theorist who studied Japanese and American cultures, suggested that a context-sensitive and an interactional style of discussion to situated talk initialize in efforts to uncover rational misinterpretations and other communication occurrences. Miller identified those misinterpretations first and then provided solutions. Ignored subcultures ferment, and their actions could affect the strategic profits of the parent company. Knowledge of how subcultures affect the parent organization's ultimate vision is needed to deter competitors and increase strategic profits. Company direction and objectives are important, but without collective goals, that may not support one another, profitability may be sporadic. Senior managers may not provide actionable and resource efficient engagement aimed at improving the company if the positive direction of middle managers or the capture of the negative direction of misaligned subcultures through decisions of middle managers, are not identified and analyzed.

As processes, leadership direction, and business focus change, subcultures within the organization adjust to compensate for them. Subcultures can either adjust completely, or partially, but should support the parent company overall. Misaligned subcultures do not support the organizational whole adequately enough to promote the wise use of resources. Such discourses can lead to internal challenges and profit loss. Aritz and Walker (2010) surmised that when discourses occur, it appears they affect team group functioning and altered echelons of leadership, team distinctiveness, interactive conflicts, and the team fulfillment between participants of multinational teams. In some cases, discourse can play more positive roles. Not all subcultures adjustments are negative. In

fact, some may prove useful if they observe and improve operational or communicative inroads to affect positive profits or extrapolate new ways to resist competitive adversaries. Senior managers must see and accept the existence of internal subcultures and not become closed to environmental changes to start this process.

Closed organizations feed upon their skill sets and seldom vary from their normal operations. These companies do not reach out of their comfort zones to keep up with environmental changes, including those changes that keep them competitively viable. Hamel and Prahalad (1994) posited that the most closed organizations lose their ability to compete. In their estimations, closed organizations do not perform well. They become closed organizations blind to the awareness of outside competitors and risk being outpaced. Part of the underperformance links itself to closed organizations not being competent in what the customer sees as value performance. Subcultured organizations that stove pipe their efforts within divisions begin to lose the ability to perform and support the whole of the company. Such realizations lend another reason to study multicultural (subcultured/stove-piped) organizations.

Focusing on individual subcultural divisions alone can also be a problem. Not all subcultures represent negative operations within the company. Opposite ends of the spectrum of the never change attitudes and reactive changes to them, require consideration too. Senge (2006) described the danger of leadership focusing on a sub-division of the company and becoming reactive to discoveries found within them. He posited that top management action that prescribed a reactive stance to a subculture will result in the symptom's treatment, but not solve the problem. The failure to understand

what caused the challenge to begin with may escape analysis. The subculture analysis must include the consideration and understanding why subcultures exist in the first place and is the most important aspect. That analysis deepens when attempts advance to bring communicative health to an organization. The process of investigating the possibility of subcultures within the company may bring senior management and stakeholders to a closer and closer realization that subcultures within the business can be beneficial or harmful and enhance the communications necessary to improve their company situation. Constructively, the solutions presented to those senior managers can prove highly profitable for the organizations who take it seriously.

Conceptual Framework and Possible Inferences

Organizational cultures consist of pieces of habitual comforts that people become accustomed. This comfort may lead to divisional silos that can preclude a disastrous competitive outcome. Engle (2013) postulated restructuring silos is a difficult task when endeavoring to improve a company. Those company cultures that diverge from the company vision and culture operationally might become subcultures due to seeds of miscommunication originating from a divisional or senior manager's communications. From that perspective, it is easy to see how internal cultural views might affect the decision-making efforts of leadership. The baseline for future success within the organization may begin with the communications from senior managers that either support or deny positive decision-making efforts.

Organizations run the risk of becoming unresponsive to environmental changes without an analysis of current organizational subcultures. The company's ability to

compete might weaken due to those subculture changes or at the very least the knowledge

without the entrepreneurial response to those changes. Hamel and Prahalad (1994) argued

that organizations that accept such introspection in the marketplace continue to survive,

and vice versa. All organizations, civilian or military, compete against others for

resources. Accepting and understanding this paradigm is the first step toward remaining

healthy in a resource-starved environment and eventually in the marketplace.

Subcultures in organizations are not new to managerial concepts. However,

bringing a new approach for ways to identify subcultures within organizations, which

does not represent invasive techniques for that identification could be both timely and

less resource intensive. As a business consultant for more than 24 years I have watched

companies attempt change management using internal change agents who focus on

improving individual sections of the company with sometimes little thought of how other

sections of the company might suffer or gain from the experience. Sometimes those

changes resulted in terminations, sometimes intimidation, but always at a resource cost to

the company. In this dissertation, I proposed a method that first identifies the possible

need for business realignment using the communication process providing a less invasive

technique than initial surveys, while reducing the resources needed to accomplish that

task. As confirmed in many studies, inefficient communications do affect decision-

making. Focusing on the top-down communication and the effects associated with those

communications to the internal decisions made in organizations can identify the

effectiveness of the communication. Looking from the top down requires an analysis of

those who draft communication to mid-level managers. Tariq (2013), Katsaros, Tsirikas,

and Nicolaidis, (2015), and Steele and Plenty (2015) stipulated some of the main factors that influence CEOs can be associated with vagueness, gratification and stimulation, demonstrative intellect, job satisfaction, managerial commitment, significance and attention, and their direct or indirect participation. Using a one-way lens associated with only the most senior levels to analyze communication represents only part of the communications equation.

Communication only occurs when those drafting that communication consider how their individual subordinates comprehend the message and how those subordinates engage with one another and integrate dialogue into the solution set (Yap & Webber, 2015). Associatively, analyzing where or what affects the clarity, information delivery tools, mental frames, and in what form the information prognosticates may point where misalignments might occur. Division managers' separate from the company direction when senior leaders to not communicate the need for cross-boundary understanding.

Organizations that have misaligned divisions within them already, or are growing in them, initiate from somewhere or by something. The construct of the communication itself may be partially to blame. Associatively, the first objective was to improve the communications between the senior and middle level managers. The secondary objective of this effort was to develop a tool that identifies ineffective communications that might contribute to misaligned divisions. This tool, developed administratively in such a way to provide a less invasive disruption of the organizational whole, must also decrease risk for senior managers and stakeholders. The first part of this analysis must be to identify subcultures and their effects on the organization. As Schein (2010) explained,

management has to identify the problem before things can happen. Schein discussed several different proposals concerning why it was important to identify problems and the fears associated with organizational and cultural change. However, there was no concrete description of a way to identify cultural misalignments without increasing the risk and cause major operational disruptions. Although he discussed the use of internal groups to facilitate the identification and the importance of leader buy-in, he did not propose a way to identify the need for cultural change with an innovative and less invasive solution for doing so. That is important because to realign subcultures improvement analysts must gain buy-in from senior management. Senior managers and stakeholders alike understand a change or improvement process to highlight that identification mean they must consider the possible risk of operational disruption.

Second, Schein (2010) discussed communication but again not with a conceptual framework of how the inputs of communication might affect the decision-making process. This study provided the first known baseline associated with senior leader communication, as it relates to the decision-making process, and a process for identifying subcultures within the organization. Provisions for the backbone of this study begin with the leader-member exchange theory (LMX) and decision theory.

Leader-Member Exchange

A useful tool to explain efforts to communicate with leaders, managers, and employees in companies is the leader-member exchange theory. Herrara et al. (2013) explained the LMX theory as an agreement between the supervisor and subordinate and a better way to understand leader behavior and the corollaries associated with them. The

data provided by LMX theory support the concept that senior managers must evaluate

and provide information that is effective and useful to those who do the work.

Leaders and employees of companies must communicate well enough to provide

a united focus for businesses to succeed. The information to achieve and sustain

profitability should support both the vision of the company and the acceptance of that

vision among those who achieve integral parts of the tasks that bring profitability to that

vision as profit margins become strained. The leader-member exchange (LMX) theory

focused on the processes and interactions between both leaders and followers and what is

needed to achieve a successful outcome (Graen, 1976). The LMX theory supported a

collective, or team, concept to business communications direction.

Herrara et al. (2013) supported the collective, or the business concept of team, as

the largest contributor to commercial success related to leadership and employees. They

advanced the LMX theory as a rationalization between the cultural dimensions of

individualism, collectivism, and gender equality. The LMX theory espoused the aspects

of provisioning, allegiance, influence, and professional regard. Herrara et al. found that

collectivism is a substantial forecaster of all four of the LMX outcomes. Further,

collectivism has proved to be the best way employees gauge the leadership's

management style (Herrera et al., 2013).

All organizations should inquire and initiate collectivism as standard policy if

senior managers accept Herrara et al. (2013) as being correct. Collectivism was further

supported by Sunstein (2014) when he acknowledged individual members remember as

individuals, although each member's recall will likely be different, which may yield more

expected indicators of the general or collective population. Also, House (2004) posited that senior management should support and reward the collective dispersal of resources and processes. House's affirmations should provide the organizational glue and leadership motivations necessary to support company provisions to effect clear and efficient information to the divisions within them.

The policy to establish a collective stance for business should be correct for international and local culture adherence alike. Outcomes of studies suggest that not all links to what people do in organizations and what they think are exact in every case. Herrara et al. (2013) suggested that psychological differences exist between the actions of people in organizational cultures when comparing industrial and organizational psychology. In this study, I focused on a set number of behavioral parameters, represented by the independent variables, which may pare behavioral criteria down to a more manageable set of behavioral predictors. The diversity of the cultured practices of groups of people, known as independent cultures, contributes to the myriad of situations encapsulated within the organizational environments they occupy.

How the leadership combines their communications efforts so that subordinate managers leading those cultures understand what they mean and when they mean it, matters. Allen, Smith, and DaSilva (2013) explained the differences of management's communication tendencies as being transformational, transactional, or operate with a laissez-faire attitude toward subordinates could cause a difference in decisional outcomes. Senior managers and company stakeholders might help deliver more profitable and sustainable information to companies once those variables conceptualize.

I reduced the field of study in this area to the micro-operational information supplied to divisional managers, the tools they use to deliver that information, the mental frames of the subordinate middle manager, and the forms of that communication as variables that might associate with the effects they have on their decision-making processes. This research was necessary because Herrara et al. (2013) argued that understanding people and their social underpinnings will lead to a more advanced understanding while helping to foster employee engagement regardless of their ages or their geographies. Providing situations that link the senior manager's social interactions along with their knowledge of the workforce environment and then tying those interactions with their communication skills might provide that engagement.

The senior leaders who socialize with more subordinate managers appear to provide many of those environmental continuities. Senior leaders have only so much time to spend with subordinate managers. Herrara et al. (2013) and Tsai and Bagozzi (2014) posited that the relationships forged are not intentional, but environmental. They also suggested there were two different forms of LMX exchanges. One exchange embodies the *in-group,* where increased trust, personal associations, provisioning, and rewards were apparent and the second, the *outgroup*, where decreased trust, less personal associations, less provisioning, and decreased awards were evident. Paralleling their study supports that the LMX dimensions described the need for communication and feelings of inclusion also exist within internal cultures.

Loyalties are the same in localized cultures as those associated with international ones. Herrara et al.' (2013) focused on the collective conceptualization of employee's

association of affection and the loyalty they feel for their leadership. The cross-pollination of cultural change to affect that collective focus should help sustain profitability. That cross-pollination might begin with management's efficient utilization of clear and concise information from the top down. Associatively, cross-pollination might require some companies to change their communication policies to be effective. Herrara et al. stipulated that expanding globalization necessitate that organizations revisit their strategies and dogmas so they may become flexible enough to support differences associated with those cultural changes. Effectiveness will suffer without this strategy of diversity and leadership.

The divisional manager's perceptions could change once the type of information shared might support both actionable and profitable operations for the organization. Mastrogiacomo (2014) posited that joint efforts involving the communication of what was wanted, what tools were available, what risk was involved, and how committed all participants were would allow for a unified company front. Those effects might increase the understanding provided by clear communications and the proper use of the informational tools available to them. Further, it may help middle managers coalesce and deliver a more unified and strategic decision-making process that helps promote an understanding of the company vision and facilitates an increased sustainability. Strategic decisions require a basing on some form of decisional theory. In this study, the leader-member exchange explains ways to promote open dialogue, both pro and con, between the senior manager and the middle manager. It seems imperative that to identify divisions managed by middle managers, who do not understand their senior leader or chose not to

follow his or her direction, must begin with enough communication so that senior managers may ascertain the difference.

Decision Theory

Decision theory has been studied by many different theorists and includes Bayesian, psychological scaling, normative, descriptive, and natural. The effectiveness of each decision depends on the information available and the correct use of decision processes when associated with the environment. Thomke and Manzi (2014) stated giving decision makers samples of previous decisions made help to obtain profitable understandings and lessen guesswork. Each decision sample can provide insight into the decision-making process. There might be many individual decisional hurdles a mid-level manager must entertain to achieve a final decisional outcome. Those decisions can take time. Each version of decision theory signifies a communicative piece along with several considerations for decisional rules that directly influence the decision in question.

Decision theory helps management model decisional perceptions. Stakeholders should persist to push for advancements that are conducive to the transforming business environment, so the advancements support the implementations of effective decisions. Management should strive to update the tools used to facilitate increased opportunistic venues as well as update their individual planning aptitudes (Gluck, Jacobides, & Simpson, 2014). These theorists provided a background for this self-designed mixed method explanatory study as an opportunity to test how communication systems influence the organization's internal decisions. They established the tenets of the decisional theory that included secondary effects associated with the possibility of

allowing flexible and creative solutions necessary to compete in the future. This conceptualization requires an understanding that a manager's creativity should have an organizational focus providing for overall profitability and sustainment. Organizations should adapt or change some of its communication policy to achieve the flexibility necessary to sustain the company against future competitors.

If senior managers or stakeholders accept the possibility of sustaining it, top management must first identify the crucial need for change. As Boaz et al. (2014) explained, identifying change is necessary, and the change itself needs to be iterative, but organizationally appropriate. Identifying divisions that do not follow the company plan or vision represents the first part of that requirement.

This research provided an initial step toward helping to develop a possible identification process of internal subcultures currently outside the organizational management consciousness. An analysis of the company's information delivery tools might give senior managers some indications of how to improve information dissemination to subordinate managers. Informational tool analysis might help point toward the identification of misaligned subcultures. As managers advance their communicational knowledge, their efforts might help improve the company's strategic decision making, assist in resolving new issues, and rally to enhance company effectiveness (Meng, 2014). The subcultures that do not align with the organization's vision might continue to rob the necessary resources of their organizations and thwart efforts so that the enterprise can compete in the near future without effective communications.

Those communications might originally initiate from the company headquarters, boards of directors, or senior managers' direction. What the division managers perceive as directions are in essence what they believe or understand and reflect their reality. That belief may lead to rational, irrational, individualistic, or collective decisions that can support, or not support, the company focus. Greaves (2013) stated that decision-makers will perform an action that increases their own credence. That knowledge may help explain how the senior manager might effectively communicate with subordinate decision makers once senior managers find out how and why they make decisions the way they do. Perceptions that associate with clear or unclear communications might affect the decision maker. Indications seem to support that clear information enhances company profits and efficiencies when effectively communicated to the people responsible for carrying out the work.

Part of the information that governs the workplace is the information shared with mid-level managers from senior managers, who are responsible to stakeholders and board members. Karhade et al. (2015) explained that information systems and their approval rankings are important to support the acceptance or rejection of resource allocations within organizations. There were no scholarly studies specific to how internal communications affect misaligned subcultures associated with an organization's decision making using the variables as described. Theorists have discussed decision making, communication, and multicultural effects while decisions are made when *multicultural* refers to different nationalities or even race-related diversity. However, there is a lack of literature describing multicultural decision making when the term means the study of

independent divisional subcultures, or stove-pipes, within a parent company. In this explanatory study, I discerned how much, or how little, such information affects those multicultural decisions represented by internal subcultures or stove-piped organizations.

My intention in the development of this dissertation was not to discuss ethnic or foreign cultures, diversity-related issues, or the most general effects of communication across enterprises. Instead, my intention was to help guide effective communications through a process of the identification of those misaligned cultures that develop inside the company which are to varying degrees discriminately different from the company's parent culture. Identifying and inculcating separate divisional practices into a more cohesive direction might provide senior managers a way to capture previously unidentified higher profits. This framework may aid future scholars in their pursuit of research concerning company decision making. Kumar (2014) discussed the differences within and outside countries, but focused on technological changes when he noted that some countries accept technological change, some do not. Differing cultural adaptations to technological innovation can lead to cross-functional compatibility problems when technologies do not communicate with each other. This challenge might require a broader and increasingly diverse set of company technologies to reach them. Associatively, technological innovation might exacerbate the subculture challenge when companies have mixed customers. Further, that challenge may foster misalignment and subculture growth.

It is critical to understand how divisional managers use operational information provided by their senior managers, the informational tools used to disseminate them, and

the mental or cognitive frame of the decision maker, and what form that information takes. Such knowledge can be used to explain how, how much, or why that information is used to accomplish divisional tasks. Those divisional tasks commence based on decisions the divisional manager makes. The identification of how and how much the independent variables mentioned impact those divisional decisions is the first step to understanding a company's communication shortfalls. Schein (2010) posited that the first part of solving problems was decision recognition. This study is right on track if senior managers or stakeholders accept his beliefs. The following decision-making models provide a very limited background of some of the decision-making tools that managers utilize to make decisions as applied to the LMX and decision theories.

Senior managers might wish to improve communication efficiencies to sustain their organizations once they and company stakeholders understand how, or not, the variables may affect the decision-making processes of divisional managers. Baraldi (2013) noted gatekeepers might exist within the company organization. Associatively, it is necessary to discuss the primary decision-making models to formulate a proper understanding of their use in this study.

An Overview of Decision-Making Models

This study includes a brief introduction of three types of decision-making models, the rational, intuitive, and conjoint models. However, only the rational and intuitive decision-making processes exist in the research instrument because it requires the participant to choose which decision-making model they most preferred between two choices. The reason for the conjoint model description is to provide a holistic approach of

decision contemplations depicting a mixed decision-making model. Horvarth and Sinha (2013) stipulated that each model represented different challenges for the decision maker. Their analysis disclosed what utility culminates from the decision and who might benefit from that utility when employing each model. Each model describes a summation of various decision-making environments reflecting different factors to consider.

Rational Model

Rational models include the decision matrix analysis, Pugh Matrix, SWOT analysis, Pareto analysis, and decision trees. These rational models use different decisional processes based on utility and their uses vary across a myriad of disciplines. Horvath and Sinha (2013) explained rational decision making necessitates stakeholders to prioritize conclusions on the foundation of utility, and handpick the conclusion that generates the greater utility. The selection of the decision-making model indicates the requirements within those differing decisional conditions. The authors suggested that depending on the need for quickness, thoroughness, and the need for contingency planning the rational variant may be the best alternative.

The rational model of decision-making embodies the definition of a problem, generating potential solutions, analysis of possible solutions to predict the best outcome, and choosing the best alternative. As Greaves (2013) explained, rational decisions may presume any restrictions produced by the manager's understanding of the requirements of his or her situation, and by the imposition of any adjacent limitations. Not all the steps for rational decision models are the same due to environmental constraints and decision realities. Deciphering those individual constraints increase with the decision maker's

awareness of the decisional environment and efforts of the rational decision maker to concoct choices to maximize their utility. The varying environments where those decisions occur may have different unit boundaries. Greaves suggested the knowledge of boundary awareness and the effects of decisions made by differing divisional cultures, that may have different goals, are similar concerning macro company decisions based on the broader information available to the masses. Micro-directives from senior managers given to internal division managers remained un-discussed. Subsequently, previous authors overlook internal cultures and the awareness of how their decisions affect parallel or peer divisions may be diverse.

Ignoring cultural differences permits the loss of information that could prove beneficial for the company. Different cultures have different behaviors. Gluck, Jacobides, and Simpson (2014) believed that managers should consider both social and advancing work to acquire a progressive understanding of the company plan. They believed that an improved perception of how to increase meaning to cognitive issues could deliver a better emphasis on decisions throughout the organization. The cultural challenges may differ even if the rational process seems the same. Divisional cultures, like geographical cultures, require social communication consideration. Consequently, exempting even one division from the decision-making process could lead to ineffective buy-in from divisional management during the decision-making process. Any one of these divisions might have developed a different internal culture.

Intuitive Model

A mistaken belief that magical formulas represent intuitive decision models would be in err. These predisposed conclusions concerning intuitive models represent more than the opposite of rational models. Althonayan et al. (2012) posited that the preponderance of decisions and communications develop as efforts to decrease the enterprise risk. How the manager makes that decision could be rational, or intuitive. Sometimes the only decision is an intuitive one if a decision requires a quick resolution with little time for analysis. The intuitive decision maker might state something similar to their incorporating "a gut feeling" before making decisions. Intuitive decisions are commonplace in both civilian and military organizations. How common they are when subjected to communicational differences currently remains unknown.

Military decision makers might make intuitive decisions relative to to their environments. Too little or too little information, the fog of war, and the lack of time all converge for the military decision maker. As Caldwell (2015) described, all of these attributes are indicators of why decisions culminate the way they do. It appears from the boardroom to the battlefield, the decision-making and models of the environment require an analysis first (Ruževičius, Klimas, & Veleckaitė, 2012).

Subjected to the construct of environmental analysis, in this case, the communications environment provides the decision maker with how clear the guidance is or should be, and the extent to which the situation is static or temporary. Laing (2013) found tht decision-making differences exist concerning specific organizational genres such as decisions associated with outsourcing. Other researchers have shown how

decision makers are not always rational, nor do they always use intuitive decision-making processes when deciphering between the rational and intuitive decision. However, it is important to discern which part of the organization inherits the best utility from which type of decision. Not all divisions benefit or suffer from decisions to the same degree. Associatively, there is sometimes a mixing of the rational and intuitive decision-making models.

Conjoined Decision Models

As pure rational or intuitive models have proven less useful when attempting to discover how decisions direct strategic result, a combination of decisional methods forms a more robust process for organizational management decision making. Caldwell (2015) argued that conjoined decisional attributes help consumers to make better decisions. Caldwell also discussed the likelihood of all attributes including goal-based attributes, intangible characteristics, and the context differences for decisions. He believed that each decision maker received and understood communications differently.

One constant is associated with decision making, regardless of which the decision maker prefers concerning the decision tool or process. That constant is communication. Koury (2013) agreed that two-way communications from senior managers to mid-level managers appear to be the best way to collaborate. A strategically sound decision may not be the result without effective communications to help focus or rationalize the intent of environmental circumstances.

The uniqueness of the organization's decision making environment, their individual cultures within those environments, and how internal management considers

the choices they face affect those decision-making processes. Malbsic and Brcic (2012) and Engle (2013) stipulated that the organization's communications focus should be to measure the relationship between the clarity of the message communicated from the senior managers to the divisional managers. How that decisional information disseminates within the organization and the mental or cognitive frames of the divisional decision maker, who ultimately makes those organizational unit decisions, and how that information passes on to the employees who must perform the work must connect.

Unanalyzed communications that matriculate through the organization can engender and exacerbate any managerial biases that exist. Beshears and Gino (2015) suggested many biases can affect management's decision making, including action-oriented biases, biases related to perceptions and judgments, the outlining of alternative biases, and biases based on the stabilization of the current organization. Each organization will engender some decision-making challenges. Finding out where they exist within the organization might reduce more extensive carving of resources if found earlier as opposed to later.

The revelation of the tendency for the divisional manager to share or enact unilateral decision making within the organization could lead to more profits if analyzed properly. The outcome of that analysis could provide the senior manager with the knowledge of what and why the division manager decided the way he or she did. Increasing effective communications from the senior to the mid-level manager might result. That explains the necessity of the tool that I developed.

Another tenet concerning the differences between collectivist organizations, group led, and individualistic, hierarchical, organizations reveal they both go about decision making differently. Thomas and Inkson (2004) postulated that decision-makers make decisions from either an individualistic or a collective stance. They explained that the individualistic decisions push for the assertiveness of personal rights and conceptions that defend their proclamations against group wants, and the collective emphasizes for considerations for others in the group. Decision-making is a good indicator of how or what each divisional organization truly is in this context. The decision-making process is an indication of how leadership involves itself or does not involve itself when associated with the communications necessary to shape the organization's middle management decision teams. Senior managers should articulate messages clearly enough for mid-level managers to act upon their guidance. Unclear guidance may not support middle management decision-making and organizational efforts to sustain cross-divisional operations and robs resources from the company.

Internal Communication

The internal communications set the stage for secondary effects within the company. Ellis (2015) noted that communications start with the senior managers to the division managers. How those internal communications distribute and how they become understood within the organization follow-on decisions made within the company. Herrmann-Nehdi (2013) and Verma (2016) stated that the different thinking styles between the senior and subordinate managers can influence how the communications matriculate within the organization and can affect what and how decisions result. These

thinking styles can influence decisions and may help develop internal subcultures. The possibilities and problem of inefficient communications between the senior and middle managers might cause internal misalignment that might increase when senior managers are not entirely aware of those subcultures. Part of the discovery of those internal subcultures may promote profitability. Restricting profitable discoveries to only segments of the business disallows strategic and sustainable organizational growth. Accepting and understanding these changes may provide the company and their internal divisions with a future advantage represented by a change in how individual divisions organize, prosecute, and supply product or services to differing sets of customers. The affected decision processes affect how different cultures grow or how they change. Those decisions may enhance the subcultures' ability to help provide for strategic profits or provide roadblocks to company competitors.

Management decision making requires clear and adequate information before divisional decision makers should make considerations. Collaborative leadership styles in differing cultures might benefit through an increase of relationships between managers that would associatively support understanding and clarity (Aritz 2014; Rozkwitalska, 2014; Turregano & Gaffney, 2012). Communication is necessary so senior managers can coordinate decisions, effect the company vision, and solidify the team's effort. The message may become misconstrued no matter if the intent of the senior manager's communications is unclear or misunderstood by decision makers in middle management. The clarity may not fit the conceptual framework and mental model of the receiver. The

need for clear, developed, and understood communications may improve strategic profits or change parts of the organization moving toward achieving that profitability.

Two-way communication, between senior management and division management, is crucial for effective operations. Koury (2013) posited that management should enthusiastically arrange for two-way communication by letting personnel discuss their challenges. Koury believed subordinate employees are closest to the customer and frequently understand how to improve customer effectiveness. Failed attempts to improve the communications between managers and other employees are as important to discuss as those communications that provide positive results. The company may learn from failed efforts so they do not repeat them, or the company's competitors may change, providing an opportunity for profitable opportunities. Organizational environments change with time. Some of these reporting failures might be the result of how senior managers reply to such instances. The same might be true concerning positive results.

The communication environment affects those scenarios. Laudable and synergistic internal communications should reach every part of the company to provide structure for managers at each level even while senior management might withhold some information from divisional management for developmental reasons (Dulek & Campbell, 2015). That reason could be either individual or organizational when associated with the decision-making processes (Schulte, 2012). Mapes (2014) supported sharing as much information as possible when she suggested that senior managers must include their mid-level managers if executive management is to be successful. The divisional manager's

decisions within each subpart of the organization might either support or diminish the parent company's intent without middle-management inclusion.

How subordinate managers and employees understand such efforts and feel involved in those efforts matter. The employee's motivation ties to their belief that any organizational change is a positive one. Armenakis et al. (2011) posited that offering internal indications that a company will increase its industrious and lucrative outcomes helps encourage change recipients that the company change truly has its envisioned result. The work effort meant to support the constructive enhancements for the company's benefit might not materialize without the information reaching those required to focus the direction of the work.

Some companies focus on the external marketing of their products or services more than the internal marketing that needs to occur to keep management and employees aware of the importance of their work. The internal communications that market how those products and services come into existence can be just as important (Mishra et al., 2014). Keeping the management and employees engaged with the efforts of the company communicates connectivity.

Cultural Rules of Communication

The leader's acceptance of the possibility that stove-piped organizations exist within their organization represents only part of the company puzzle when attempting to meld cultures for strategic profitability and sustainment. This acceptance is an important step to provide insights to senior management and other stakeholders. As Sultana et al. (2013) explained, the skills of staff require development to increase their own and other

employees a positive view of other cultures to enhance competitive advantages. The identification of subcultures within the organization and the acceptance of their existence must occur so that the analyses of stove-piped divisional cultures help management reach profitable parities.

Affecting the processes to change the communication efficiencies can occur incrementally through the practice of the decision makers within each division. Training staff to support and provide communicational improvement and sustainment positively affects managerial guidance and subsequently provides the continuity for future development of divisional management. These improvements support the efficiencies of middle management's decision processes. Schulte (2012) explained that the information that supports how decisions occur is relevant. Highlighting the need for such analysis increases the resourcefulness and abilities to manage and take advantage of such diversities for any civilian or military organization.

Reducing cultural ambiguities within organizational communications may lead to higher profits and provide further roadblocks for competitors who want to outpace the company. Gallicano (2013) explained how different levels of a company's culture have different stresses. Decisions made in groups are normative in the sense that the overall benefits override partial dislikes, but listening to those divisional concerns is necessary (Schulte, 2012). These stresses might cause what should be co-dependent divisions to become independent divisions. Identifying these differences may be important. Gallicano believed that if subcultures with differing views are not part of the pre-decision-making processes, not only are they not heard, but they remain subjugated to an organization's

parameterized decision. This marginalization increases the chance that more independent divisions will not have the opportunity to voice a strategy that may provide a current or future solution to a major dilemma. Those independent divisions might provide the answer to company sustainability. I attempted to make the invisible visible by identifying and promoting the capture of existing and developing internal subculture actions so that they support organizational utility and profitable strategic planning. Another way to enhance the visibility is to illustrate how much or how little divisional management use the tools that transfer the communications from the senior management.

Information Delivery Tools

Information delivery tools—telephone, email, face-to-face, and company or social meetings–provide the medium in which company governance develops and helps management increase decision making opportunities. These information delivery tools disseminate more than simple communication. Bronn (2014) posited that communication managers must advance their strategic direction if they are to participate in decision processes where dialogue and communication both exist. Bronn found a modest but significant correlation between a calculated alignment and participation in decision-making and the invitation to the strategic development process. Bronn observed that the organization's senior management directives permeate all subunit operational decision-making within the organization.

Applying Bronn's (2014) communicative knowledge brings senior management and stakeholders to the second step associated with communication at the company level. In this case, communication brings decisional information from the most senior of the

management staff and the boards of directors to those divisional or mid-level managers who typically make the decisions. It may become apparent how much middle management chooses to use the communications available through their parent headquarters via the senior manager to make day-to-day decisions. As such, this mixed methods study was intended to give senior management an idea why they elect to use communication the way they do. Further, if senior managers can identify a trend of miscommunications or the communications usefulness of its middle managers, they may be able to curtail misalignments of company resources by reconstructing educational efforts. Identifying miscommunications that may contribute to the misalignment of divisional effort requires the analysis of how the organization communicates now.

Although other spurious communications exist, I concentrated on those above management speeches to internal groups, informal discussions between managers and employees, telephone, and e-mail. Armenakis et al. (2011) posited that communication efforts should mention endeavors, or the failures of communication efforts, and be open to the discussions of both, to all who must enact, govern, and follow-up with those who do the work. They believed information should generate willingness for cultural change. This information continually points to those portions of the organization may not congeal into a united front if subcultures continually focus on narrow self-interests. How internal managers make decisions, based or not on individual preference, could provide glimpses of personal self-interests or organizational benefit.

Mental or Cognitive Frames

How the divisional manager receives or understands the messages delivered to him or her from the senior manager may be crucial. Malbsic and Brcic (2012), Geertshuis, Morrison, and Cooper-Thomas (2015), and Luo et al. (2016) suggested that part of that mental frame may be due to the relationship, or nonrelationship, the division manager has with the senior manager, or the communications provided by the senior manager. Minas et al. (2014) provided confirmation bias affect the decision-making process when associated with predilections based on an individual's cognitive thought instead of contemplating differing or challenging data. The clarity or information delivery tool may mean little if the decision maker is predisposed toward making a decision one-way or the other. No communication input matters if the mental or cognitive frame of the division manager is fixed.

Individual measures of how decisions are made is more realistic than predilections of societal expectations of how those decisions are made within organizations (Ralston et al., 2014). Associatively, there should be a separation of the independent variables, in this case, the mental frame, and then a combination of the independent variables concerning the resultant divisional decisions made to ascertain how and if the mental or cognitive frame exacerbates the decisional information to the divisional manager. The mental or cognitive state of the division manager might be juxtaposed against the dependent variable, the decision-making process, to ascertain how the division manager's state of mind may or may not affect the decision he or she makes once those mental frames are understood. Further, it is important to ascertain why

decisions progress the way they do because the interrelatedness of organizational decisions could project a willingness to discount communication to other divisions.

It is important to know why a decision maker could be distressed concerning his or her decision, particularly the degree to which the decision maker understands what decision they are required to make due to their mental frames. Mental and cognitive frames could influence an individual's guilt and shame. Han et al. (2014) explained projected shame is not from discerning the deed or procrastination but rather an undesirable universal-self corollary due to a consequence of that deed or procrastination. Han et al. helped explain the possibility that decision maker's state of mind affects how the decision maker decides to tow the company line, or not to tow it. Those differences can affect the business bottom line. Those differences can depend on the degree of variation between a divisional manager's ways of thinking and that of the senior manager or company.

Senior managers can only guess at how best to communicate and which best information tool to use to promote this opportunity without this knowledge. That guessing might be the difference between profits, or failure. Hahn et al. (2014) supported that sustainability issues involve financial, environmental, and societal elements that differ due to the mental frames of the decision maker. It is laudable to assume these decision makers came from different backgrounds and shaped by the decisional environments they once served. Further, as those decisional environments differ so might the internal cultures develop. These middle management decision makers with different backgrounds may also serve different customers than the original intent of the company.

Their divisional direction may vary due to their understanding of requirements to serve different customer groups. It is easy to see how those circumstances might exist within company and corporate organizations.

A senior manager may lead three or more divisions, and how each division receives and understands the information provided to it can affect subordinate divisional teams. Understanding these corollaries helps seniors produce an extraordinary, high-performing group by concentrating initially on what urges the group's performances at their origin (Herrmann-Nehdi, 2013). Some of these teams may adjust their decision-making to satisfy different customer basis and view the information from that perspective. How they see themselves interacting with others within the company may vary over time. That variation can become a differentiated business subculture.

Sometimes management enables subcultures to develop within their organizations. Van der Voet (2013) emphasized that most studies emphasized senior manager attitudes and do not consider the mid-level managers' attitudes when change management is involved. Van der Voet saw that as an oversight. He believed it imperative that organizations consider how the middle managers adopt and further the senior manager and company stakeholder's communications to the teams who work directly for them.

Senior executives who support decision-making meetings may not capture profit-maximizing information for their use or consider the mental frames of the company's internal decision makers. When they do not, they can lose the opportunity to discover the use of different technologies to perform regular customer-oriented tasks. Bronn (2014)

found that communication directors pursue every available opportunity to acquire the

pertinent materials associated to complete the communication undertaking. Bronn's

description of the variability of communication describes and supports the assertion that

relevant strategic decision-making information disseminates to the company decision

makers who may, or may not, form predecisions about the company. These decision

makers might be as varied as the companies they represent. One of the ways to

substantiate how the form of the information matters in the decision-making process is to

help decipher what information requires an action from the decision maker, or not. From

the decision maker's perspective, the necessity to understand which one might prove

critical.

"For Your Information" Versus "For Your Action"

According to the Community Toolbox (2015), communication does not exist

unless it is clear-cut, thorough, and recent. Effective communications require managers to

disclose information to their subordinates that is understandable and with enough depth to

get the job done. Depending on the clarity of message and the perception of that message

by the receiver, effective communication may or may not occur.

Senior management and stakeholders should avoid misperceptions of the intent of

messages by making sure the receiver understands what information requires action of

the receiver. It makes sense that internal subcultures might require the same level of

commonality as do multinational cultures when comparing them to the breadth of

communication specificity needed to accomplish either low contextual or high contextual

interpretations or understandings (Meyer, 2014). The level of communicative complexity should be similar between companies that are hierarchical or consensus driven.

Whether FYI or FYA messages communicate information that is effective enough to help division managers make decisions depends on both the intent and the perception of that message. Grossman (2012) stipulated that unless the shared communication results in better dialogue it misses a united mark that leads to better decision making. Further, the form of the message can have different interpretations among different groups (Malhotra & Majchrzak, 2014). All of the variables mentioned earlier may influence the decisions of the middle manager and his or her teams who accomplish the organizational tasks of work.

The Gap and Background

The effects that clarity, information delivery tools, mental frames of middle managers, and the forms of those directions have on the decision-making processes of those middle managers remain to be studied independently and then collectively. The analysis reveals first the individual effects of those variables and then their combination of effects concerning the outcome of the choices made within those decisional processes. Historical and modern theorists have studied multicultural decision-making due to communication system influences. The gap is that the previous multicultural focus has been an enterprise-wide perspective between races or nationalities but not from a mid-level management or more narrowly defined communicative perspective. The recent research builds upon past studies (Briggs, 2014; Bronn, 2014; Han et al., 2014; Karhade et al., 2015). These combined studies probed a little closer to the effects of

communication and internal decisions made by cultures that currently exist within organizations. A concise study that reconciles the communication inputs to the decision-making process remains overlooked. This study advanced their previous work concerning multicultured organizations to provide fidelity concerning how much, or how little, the communication within the company affects internal cultures. Also, this research provided a tool to identify organizational subcultures who may have become misaligned. Specifically, subcultures may result from the information received from the senior manager's attempts to communicate with middle managers and the resulting middle manager's perceptions of those directions.

Scholarly research does not accept a particular theory or decision without proof, or a way to decide the truth, without analyzing the opposing view. Mantere and Ketokivi (2013) discussed the existence of different views and theories among people and supported that analysis is necessary to acquire an informed decision. As such, divisional managers might know their environment better than their organizational headquarters. Therefore, it was relevant to review the mindset of the divisional managers to see what and how they see the organizational communications supporting what they individually believe they must do to stay competitive in the competitive marketplace. The perceptions of some managers may or may not be the reality of the managerial many.

The more diverse the company and the more customers the company responds to, the greater the chance the company will face internal cultures that grow naturally if for no other reason but to provide better service to their individual customer bases. Kumar (2014) believed organizational innovation competence was the results of the

comprehension of the international cultures within the company. His focus was international technical innovation, but different cultures can exist inside companies so extrapolations from his research are relevant. Companies may have internal divisional subcultures developing within them that have different technologies, different training, or different leadership views or skills. Each division may be different with varying levels of developing subcultures within them.

The more diverse the company, the more it is crucial to understand how the information permeates the organization and supports the decision-making processes. Albert et al. (2015) justified the importance of identifying possible organizational misalignments when they suggested that rules meant for an organization support an organization's focus, and disrupting those rules requires recognition. Their assessment points directly to the importance to determine where an organization is along the timeline of culture to subculture or stove-piped development and the decisions they may produce.

Senge (2006) explained that senior managers might inadvertently lead their company toward destructive outcomes without the identification of internal cultures. Divisional managers have a stake in the company and their individual futures as managers and associatively do not want to make poor decisions. How others conceptualize and disseminate company communication may sway how divisional management processes that information to formulate decisions to sustain his or her division.

Relevance of the Study

In this study, I argue that senior managers need to know how to derail the possible adverse effects of middle managers' subcultured decisions while allowing individual division managers' relative creativity to advance profitable ideas required to provide satisfaction for a changing customer base. Kunisch et al. (2014) posited, "By remaining alert to the challenges functions face as they mature, company executives can anticipate problems and put in place countermeasures to help functions add rather than subtract value" (p. 117). Learning first how micro-operational directives affect middle managers' decisions represented a variable to provide managerial direction for follow-up studies that might provide senior managers ways to implement improved communication to mid-level managers. That importance only increases as efforts to advance company profits and sustainment continue.

The intent of improving the communication within decentralized companies is to improve and sustain their profitability and provide barriers to their competition. Both Escobedo et al. (2012) and Kumar (2014) found a gap in the literature concerning communication and decision making within decentralized organizations to sustain themselves economically and competitively in the future. Providing the fidelity necessary for organizational decision-making processes means determining relationships between the communication variables and how they affect it. The continuity resulting from the senior directives and actual divisional manager actions may serve to influence the drafting of future communication messages. The resulting outcome of this research may

highlight the ways in which those messages matriculate to middle managers who must further support company continuities.

The organizational MIS may need to adjust if internal misaligned subcultured division managers utilize micro-operational directives to make decisions provided to them differently. Communications training for senior management is still needed to access and provide separate guidance to subordinate leaders (Zerfass et al., 2016). Bronn (2014) documented that the management communications required by companies who wish to be successful remain undiscovered, even though the leadership warranted it the most important. Further, Bronn stipulated that 44% of managers believe communication managers are involved in decision-making. This admission further supports the Katsaros et al. (2015) description of senior managements' involvement in the communicative processes. Communications deserves more emphasis if they are that important. The importance of communication and the possible gains associated with strategic survivability seem oddly out of sync.

Misaligned divisions supported by ineffective communications can be harmful to the organization. Discombobulated information could lead to misadventure and divisional misdirected managerial decisions that could further organizational mistrust. Engle (2013) discussed some of the misaligned decisional directions as losses associated with management hiding mistakes and redirecting failures at others. Engle postulated that if the quality, clarity, or supervisory information to middle managers is not useful or effective, or if the internal division managers do not use it properly, it detracts from the

efficiency of the company. The information to exact the profitability intended to sustain

the organization might evaporate and may further exacerbate company suspicion.

Gluck et al. (2014) described an adjacent theory, the communication

accommodation theory (CAT), which associated the interpersonal and intergroup

identities as platforms to explain communication dissimilarities that can lead to decision-

making difficulties. Engle (2012) stipulated that consensus and group views are not the

same. Engle held that what is good for a particular group might not be good for the

operational whole. Facilitating the integration of interpersonal and intergroup thought and

goals promote a clearer understanding and better strategic company direction. Other

group concerns could detract from the original intent of the message. Senior executives

might think he or she is clear when composing the instructions for divisional managers

but may be forced to use a particular method to deliver the message, not knowing the

mental frames of the division manager, and how perceptions framed around the form of

the message effects the divisional decisional process.

Integrating message ideas to achieve an overall goal helps prepare senior

managers for better assimilation to support strategic thought. Smith (2015) posited that

integrating and linking practices go a long way toward helping diminish apprehensions

when discussing products and innovations, and can help other managers see the relevance

of different approaches. Senior management should not dictate exactly how the synergies

should occur but facilitate ideas to enhance cohesive direction.

That does not mean senior managers should control the decision-making group.

However, Smith (2015) argued that senior managers should ask questions concerning

what a decision may mean to a different division. Facilitating a meeting in this manner helps reveal the capabilities, both operationally and socially, of each division. These revealed capabilities contribute to the knowledge each department can then share with one another. Also, senior managers can observe how the departments work together afterward. That observation might provide a good indication of training or improvement considerations needed for each division or department.

The revelation of how each division forecasts competitive postures gives senior managers an idea of what information is needed, what challenges are faced, and the effects competition have on the separate divisions which might provide a launching pad for codependent discussions. The clarity required to guide complex decisional issues can be formidable. Senior managers must practice integrations that produce relationships and collaborations between strategic groups (Smith, 2015). The senior leader must communicate or preface the information disseminated during the meeting while addressing possible challenges identified which might affect the organization's strategic plan. Considerations for senior managers include an examination of the information to disseminate before starting the meeting and how current operations include the agendas during the administrative process, the sharing of information within respective divisions, and the social interactions of the middle managers (Baraldi, 2013). The senior manager might think of how iterative the information should be released, to who, and when.

The senior manager's clarity, how the information disseminates, the mental frame of the division manager, and the form of the message, or the particular division's customer environment as understood by the divisional manager all might affect the

divisional communication process. The information gathered during divisional management meetings must contain the questions asked, not just the possible solutions from the initial problem. Senge (2006) and Baraldi, (2013) postulated that a precursor to sustainable problem solving exists only where open and nonjudgmental dialogue exists and represents a critical element of management discussions. It is as important to discuss the reason for the question as much as the solution during managerial dialogue. The revelations of divisional concerns associated with the future organization culminate through the questions asked. Senior managers help put those questions in the proper organizational perspectives. The subsequent reviews of the reason for those concerns lead to understanding the support required, the divisional directions revealed, and the ability of management, which helps divisional managers, set precedence for further decision-making processes.

The imperative for review connects with the pressures senior leaders experience when stakeholders require the exploration and the exploitation of processes to improve the company. Smith (2015) posited that leaders face mutual in-house and external demands preferring constancy above the acceptance of varying continuous strategies. Those demands differentiate as requirements to capture the positive aspects of subordinate management that might promote the organization or help encourage divisional realignment. Also and constructively, it might promote the retention of needed resources available to sustain the organization in a competitive environment.

It may be difficult for decision makers or senior managers to decipher solutions when organizational benefits and individual benefits compete. A thorough understanding

of the current state of the organization and knowledge of middle management proclivities

provides a real clue as to how decisions may evolve. Individuals constantly assess

marked dissimilarities between presented choices. Once those assessments are recognized

it helps leaders predict other's decision-making (Scheibehenne, Rieskamp, & González-

Vallejo, 2009). How to predict subordinate managers' decisions begin by identifying

which manager may decide which way and for what reasons. Informational gatekeeping

begins when the recognition of divisional differences does not materialize. The

information might not reach the senior manager in the form required so that actionable

solutions for change, if gatekeepers embed themselves within the dialogue process, could

occur. The gatekeepers might be those who feel they are protecting their individual

divisional areas, but fail to see the overall negative effect of their decisions on the

organization.

Decision teams assemble to make decisions. Although this may seem a rhetorical

statement, it is not. Smith (2015) wrote that managers who develop decision teams appear

to follow two primary schemas for decision making: differentiating and integrating.

Differentiating schemas focus on the differences amid exploration and exploitation but

integrating schemas focus on collaborative and interdependent connectivity. Smith eluded

that while collective group opinion matters, the individual thought persists. Smith

believed it important to realize that these individuals, and soon their groups, understand

the decisions they are required to make are not trivial or unimportant. The divisional

managers and their teams must feel they are part of the in-group, which is also associated

with decision making. As described by Herrara et al. (2013), if individuals feel they are in

the out-group, they simply become unmotivated to provide organizational loyalty and trust. Decision makers must feel as if they are part of the team. Associatively, it seems logical to associate the decision-making with inclusion during the drafting of messages to create clarity and understanding.

It is necessary to consider the collective nature of message creation because creative acts might involve drafting individual processes to create collective outcomes (Sonenshein, 2014). The subordinate decision-maker may become derailed when attempting to follow company lines if the flexibility and creativity required is not lead through the joint and collective efforts between seniors and divisional decision makers when drafting organizational direction. Connectively, it is important that all individual divisional drafts of messages understand the same thing in order to support the organizational goal. Further, all senior management directives to middle managers that require their collective and perceived actions should be in a form of communication that can be clearly understood by those who must perform the work.

Summary and Conclusions

I examined the relationships and lack therein of the senior management micro-operational direction, the utilization of information delivery systems, the mental frames of the mid-level decision-makers, and the forms of the message when transferred to the divisional decision maker in this explanatory study. I used the leader-member exchange (LMX) theory and the decision theory as the backbone from which I attach other related studies. Comparisons of the individual variables to the decision-making process, and then combining the variables illustrated how they interact with one another to produce

decision processes for the middle manager. This study provided possible insights through

the effective use of communication by senior management and the company leadership.

The study promoted the development of a tool to help the senior management to improve

their communicative skills while supporting the enhancement of shared beliefs (schemas)

permitting organizational cohesion that could lead to an increase in strategic profits. The

data provided by the U.S. Small Business Administration (2014) stipulated that the U.S.

should create 24 million full-time jobs by 2020 to return the national unemployment

figures back to those represented by the pre-recession numbers.

Numerous benefits are associated with the knowledge of the communications and

their combined effects on decision makers within companies. As Gluck et al. (2014)

suggested, management should adapt modern tools to support the changes in business

circumstances, and pay attention to the tools as much as the charter for business plans.

Adaptations, streamlining, and progressive operational alignments connect through the

communication process.

Several researchers and theorists concluded that communication does impact

decisions within the organization (Engle, 2013; Herrmann-Nehdi, 2013; Koury, 2013;

Thomas & Inkson, 2004). Their studies, however, do not give a concise answer of how

the communications interface, when associated with the manner in which the

communication was proposed, how it matriculates within the organization, the mental

state of the decision maker, the form of message, and how singularly or in tandem they

may, or may not, affect the decisions of internal decision makers. I undertook this study

to identify shortcomings in organizational communications. I endeavoedr to accomplish

that communication improvement by analyzing each independent variable separately with the dependent variable and then analyzing them as a combination to see how they contribute to the effects of the divisional manager's decision-making process.

Using a mixed methodology that allowed for cross-leveling and triangulations of data provided me with answers when those juxtapositions occurred between the independent variables and the dependent variables that otherwise might have been missed using other methodologies. Also, this research can lead to further studies on how to best monitor independent subcultures within companies. I believe this timely research may help companies see the relevance of that subculture identification so that their individual plans to monitor them become part of their management's job description. Sultana et al. (2013) believed a continual review of the social workplace will enhance a more collaborative and intelligent workforce. The resulting study might help improve the tools for senior managers to identify misaligned internal culture actions that detract from company profitability and sustainability. Associatively, I believe it could lead to the company's improvements of their barriers to new competition that might allow small to medium-sized businesses to succeed within their communities. Improving the efficient use of resources congruent to the alignment of divisional direction should improve the cohesion of company-wide goals. Alignment providing cohesive goals is increasingly important for them, especially if the company is resource-strained.

Venkatesh et al. (2013) posited that deductive reasoning is associated with the quantitative approach while the qualitative approach is associated with inductive reasoning. I gathered both qualitative and quantitative data during the research phase of

the dissertation in hopes to lessen the impact of the 2010 business failure rate for the state of South Carolina of 13.6%.

Chapter 2 provided a discussion of the reasons for the study, the gap associated with the literature, the literary and search strategy, the theoretical foundations for the study, discussions of the variables for the study, conceptions associated with the validity and bias, assumptions, and its conclusion.

In Chapter 3, I show how I analyzed these variables and discussed the study design, data collection methodology, the statistical analysis tools, and participants. The chapter also includes the further rationale for selecting the mixed methodology strategy.

Chapter 3: Research Method

Introduction

The primary purpose of this research was to provide ways to improve the communication effectiveness between the company's senior management and middle management. That than harmful if communication improvement occurs. This mixed method was primarily quantitative but also included a qualitative methodology that helped identify relationships between an organization's intradivisional decision making, as the dependent variable. The independent variables were micro-operational communications via the senior manager, the delivery tools utilized in the dissemination of those directives, the mental state of the subordinate decision makers, and the form of the message received from the senior manager. The research examined the level of clarity and subjectivity of the senior manager's information, the mental frames of the decision maker, and the form of the message as an analysis of how that information relates to misalignments in divisional direction when compared to the company intent.

Learning how those communicational inputs affect the organizational decision-making processes begins with identifying where those communicational breakdowns arose. Further research, through an organization's internal audits which focus on capturing misalignments affecting the enhancement and sustainment of profits is needed. Also, continued scholarly endeavors to improve the understanding of this phenomenon might follow once the organization identifies where communication breakdowns occur. Reducing invasive techniques may prove useful to identifying misaligned divisions and reducing biased judgments (Twyman et al., 2014). This research effort advances a

nascent subculture identification technique that provides for less invasive and less costly

alternatives for the capture of profits and realignments of divisions that promote resource-

draining operations within organizations.

This study represents the first step in this process as outlined in the following

sections: Setting for the study, research design and rationale, role of the researcher,

methodology, an explanation of the pilot study, participation recruitment, the data

analysis plan, threats to validity, trustworthiness, ethical procedures, and the summary.

Setting of the Study

Participants were managers from small-sized to medium-sized organizations in

South Carolina that had at least three internal divisions and 50 or more employees within

them. I contacted individual companies and their middle management participants who

met the selection criteria and who I had recruited through the membership lists of the

local Rotary clubs and individual South Carolina businesses. Initial contacts were those I

found through the Internet and personal contacts who worked at brick and mortar

organizations. Organizational administrators granted permissions to access participants.

Participant access was through the brick-and-mortar establishments where I had

permission to place advertisements in lobbies and lounges and on community boards. The

advertisements explained the problem statement of the research, the Internet link for

accessing the study, and my personal contact information should an interested participant

member need to resolve any questions.

Research Design and Rationale

The design was a mixed methods approach. The overarching research question was: How does communication efficiency or the lack thereof, contribute to the decision-making processes of a mid-level manager? I hoped to resolve this issue by analyzing the associated clarity of instructions received from senior supervisors, the information tools used for information delivery, the mental frame of the decision maker, and the form of the information itself. Each independent variable was compared to the decision-making process, then all of the independent variables were compared as a single unit to the decision-making process. These research questions align with the goals of a mixed methods design as follows:

Central research question: What is the extent of the relationship between micro-operational direction clarity, its information delivery tools, the mental frame of the division managers, and the form of the information when given to the division managers to the decision-making process?

Null hypothesis: Clarity, information delivery tools, mental frame, and type of information are not related to the decision-making processes.

Alternative hypothesis: Clarity, information delivery tools, mental frame, and form of information are related to the decision-making processes.

In statistical terms, I tested the following:

Hypothesis: $H0$: ß1 = ß21= ß22= ß23= ß24 = ß3 = ß4 = 0

$H1$: At least one ß not = 0

This hypothesis requires a regression analysis, where the dependent variable is the proportion of time utilizing a rational or intuitive decision-making process, and the independent variables are those identified in RQs 2 through 5. Note: ß21, ß22, ß23, and ß24 are the betas associated with the four variables identified in RQ3.

Specific Research Questions

RQ1: What effect does the senior manager's micro-operational direction, *clarity*, have on the division manager's decision-making processes?

Null hypothesis: Decision-making process is not associated with clarity of information.

Alternative hypothesis: Decision-making process is associated with clarity of information.

In statistical terms, I tested the following:

Hypothesis: H0: $r \neq 0$

H1: $r = 0$

This hypothesis requires a correlation analysis, where r is the Pearson correlation coefficient between clarity and the proportion of time utilizing a rational or intuitive decision-making process.

Note: In the survey, one question solicits an answer concerning how clear or understandable the division manager believes the messages are from the senior manager and a question on the proportion of time the division manager chooses a rational or intuitive decision-making process.

RQ2: What effect do the *information delivery tools* have on the division manager's decision-making process?

Null hypothesis: Decision-making process is not associated with the information delivery tools.

Alternative: Decision-making process is associated with the information delivery tools.

In statistical terms, I tested the following:

Hypothesis: H0: $\mu 1 = \mu 2 = \mu 3 = \mu 4$

H1: at least one μ different

Where $\mu 1$ is the mean for telephone, $\mu 2$ is the mean for face-to-face, $\mu 3$ is the mean for email, and $\mu 4$ is the mean for the company meeting. The dependent variable is the proportion of time a rational decision-making process is used for the delivery tool category, and we can test this hypothesis using ANOVA.

RQ3. What effect does *the divisional management's perception*, based on the relationship with the senior manager(s), have on division manager's decision-making processes?

Null hypothesis: Decision-making process is not associated with the mental frame.

Alternative hypothesis: Decision-making process is associated with the mental frame.

In statistical terms, I tested the following:

Hypothesis: HE: $r \neq 0$

HE: r = 0,

This hypothesis requires a correlation analysis, where r is the Pearson correlation coefficient between the mental frame and decision-making processes.

Note: The survey instrument has a question that identifies the mental frame of the decision maker and as in RQ1 and RQ2 a question on the proportion of time using a rational or intuitive decision-making process.

RQ4: What effect does the amount of *for your information* (FYI) and *for your action* (FYA) have on the decision-making process?

Null hypothesis: The percentage of either FYI or FYA information from the senior manager(s) is not associated with the decision-making processes.

Alternative hypothesis: The percentage of either FYI or FYA information from the senior manager(s) is associated with the decision-making processes.

In statistical terms, this is what we are testing.

Hypothesis: HE: r ≠ 0

HE: r = 0

This hypothesis requires a correlation analysis, where r is the Pearson correlation coefficient between FYI/FYA and the decision-making processes.

Note: The survey instrument has one question that identifies the percentage of time FYI and FYA information queries the decision maker and as in RQ1, 2 and 3, compares to the proportion of time that a rational or intuitive decision-making process is used.

Choosing the Method

I considered the phenomenological and quantitative methodologies before choosing a mixed method. I initially considered the phenomenological method because I had worked for a government entity and had experienced much of what I would have reported had I the opportunity to do so. In addition, I had direct access to the individuals for the study. Roberts (2013) noted that phenomenological studies require an opinion from those who have undergone actual situations concerning the phenomenon and can connect it to the external environment, and investigators seek to answer points of research by asking those who have experienced the phenomenon. However, before I finished the proposal for the dissertation, the organization closed and the individual pool of participants disbanded, further exacerbating the challenge of time so any subsequent data obtained intensifies obsolescence. Because of the focus of phenomenological studies, concerning firsthand experience and qualitative analysis no longer being available, the qualitative phenomenological research design was no longer appropriate for this study.

The second consideration for the study was a quantitative correlational methodology. Venkatesh et al. (2013) observed the quantitative methodology requires correlational numerical data, typically from a survey and direct observation or experimental and field study and questions that might lead to statistical correlations between data elements. However, data correlations alone might not explain the reasons why such data exists for this study and may reduce what a more in-depth knowledge of the phenomena would not be the result. Subsequently, I discarded the quantitative correlational design for this study.

The third consideration was a qualitative coded design to reveal inferences obtained through comments alone and without quantitative correlational inputs. That methodology would not provide the revelation of how much participants felt about their answers. The qualitative method alone was discarded because it would be easy to distinguish what, but not how much each variable contributed to the decision-making process of divisional managers. Venkatesh et al. (2013) believed mixed methodologies promote insights far better than either the quantitative or the qualitative can alone. The mixed-methodology provides an enhanced understanding of the quantitative supporting numerical data and the participant reasons for their qualitative answers. Further, a combination of the qualitative and quantitative methods increases meta-inferences. Recent exclamations that posit mixed methods research are abundant. New meta-inferences might be gained when juxtapositioning the qualitative and quantitative variables against one another. A broadened lens used to inculcate meta-inferences provides a much richer explanation of the phenomena, as mixing data in this fashion allows for the human element of expressive opinion.

The Choice

A thorough understanding of how the quantitative and the qualitative contribute to this blending is necessary to expand and inform phenomena. Creswell (2015) championed the use of mixed methods as a mechanism for drawing richer information to provide a deeper analysis and understanding of the scholarly inquiry once an independent and then combined analyses completes.

A mixed methodology allows cross-referencing of data while allowing the different epistemologies, positivist and interpretive, and the different methodologies, qualitative versus quantitative, to juxtapose against each other to provide better results through meta-inferences. Venkatesh et al. (2013) revealed the superiority of the mixed methods for they study of informational systems. They believed a better understanding of the phenomena resulted through the mixing of worldviews. Thus, the mixed methodology was the best choice for the study given the need to explore the interactions and possible effects of these particular variables.

There is no superior mixed methods design, only a better design to achieve the best information given the conditions experienced by the researcher. Creswell (2014) posited that the method selected should combine a worldview and a specific design that reflects the issue or the problem studied. The embedded design uses one or the other (qualitative or quantitative) output to answer the most predominant form of inquiry with the other. The explanatory design uses qualitative data to defend quantitative results. The explanatory design utilizes the quantitative data to explain results found in the qualitative findings.

These design strategies often mirror images of one another and lead to meta-inferences. As one example, Powell et al. (2011) studied bullying and peer victimization in school and completed the study using the quantitative study alone. Although the quantitative data suggested the program the school had instituted might have been harmful, the qualitative data provided the strengths of the nearly scraped program. As a result of the mixed method approach, the program was improved rather than scrapped.

Creswell (2014) suggested researchers must choose the best design to extrapolate information that more clearly informs through a more thorough analysis of the study outcomes.

Meta-Inferences

Combinations of qualitative and quantitative data within mixed methods research enhance meta-inferences. These meta-inferences help increase the fidelity of findings in research results that might be otherwise lost. In fact, without obtaining meta-inferences from the combinations of both the qualitative and the quantitative methods, it is not worth the researcher's effort to adopt the mixed methodology. Venkatesh et al. (2013) believed the primary reason to engage in mixed methods research was to be able to expound on meta-inferences. Hashemi (2012) and Gambrel and Butler (2013) discussed the positive use of the mixed methods research when associated with their professions. They believed mixed methods research helped them obtain a better understanding of relationships that might have gone unnoticed. The availability of research that supports contextual learning adds greatly to differing thought patterns between people. It is apparent that meta-inferences provide much more understanding than the qualitative or quantitative methods alone. Combining the qualitative and the quantitative data sources provides the researcher with an improved and generalizable view informing social inquiry conclusions through analysis and the development of meta-inferences.

Meta-inferences provide support for additional ideas and testing. Associatively, the goal of mixed methods design should be to extract more information and in more depth than either the qualitative or quantitative methodology alone. Venkatesh et al.

(2013) offered three important guidelines to consider when choosing the mixed

methodology: the relevance of the mixed methods appropriateness of a mixed methods

tactic, ability to develop meta-inferences, and the valuation of those meta-inferences. All

play individual, but integrative parts, to support a rounded theoretical base for the

phenomena studied. As MMR methodologies continue to improve, their acceptance is

growing.

Mixed methodology research represents a combination of both the quantitative

and qualitative methodologies with different methodological standards for validity and

reliability. Venkatesh et al. (2013) posited an epistemological foundation including the

practical, renovative-liberative, and an acute reality of the mixed methods

conceptualizations. Therefore, the mixed methods design provides researchers a

convergent design that obtains dissimilar, but supportive, data concerning the same topic.

Associatively, theorists continue to suggest ways that MMR is collected, evaluated, and

how the resulting data are qualified.

Further, methodological designs develop through a baseline conceptualization of

the ways to think how the designs should form. The conceptual adaptations explain the

design concepts that serve as foundations for further analysis. Venkatesh et al. (2013)

explained that pragmatism was associated with movement between both the deductive

and inductive reasoning. Creswell (2014) explained that pragmatic reasoning does not

support common beliefs about phenomena but instead favors logical explanations to

achieve practical solutions to situational environments. Additionally, Creswell asserted

that the transformative ability provided interpretation of phenomena when using the

mixed methods approach. The transformative liberation viewpoint helps explain the realization of a more just and democratic society as its goal. These theorists believed in the transformative-emancipatory way of life. However, Creswell also believed that the mixed methodology conceptualization of pragmatic and transformative dispositions was not as important as critical realism, which favors the empowerment of humans to overcome restrictions placed on them by race, class, and gender.

Arguments against the use of mixed methods research (MMR) were once plentiful. However, pundits who championed MMR explained their support for MMR by countering the challenges of its use such as those discussed by Creswell (2014). Creswell examined the primary differences between the qualitative and quantitative approaches that included the projections of the value of the mixed methods over the other two methods individually. The supporters of MMR used these conceptualizations to present the data to other researchers, so the process of MMR understanding developed to reach both the breadth and depth of its adoption and use. Venkatesh et al. (2013) championed mixed methods research over mono-method research because the questions, inferences, and the presentations of the MMR views provided by its applications were more diverse than mono-methods. Among those differences are the mixed methods ability to merge open- and closed-ended questions, ability to translate information from a variety of sources, and provide for statistical and data outcomes.

Convergent or Sequential Designs

The methodology and classifications impact the design of MMR as research data is gathered. The researcher's environment, time, cost, and capacity to control bias within

the study affect his or her ability to schedule the collection of data. Creswell (2015) noted that choosing the research design represents the initial step in the MMR. The first selection represents the choice between the convergent and sequential designs for the study. Both designs influence the way data are gathered and later explained by the researcher. Convergent designs represent the separate gathering and analysis of both the quantitative and qualitative data and then merging them for analysis. Sequential designs connect the data to explain results. The sequential design represents the gathering qualitative and quantitative data separately, one before the other, and then combining them in a separate phase for analysis. The researcher must choose the best design to extrapolate information that least supports the effects of bias.

Bracketing and Bridging

Use of racketing and bridging concept reduce possibilities of bias. Venkatesh et al. (2013) described bracketing as a process to incorporate varied (contradicting views) data, while assuring the views of people do not suffer omission for inquiry. A more realistic understanding of the phenomena might ensue when both pro and con information are juxtaposed in the research. Constructively, capturing all the supporting ideas from participants bring focus to the depth of consensus of the group. Bridging develops the (consensus views) of data between the qualitative and quantitative results. Both methods support the integration of qualitative and quantitative data, enabling MMR to develop complete theoretical inquiry. The bracketing and bridging processes combine as a method to inform the cross-referencing of the data and the resulting meta-inferences.

Cross-Referencing Data

The design of mixed research affects the methodology and possibly outcomes of mixed methods research. Creswell (2014) mentioned four mixed research designs:

1. Convergent parallel, explanatory sequential – gathering qualitative data first then comparing qualitative to the quantitative data, explanatory sequential – is gathering quantitative data first and then comparing the quantitative to the qualitative data.

2. Embedded mixed research design allows the gathering and analysis of either qualitative or quantitative first, during, and after either method.

3. The transformative research design utilizes either the convergent, explanatory, exploratory, or embedded methods.

4. The multiphase research design centers on longitudinal studies where the overall objective allows the researcher to analyze multiple studies which further informs the next study for clarification.

Each design represents variations in the way to achieve cross-referencing of the data. Those cross-references and the associated triangulations of data may well develop into meta-inferences.

Triangulations might help researchers discern divisional cultures, and the research represented in this study provides an internal view of the parts of the entire enterprise first. Each internal division plays a part that affects that communication whole as differences of communications understanding are extrapolated through triangulations between the senior and middle managers. These comparisons fit the criteria outlined by

Venkatesh et al. (2013). They posited mixed methods that used qualitative and quantitative triangulations that directly correspond with this study. I analyzed the message and using information delivery tools to communicate those messages. Further, the study analyzes the mental or cognitive frame of the divisional decision makers, the form in which those messages arrive, and how the divisional managers receive and make decisions based on combinations of that information. Those individual decision makers might matter when it comes to supporting the company objectives because the divisions make up the respective whole of the organization. The entire set of independent variables compare to the decision-making processes after isolating the divisional answers to each variable and formulating the results.

Isolating independent variables compare to the dependent variable, the divisional decision-making processes, of the divisional or middle manager. Venkatesh et al. (2013) believed the choice of mixed methods research hinged on the suitability of the mixed methods tactic, creation of meta-inferences from the approach, and the appraisal of the value of the meta-inferences. Subsequently, gathering data associated with the organization's information delivery tools (telephone, face-to-face, email, company management or social meetings) provide decisional criteria for both managers and employee alike. It is logical to assume that the action of gathering data, and then analyzing them using both qualitative and quantitative means, is necessary to achieve the basic understandings of the segmented stove-piped cultures within the company first. Companies comprised of several divisions will simply default to have the propensity to

develop subcultures or stove-piped strategies more than companies who have no clear lines of functional or divisional responsibilities.

Limitations

Mixed methods research designs have limitations. Venkatesh et al. (2013) explained that it typically takes more time and effort to collect, analyze, and validate both the qualitative and quantitative methods before combining the data. Venkatesh et al. suggested a sequential data gathering methodology if the focus is to develop or increase interest in the phenomenon. Venkatesh et al. suggested the mixed methods limitations could be the result of either the inexact, or inadequate explanation of the meta-inferences made when the qualitative and quantitative methods intersect. Venkatesh et al. believed that mixed methods should not take the place of either qualitative or quantitative research if either method might perform the same task. They posited that the mixed methods approach provided an enhanced understanding of the phenomenon studied. Venkatesh et al. believed the researcher should always consider the individual use of either method first, if a single method would suffice. Further, Venkatesh et al. posited it is critical for the researcher to interpret data so that it makes sense to future scholars and their ability to continue to study the phenomenon. The information for this research was primarily accumulated through the Internet, with the exception of the initial pilot study. There was no face-to-face interaction.

The availability of Internet access for the middle management participants could hae been a problem. Company employees use social media more and more to access information and stay connected to others, but how little or how much is used to support

corporate communications is unknown (Kim et al., 2014). Further, I had to take into that smartphone use may have varied between participants, so their access to data input may differ. Callegaro (2013) discussed the application of downloads as shortcuts that adapt to different technologies associated with computers and smartphones as mobile apps. There are both advantages and disadvantages when utilizing apps with various devices. The benefits of apps include both that the survey does not need a permanent Internet access to gather information and the reliability concerning how the instrument displays on the equipment.

The disadvantages included the need for the participant to download the app before the survey begins, and understanding the participants' system requiring different programming from the Internet gathering service to work best. As supported by Callegaro (2013), compatibility with multiple devices is increasingly important. The capabilities of the smartphones continue to change through upgrades and accessibility. I was aware that successive additions or contributions of technologies, environmental challenges, and so on are considerations as part of the research methodology given that the data itself drove the choice of analysis.

Role of the Researcher

Because of my background, I needed to guard against bias. I am currently the owner and CEO of a small business-consulting firm serving both local and military organizations. I am also a retired senior U.S. Army Reserve officer. One way I controlled for bias was to exclude previous clients or affiliates. Additionally, I offered no incentives for participating.

Methodology

Once the IRB approved the proposal for the study, I conducted a pilot sample survey to get feedback about the questions. Further, an independent reviewer helped substantiate the conceptions of the initial questions within the pilot study. Following the individual analysis and changes, I announced the study to the local Rotary clubs and businesses contacted via the Internet within South Carolina. The sample participants for both the pilot and main study were small- to medium-sized South Carolina organizations that had at least three internal divisions within them and more than 50 employees. Participants accessed the instrument through a Web link. The instrument gathered both the qualitative and the quantitative data consecutively. Separate analysis of both sets of data followed. The qualitative data, entered into an Excel spreadsheet, began with coding the data and analyzed to derive consistencies of answers between the participants. The quantitative data, analyzed using ANOVA and regression analysis, verified the associative strengths of answers. Those separate analyses then were triangulated into one overall analysis providing meta-analysis.

Four initial qualifying questions for participants preceded the requirements for inclusion in the study.

1. Does your company have more than 50 employees?

2. Is the company comprised of at least three divisions?

3. How many senior managers do you report to – one or two or more?

4. How many subordinate managers report to you?

The pilot and main study companies, which fit the vetting criteria and had no previous work affiliated with me, then qualified for inclusion in the study.

Participant Acquisition

The individual companies and their middle management participants originated by contacts through membership lists from local Rotary clubs, and through Internet contacts with businesses that fit the selection criteria. Most of the personal contacts started with the local Rotary club, which gave me permission through their administrators to obtain membership lists and requested support in the form of awareness of the research. The brick-and-mortar establishments included permissions to place advertisements at locations such as lobbies, lounges, and community boards. The advertisements for the research explained the research problem, the Internet link for access, and my personal contact information for interested participants should they have any questions.

Instrumentation

I used SurveyMonkey to collect, analyze, and then triangulate the electronic data for developments of meta-inferences. Previous researchers had not identified the variables mentioned in this study, nor had they combined them in this manner to find possible correlations. I used a self-designed explanatory survey, so I did not need prior permission.

Procedures

I provided informed consent information to the local Rotary clubs and to the potential business owners through the Internet. The informed consent information

preceded the questionnaire in each case as part of the initial instrument prequalification instructions prior to the participant answering the questions.

Data Analysis Plan

To test the central research question, I used a regression analysis to predict decisions using clarity, information delivery tools, mental frame, and form of message. Here ß21, ß22, ß23, and ß24 were associated with the four coefficients for clarity, information delivery tools, mental frame, and the form of the message respectively as are identified in RQ3. To test the hypothesis (RQ1), clarity, I used a Pearson correlation to see if the means of clarity ($\mu1$, $\mu2$ $\mu3$, and $\mu4$) for the decision-making categories were different. I rejected Ho at the point the p-value of the Pearson correlation test was less than 0.05. For the hypotheses on information delivery tools (RQ2), I used the ANOVA test for the significant mean difference and the Pearson correlation to test for Ho. Similarly, I a Pearson correlation to test for the p-value for (RQ3) the mental frame. I rejected the null hypothesis (Ho) at the point the p-value aws less than 0.05. For (RQ4), form of message, I used a Pearson correlation analysis, where r represented the correlation coefficient between FYI/FYA and the decision-making processes. I rejected the null hypothesis (Ho) at the point the p-value was less than 0.05.

These qualitative answers, collected as raw data, combined to support codified meanings commensurate with the data received. The statistical tests further helped to explain the coded qualitative answers and the strengths of those answers while extrapolating meta-inferences from the combinations. Also, a fellow doctoral candidate not associated with Walden University assessed the level of agreement with the

conceptualizations of the coded meanings and complete an independent review, to

increase trust-worthiness and validity of the study (see Appendix E).

Study Design

Once the IRB approved the instrument, I conducted a pilot sample convenience

survey to obtain information on the dependent variable (decision-making process) as well

as the independent variables (clarity, information delivery tools, mental frame, and form

of message). A convenience sample of one organization supported the test of the pilot

sample survey. The result of the pilot study provided information to alter wording of the

questions for understandability. An independent reviewer helped substantiate the

conceptions of the initial questions within the pilot study (see Appendix D). Following

the individual analysis of the pilot study and the review for any necessary changes, the

instrument proceeded to Survey Monkey and to the members of the participating

organizations coupled with the access link for the study.

I used the G*Power tool to provide clarity for the sample size of participants

needed for this research. To be statistically significant the minimum number of

participants for this study was 168 with a power of .95. Coded qualitative questions

further explained inferences drawn from the quantitative answers.

Modeling and Rationale

Consistent with the explanatory-sequential design, a convenience sample

consisting of one company used to gather information to realign the proposed questions,

occurred supporting the establishment of understanding and generalizability for later

questions in the main study. Creswell (2015) stipulated that an explanatory-sequential

design require the researcher first to discover the views of those participating in the study. Hence, in a sequential fashion and complementary means, the qualitative segment represented the guiding principle concerning all the questions asked in the instrument. Aligning the questions for the purpose of better generalizability associated with organizations in South Carolina enhanced the prospects that the instrument provided the inductive exploration of compound communication perspectives. This generalization helped identify emergent themes and patterns, discern new implications, and gain possibilities for significant perceptions associated with possible communication irregularities.

As part of the mixed design, the quantitative segments did not support the coded qualitative answers. This process examined the relationships between the division manager's decision-making process, dependent variable, and the clarity, information delivery tools, the mental frame of the decision maker, and the form of the message sent from the senior manager to the middle manager as independent variables. I analyzed these qualitative and quantitative data sets using a cross-reference triangulation method. The qualitative, open-ended, data provided general topics experienced by the participants. Farrelly (2013) suggested that the strength of open-ended questions is giving participants the chance to express emotions, doubts, and his or her various social beliefs and interpretations of the questions themselves. The closed-ended questions did not provide the strengths of those emotions, doubts, or social beliefs. The strength of the closed-ended responses explained how strongly or weakly the participant felt about their statements. The weaknesses of each methodology represented the obverse when

compared to one another. Those comparisons proved statistically insignificant in all cases with the exception of one. Regardless of the confusion between general communication and operational communication, a strong statistical correlation occurred between the clarity of the message from the senior manager and the forms of message the senior manager chose to use, as FYI or FYA, which was unexpected. Further analysis, after the participants understand the differences between general and operational communication using triangulations, may yield different results and inform us of other possible meta-inferences not yet anticipated.

Threats to Validity

Theoretical closure is a main advantage when utilizing the mixed methods research design. Single methods simply do not give enough information to address closures to multiple arguments. Azorin, Gamero, Moliner, and Ortega (2012) posited that researchers who have an entrepreneurial slant require sufficient information to verify theoretical concepts. They believed all mixed methods research slants toward the entrepreneurship discipline. Also, Azorin et al. surmised that each method has its strengths and weaknesses and its limitations. Validity is a parameter most utilized in quantitative analysis and trustworthiness in qualitative studies. The collection of 220 participants met both the parameters of validity in the quantitative portion and the trustworthiness in the qualitative portion to obtain significance. Continued considerations for reductions of the threats to validity and trustworthiness follow.

Issues of Trustworthiness

Participant conscription varied by contacting different types of business sources in South Carolina. These business sources represented either a product or service organization or a mixture of both organizational business structures. Differing business sources contacted to recruit participants ensured the data collection would be more representative of the general business population within the state. Using these steps reduced the probabilities of bias associated by aspects of one business group. Secondly, coercion of the participants did not exist. Providing this information in the initial part of the instrument helped ensure participant answers did not contain their individual organization's political initiatives or their providing answers that might skew due to peer pressure. The appreciation of sincere answers and the assurance of participant confidentiality helped attain their honest opinions adding to the usefulness of the study.

Transferability

This study was designed to be useful to any organization that has multiple divisions or operations within its construct. These attempts assume that any organization, civilian or military, have nodes of stove-piped cultures already existing or are currently growing within them. Engle (2013) stipulated that silos might be part of the culture. Although statistical significance was not achieved to support the quantitative findings, there were large differences in the companies' use of information delivery tools. The findings showed that email is commonly used, but face-to-face is the preferred method of sharing information. The differences were large enough to consider reviewing subculture development in that area. Finding out the propensity of those siloed, or subcultured,

existences within their organizations could provide senior managers with a lens to provide the fidelity of what and how they might improve their communicational efforts with misaligned divisions. Those companies who may not know that they have these internal subcultures apparent within their organizations currently may develop them naturally. The data were not statistically significant and could not support a tool to help identify subcultures in the organization. More analysis is needed here, as it aligns with the understanding of general communication and operational communication. The research providing the reason for the study is becoming increasingly available. Providing senior managers with a tool so that the creative solutions found in these divisions might provide profits, while not injuring the parent business focus, can be crucial to future organizational successes. Companies sustain themselves through their performance of delivering satisfactory products or services to customers and the profitability of stakeholders that depend on the organization. Finding new ways to identify subcultures, without upsetting the company whole, reduces the impact of providing better services or products to those customers and providing profits for stakeholders.

I assumed that most enterprises that fit the participant criteria had discernible decentralized divisions, or submanaged sections, existing within their structure, and had production or support operations involving the need to acquiesce to customer needs. Local customer likes and dislikes are hard to manage or satisfy without a decentralized organizational structure. Koury (2013) posited that effective communication and getting closer to the organization's customers must be one in the same. Associative logic also demands that it be just as likely, as customer bases fractionalize and resources for both

the clients and the organizations diminish through competitive and technological change; clear and efficient communication heightens the importance of understanding the parts (subcultures) within the company (whole). Further, if the parent organization is resource-strained, identifying divisional subculture operations that do not add to the strategic position of the company is equally important. Realigning those efforts, while capturing the lessons learned from divisional efforts, even if misaligned, might prove useful.

An interesting factor to consider was how misalignment initially occurs within organizations. Holden et al. (2012) found that improving skill levels required more than employees' adjustment to company policy. Their study provided some clues that the identification of the shortfall and challenges associated with the organization's communicative arts was the first consideration. An organizations' divisional or codependent profit centers may require periodic company review based on that information alone. Holden et al. supported the requirement for a proactive, but flexible, understanding of the communication between senior managers and middle managers to be successful.

A focused and flexible business structure can support the organizational needs to withstand future challenges than without such a structure. Herrara et al. (2013) contended, "The workplace of the future will be one that provides workers a personalized, social experience that attracts, develops, and engages employees across all generations and geographies" (p. 54). In a pragmatic view, Herrara et al. pointed out that for flexibility to occur senior managers must improve communication. They stipulated that the first bridge of communication should connect with internal management in order

to attain a flexible and creative organizational reality. The first step toward improving communication requires many organizations to accept there may be room for improvement. Accepting the possibility for possible improvement may require the initial examination from the senior management, or company stakeholders.

Part of the senior management's decision oversight encompasses the sustainment of individual divisions while supporting the company focus to exact profitability. Decisional oversight and the result of its official application are critical. Powell et al. (2012) posited that the application of either rational or non-rational thought can be hazardous if the application assumes one is more important that the other. They affirmed that scholars and practitioners should consider the world parallel and as a mixture of both. Senior managers provide direction and it is important how subordinate managers perceive those strategic orientations. Those perceived communications may impact how the divisional managers carry out the operational decision-making within their individual areas of responsibility.

This study provides possibilities for further research concerning the senior manager's clarity associated with the use of varying information delivery tools to disseminate those messages, the mental or cognitive frames of middle or divisional managers, what forms those messages take and the effects they might have on the decision making of mid-level managers within the company. Making cultural decisions may be beneficial if divisional managers make them with an aim of acquiring more company customers. Caldwell (2015) posited that conjoint decision methods should modernize to consider how the behaviors of others affect those decisions. Caldwell

advocated that conjoint decisions are decisions that acquiesce to the customer's

preferences. Divisional managers who make decisions that positively align efforts to

match the organizational vision enhance sustainability. Division managers who make

decisions that benefit their division without considering the organizational whole is

perilous to the company. The communication leading those decisions and how that

communication, as perceived by the decision makers who must provide that operational

focus, is one of strategy.

Ethical Procedures

Before gathering the information, I outlined and implemented data collection

procedures ensuring the participants' protection. These protections, represented by an

informed consent form delivered as part of the instrument, provided an indication of the

participants' understanding and acceptance of the data gathered. I assured participants

that all the acquired information from them was voluntary and there was no penalty for

not taking the survey. I asked each participant to answer the survey honestly and assured

them the answers were confidential. Further, all data are stored in my personal password-

encrypted computer, along with hard copies of the data. I will erase all electronic data 5

years from the survey date.

I assumed that most of the participants from the small to medium-sized businesses

were Internet capable and were members of the local Rotary clubs or companies that I

individually contacted. The minimum participant figures represented a fraction of the

saturation of the small and medium-sized businesses in South Carolina, but I attempted to

conduct the study in a way so that I could generalize the results.

Summary

I endeavored to advance this field of research to ascertain the extent to which the combination of senior management's clarity of information, how that information disseminates, the attitudes of decision makers, and the forms that message provides positive or negative decision-making information to divisional managers within companies. In this chapter I provided details of the mixed method design and explained the techniques for data collection and analysis, the threats to validity and trustworthiness, and ethical concerns. Chapter 4 has the results of the data analysis.

Chapter 4: Results

Introduction

The primary purpose of this research was to provide ways to improve the communication effectiveness between the company's senior management and middle management. The secondary purpose of this study was to identify divisional misalignment and provide information for a future developed tool to aid in misalignment identification. The research associated with the primary purpose and the data associated with the secondary purpose connects, as it relates to the level, clarity, and subjectivity of the information and how that information relates, or does not relate, to possible misalignments in divisional direction compared to the company intent through a mixed methods methodology.

In this chapter I provide details about the pilot study, the setting, the demographics, and the different data collection methods. The main sections include the data analysis, evidence to substantiate trustworthiness, and a summary.

Pilot Study

A pilot study, completed by 10 middle managers of a local volunteer company, checked the questions for clarity. In an effort to increase the validity and trustworthiness of the study, an independent doctoral candidate, outside the Walden University community, reviewed the results from the pilot study (see Appendix C). Only one question required adjustment, but it did not require change (see Appendix D). The committee chair and IRB approved this adjustment (see Appendix F) and the approved questions were sent to SurveyMonkey.

Environmental Setting

Participants in both the pilot study and the main study had no known changes in their management or operations during the time of data gathering. No organizational changes were apparent associated with the company that volunteered for the pilot study. Associatively, no known organizational stresses are associated with the unknown participants who took the main study.

Demographics

The population for the study consisted of small- to medium-sized businesses in South Carolina. The sample included companies and organizations with 50 or more employees, at least three divisions within them, and fit the mode definition of a small- to medium-sized business of between 51-999 and 1,000-2,000 (U.S. Small Business Administration, 2012). As reported by the U.S. Small Business Administration, Office of Advocacy (2014), for the 2011 employment data, approximately 24.8% of South Carolina businesses employed one to 499 employees and 53% of businesses more than 500 employees. Approximately 33% are associated with manufacturing. The manufacturing company that volunteered for the survey pilot study consisted of 12 participants, of whom 10 qualified to take the survey.

Of 357 participants who volunteered to complete the instrument, 220 were qualified to take the survey. Although the instrument was self-identifying concerning the types of businesses involved, I took care to spread the types of businesses and organizations across a generalized spectrum of businesses within the state of South Carolina. The South Carolina Information Highway (2015) helped guide the solicitation

of individual businesses to increase my ability to generalize the results. I tried to diversify

the types of participating businesses. With the exception of the hand-delivered pilot study

and a diverse set of individually selected companies from which to gather participants,

any small- to medium-sized business that belonged to the Upstate Rotary clubs had the

opportunity to receive the instrument. All businesses who allowed their middle managers

to take the survey included themselves, and I chose them independent of the type of

business group in which they belonged, whether a product or service. That independent

and generalized business variability duplicates via a link provided by SurveyMonkey in

the main study.

The participant lists consist of the local Upstate Rotary club's member lists with a

few independent businesses I personally contacted. Rotary business owners across four

primary areas received the survey invitation, regardless of the type of business or

organization they operated. Those business owners self-identified as fitting the

requirements to participate in the survey through questions directly within the survey. If

their self-identification proved outside the scope of the survey, the survey would disallow

their continuation. The restrictive sampling took into account that some of the businesses

reached would not be members of the local Rotary clubs through personal contacts by the

researcher. I used SurveyMonkey to collect all electronic data for the main study. The

pilot data came from the collection of a paper copy. The addition of demographic

questions at the beginning of the survey either confirmed or denied access to the possible

participants to support the protection of legally sensitive groups. Other questions,

associated with the size and number of senior reports and number of subordinates, were included to aid in the developing of meta-inferences associated with the data.

As noted earlier, upon receiving IRB approval, I asked a local business to review the questions during the pilot study and had an independent doctoral student from another university to help identify any changes required in the questions to ascertain if they were understandable by the participants. I then placed the instrument, with any revisions proved necessary through the pilot study, on the link to SurveyMonkey and alerted the local Rotary so that the selected pool of prospective could access the data. I also contacted small to medium-sized business participants and asked them to join the survey via the link. All survey participants received a copy of the purpose of the study, the criteria for participating in the study, and a web link to Walden University concerning their rights or questions they might have associated with the survey included in the first segment of the survey instrument.

The research instrument consisted of 20 questions. Eleven questions qualified the participant and their organization's discernible structure that did or did not meet the study criteria for inclusion. The participants focused on the middle managers within the company and the communication with their senior managers within the organizations. The self-identifying prequalifying questions addressed the following:

- Whether the business middle manager participants were living in South Carolina.
- The number of employees employed in the businesses within the state.
- The number of senior management the participants reported to.

- The number of subordinate managers who reported to the middle manager participants.

- Whether the participants' company had more than three divisions within it.

The other nine questions examined the participants' judgment of the senior manager's directives. These questions focused on the senior manager's clarity, the information delivery tools used (telephone, email, company, or division meetings, or face-to-face), the mental state of the participants as related to the senior manager, and the form of the directional messages from the senior manager, that is, FYI or FYA.

Data Collection

This study consisted of two distinct phases of data collection. First, 10 pilot participants completed the paper version of the study, followed by the main study. An electronic link, provided by SurveyMonkey, provided access to the Rotary Clubs of South Carolina for inclusion in the study. Individual contacts provided the rest of the participants for the study. Neither the pilot company nor the contacted companies had ever been a client of mine. I also took care to exercise the selection of a diverse group of South Carolina companies.

The main study consisted of 357 participants gathered using word of mouth and electronic solicitation through SurveyMonkey for a period of 56 days. Of the 357 possible participants, 220 were qualified to take the survey. All data for the main study were gathered and recorded through SurveyMonkey. No variation of the data collection processes in Chapter 3 occurred.

Data Analysis

I first analyzed the quantified data, followed by the qualified data. Then used a mixed method analysis to compare and analyze the results. The pilot study provided the first coded data used for analysis. The analysis of the coded data resulted from continual comparisons within Questions 3, 5, and 8. Also, the data analysis focused on two primary parts, the improvement of senior manager's clarity of their direction to the company middle management, and a secondary focus to provide information that may lead toward the development of a tool for companies' senior management and stakeholder teams to justify further communication improvement within their companies.

Six prequalifying questions were asked to make certain that potential participants met inclusion criteria:

1. Are you over 17 years of age?

2. Are you over the age of 65?

3. Are you a resident of any facility (prison, treatment facility, nursing home, assisted living, group home for minors)?

4. Are you fluent in English?

5. Are you pregnant?

6. Are you currently under a doctor's care for mental stress or disability?

The answers that would remove them from the study were (1) No, (2) Yes, (3) Yes, (4) No, (5) Yes, and (6) Yes.

The participants answered two general prequalifying questions to help place them into separate groups, after safeguarding protected classes were established. D

- Do you have over 50 employees in your company or organization?

- Also, are there at least three divisions in your company or organization? (Example: administration, receiving, manufacturing, customer service)?

Questions 7 and 8 required the participant to answer the size and the number of divisions within the company or organization.

Once the participants qualified for the study, they could continue with three questions that would help identify them as part of the setting of organizational size groups and the types of supervision they encounter individually. They provide answers by placing an X in the blanks provided in the survey.

- How many subordinate managers do you supervise – one-three, four-seven, or eight or more?

- Also, how many senior level managers do you report directly to – one, or two or more?

- Further, how many employees would you say are in your company and who also work in South Carolina – 51 to 999, or 1,000 to 2,000?

The nine questions that followed were answered separately, and then those nine were combined to achieve meta-analysis to reveal more in-depth answers to the research questions. The quantitative data were analyzed first and the qualitative second. I then combined them to obtain meta-analysis outcomes. The output of clarity levels one and two have more changes than other reported clarity levels so all the quantitative descriptions focused primarily on those two levels of participant reports. The qualitative descriptions expanded the discussion beyond the two levels of participant reports. The

mixing of methods explains the combinations of the findings. The analysis of the specific research questions and central research questions follow.

Analyses of Research Questions

Central Research Question

What is the extent of the relationship between micro-operational direction clarity, its information delivery tools, the mental frame of the division managers, and the form of the information when given to the division managers to the decision-making process?

This question requires the mixing of both the quantitative and qualitative methods to form meta-analysis using a mixed methodology. The participants' previous answers from the quantitative and qualitative Questions 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, and 8 were juxtaposed against one another using a multiple-regression (logistic) analysis to ascertain if some, or any, of the previous answers impact the decision-making processes described in Question 9. When comparing all combinations of Questions 1 through 8 against 9, the results follow.

Mixed – quantitative and qualitative. The multiple regression analysis, Table 2, results indicate that the variables are not statistically associated with rational decision-making process $(p\text{-value} > 0.05)$. I subjected the inverse of the rational, the intuitive data, to the same SAS analysis to test the results further (see Table 3).

Table 2

General RQ: Multiple-Regression Comparisons Against Rational DMP

Variable	Estimate	*p*-value
Intercept	0.3983	0.4359
Clarity(q1)	0.0614	0.6477
Email2(q2)	-0.00055	0.9320
F2f4(q4)	0.00302	0.6316
MFrm(q6)	-0.0573	0.6293
FYI(q7)	-0.00728	0.2385
FYA(q7)	0.00979	0.0962

Note. $N = 220$, DMP = Decision-making process,
q1 means the variable was from Question 1 – and so on,
MFrm = Mental Frame

Table 3

General RQ: Multiple-Regression Comparisons Against Intuitive DMP

Variable	Estimate	*p*-value
Intercept	-0.3983	0.4359
Clarity(q1)	-0.0614	0.6477
Email2(q2)	0.00055	0.9320
F2f4(q4)	-0.00302	0.6316
MFrm(q6)	0.0573	0.6293
FYI(q7)	0.00728	0.2385
FYA(q7)	-0.00979	0.0962

Note. $N = 220$, DMP = Decision-making process,
q1 means the variable was from Question 1 – and so on,
MFrm = Mental Frame

As shown in Table 2, results indicate that the variables were not statistically

associated with rational decision-making process (*p*-value > 0.05) as the coefficient

estimates were reversed from that of the intuitive decision-making process (see Table 3).

Of note, decision-making processes are (dichotomous) nominal variables -taking a value of 0 for intuitive or 1 for rational - and the other variables (clarity, mental frame, information delivery tools and form of information) are either nominal or ordinal. Therefore, fitting a multiple logit form of the regression model would the best way to assess if these variables can predict decision-making process or are associated with it at all. Ordinary multiple regression models would require the response to be measured on a continuous scale, which is not true in my case, as the decision-making process is not in that form.

I used SAS to fit this multiple logistic regression model. This helped me obtain the estimates of the regression coefficients (betas) and testing for the significance of these coefficients in the model. The logit multiple regression model cannot include all the IDTs, because the ones in each question are dependent on each other. So, we can include only one or two (so long as they are independent) from each question in the model. Only one question, in Tables 2 and 3, requires a choice between two or more answers that are truly independent of one another – FYI and FYA. As independent forms of choice, they can appear in the multiple regression model.

For the logit multiple regression (LMR) model, I used the method of maximum likelihood to estimate the parameters (betas). In ordinary regression, I would have used the least squares method. When using LMR, the default method is the maximum likelihood method. Only statistically significant variables are included in the regression model for predicting the probability of a rational decision-making process.

The null and alternative hypothesis for the central RQ provided in the null hypothesis are: clarity, information delivery tools, mental frame, and form of information are not jointly predictive of the decision-making process and the Alternative hypothesis is that clarity, information delivery tools, mental frame, and form of information are jointly predictive of the decision-making process. The statistical equations to test these hypotheses are as follows: Where Y_i= type of decision-making process (0 if intuitive – 1 if rational) and P_i = the probability of a rational decision-making process. Then $P_i = P_r$ $(Y_i = 1)$ and $1- P_i = P_r (Y_i = 0)$, $i = 1, 2, 3…n$. I used a multiple regression model with a transformation to predict the probability of a rational decision-making process as $logit(P_i)$ $= ß_0 + ß_1 *$ clarity $+ ß_{21}*$telephone $+ ß_{22} *$face-to-face $+ ß_{23} *$email $+ ß_{24} *$ Company or Social Meeting (CSM) $+ ß_3 *$ mental frame $+ ß_{41}$ FYI $+ ß_{42}$ FYA. Here $ß_0, ß_1, ß_{21}, ß_{22}, ß_{23},$ $ß_{24}, ß_3,$ and $ß_4$ are the regression coefficients. The hypothesis is statistically stated as follows: H_0: $ß_1 = ß_{21} = ß_{22} = ß_{23} = ß_{24} = ß_3 = ß_4 = 0$ versus H_1: At least one $ß_r \neq 0$. To fit the logit multiple regression model, I used the method of maximum likelihood to estimate the regression coefficients. This method requires modeling of the logit of P to obtain a zero or one. Note: Here we used email (from question 2) and f2f (from question 4) for "information delivery tools" and FYI and FYA (from Question 7) for "form of information." There is no way of combining email and f2f. Also, there is no way to combine FYI and FYA in the logit model because these IDTs are dependent on each other. Therefore we can include only one or two (so long as they are independent) from each question in the model.

Concisely, since the IDT values (tel, email, f2f and csm) were dependent on each other (percentages add up to 100), not all of them can be used in a single multiple regression model. Attempts to combine interdependent variables are not be possible to estimate the coefficient of one of them – and will result in a value of 0. That is why I selected one from q2 (email) and one from q4 (f2f) since they are independent and can be used together in the same regression model, logit or otherwise. The output below shows what I have just explained when multiple regression is perform for IDTs on q2Company and social meetings (CSM) could not be estimated, due to the singularity of the design matrix. In any case, the *p*-values remain higher than 0.05, which implies the IDTs are not predictive of the rational DMP.

Qualitative questions. The three qualitative questions in the survey are discussed below.

Question 3. In your opinion, how could the clarity of the message from your senior manager be improved?

The results indicated that the majority of middle managers believed their senior manager's clarity to be adequate. However, the results also indicated some confusion between the clarity of communication and the clarity of communication associated with operational tasks.

Question 5. In your opinion, how could the answer to the question directly above be improved? Or N/A?

The results indicated similar challenges reported in Question 3. The majority of middle managers believe their senior manager's clarity to be adequate. However, the top

three improvement areas (see Table 6) indicated some enhancements to the senior

management communications is required when associated with thoroughness, confusion

in the direction of tasks, and the timeliness of the communication.

Question 8. How would you improve the information to accomplish your

divisional management job concerning clarity or the tools utilized to deliver them?

The outcomes were again similar to both Questions 3 and 5 with the following

differences. The top three improvements middle managers reported were the lack of

enough communication to help set both the priority for tasks, enough information to help

them plan to complete divisional tasks adequately, and the need for increased follow-up

from the senior manager to see that the divisional managers were doing what was

intended from their original communication.

What was discovered. The results from the qualitative and quantitative methods

forming meta-inferences were that the quantified questions do not support the hypothesis

that the variables influence the decision-making processes. But the qualitative questions–

Questions 3, 5, and 8—provided contrary information than impacted the quantitative

results. For instance, while the senior manager's clarity was rated one thing in the

quantitative analysis the improvement to clarity those findings in the qualitative

questions. These contrary findings indicate a lack of understanding between general

communication and operational communication. The results indicate that the senior

communicates well insofar as using general communication that does not require

operational specificity, but may not communicate well to middle managers when

operational tasks arise.

Although the quantified portion of this RQ noted deviations from what I expected, the qualitative portion provided information that supported further study in this area. The results indicated there was not enough understanding between the terms communication in general and operational communication. Clarity associates primarily on the communication between the senior and middle managers in this study. Therefore, I was not successful to provide statistically correlated or associated data that supports clarity effects decision-making. Therefore, I could not reject the null hypothesis, H0, that the clarity, information delivery tools, mental frame, and type of information are not related to the decision-making processes, and I rejected the alternative hypothesis, H1, that clarity, information delivery tools, mental frame, and form of information are related to the decision-making processes.

Research Question 1

What effect does the organization's micro-operational direction, its clarity, have on the division manager's decision-making processes?

To answer RQ1 a comparison was made of questions: Juxtapositions between instrument Survey Questions 1, 3, and then comparing them with Question 9. Question 1 and 9 were closed-ended, but Question 3 was open ended.

Quantitative Question 1. How clear are the overall <u>micro-operational directions</u> from senior management to make your decisions for your division? Please X closest to your choice: 1-6 (1 being the best).

Table 4

RQ1: Clarity and Decision-Making Processes

	Rated 1	Rated 2	Rated 3	Rated 4	Rated 5	Rated 6
Clarity	63	73	32	32	17	3
	Rat/Int	Rat/Int	Rat/Int	Rat/Int	Rat/Int	Rat/Int
DM-Process	53/47	51/49	59/41	58/42	55/45	58/42

Notes. $N = 220$, Rat = Rational; Int = Intuitive

The number of respondents who listed the senior manager's clarity as a 1 was 63 or 28.6% of the total respondents. The same participants who reported clarity as 1, also reported their decision-making processes to be 53% rational and 47% intuitive and so on.

Question 9. Which general decision-making process do you prefer to use to make divisional decisions? Please give in percentages, $(a + b)$ to $= 100\%$ in boxes. Illustrated as: Two choices (a) Pugh Matrix, SWOT analysis, Military Decision-making process (MDMP), Pareto analysis, Company directed decision-making process, and decision trees. _____ or (b) Experience or Gut feeling_____.

The Pearson correlation statistic for associations between clarity and the decision-making processes appear in Table 5. The associations between the clarity of the senior manager to the middle manager's decision-making processes were insignificant *(p >* 0.05). These ratings were based on a percent of use for each decision-making process.

Table 5

RQ1: Clarity and Decision-Making

Response	Correlation	*p* value
Rational	0.07216	0.2866
Intuitive	-0.07216	0.2866

Note. N = 220, *p* > 0.05

Qualitative Question 3. In your opinion, how could the clarity of the message from your senior manager be improved?

Table 6

RQ1: Clarity Improvement

Resp	Rating	Priority	Time-iness	Personalize	No Issues	Confused	Follow-Up	Thorough	Clarity
63	Clarity 1	2	1	1	37	1	0	16	5
73	Clarity 2	5	6	1	14	2	2	28	15
32	Clarity 3	1	1	0	0	0	0	21	9
32	Clarity 4	0	1	0	0	0	0	17	14
17	Clarity 5	3	0	0	1	0	0	8	5
3	Clarity 6	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	1

Note. N = 220

The results indicated that the initial review of participants who rated the Clarity of the senior manager led to eight possible themes: priority–not enough information to determine senior manager's priority for projects; timeliness–not enough time to accomplish the project well; personalized–not enough separation of information for individual direction; no issues–no issues; confused–not sure; follow-up–not enough

oversight to see if project was completed as required; thorough–not enough information

to allow complete understandable direction to include of adequate sequencing of jobs,

and general clarity–inconsistencies, agreements not solidified and so on.

Consolidating the participants' responses associated with Question 3 resulted in 8

themes, as follows: Priority, timeliness, personalize, no issues, confused, follow-up,

thorough, and clarity. Participants who rated the senior manager's clarity as one or 28.6%

of the total respondents from Question 1 also reported areas for improving the senior

manager's clarity in Table 4.
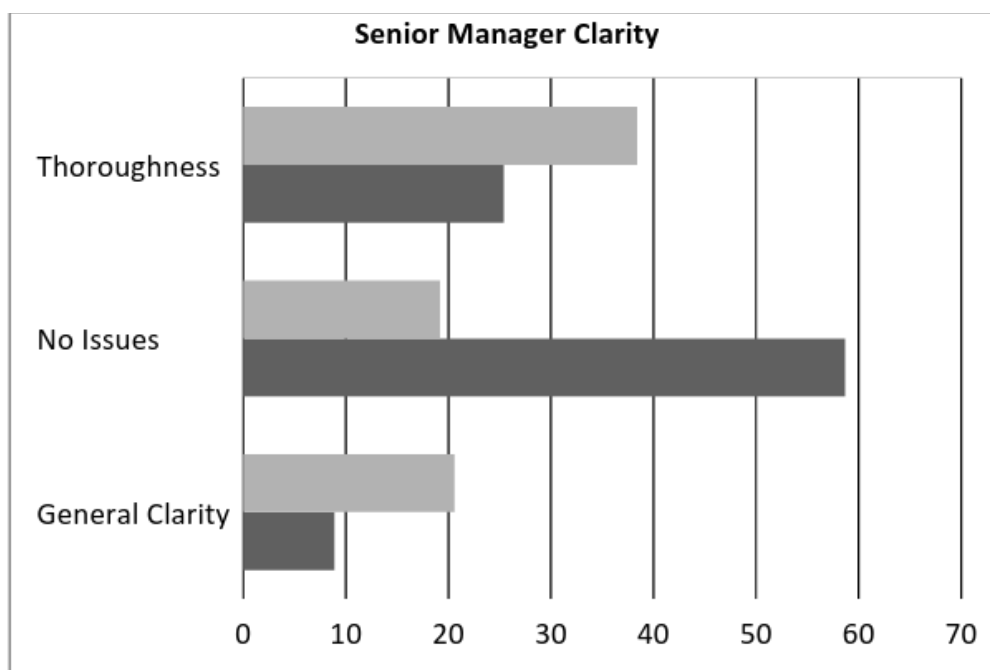
Figure 1. RQ1: Overall rating for comments to improve senior manager communication

The middle manager participants who rated the clarity of the senior manager as 1 and 2 are referenced in Figure 1. The results indicated that the majority of the middle managers found no issues with the clarity of the senior manager, but some would prefer more thoroughness in explanations when the senior manager communicated with them.

Mixed—quantitative and qualitative. Juxtaposing each of the participants' ratings of clarity from Question 1 against the qualitative question in Question 3 (see Figure 1) revealed the increased fidelity of the participants' meanings. The top three senior manager improvements that were reported by respondents who rated the senior manager's clarity as one, 63, or 28.6% of the total respondents, who listed the clarity of the senior manager as 1, also reported that 37, or 58.7% of them, found no issues with the clarity of the senior manager. Another 16, or 25.4% of them, wanted more thorough communication from the senior manager. Five, or 8.9% of them, wanted more general clarity from the communication coming from the senior manager.

The top three senior manager improvements that respondents who listed the senior manager's clarity as 2 (see Figure 1) increased the fidelity of the participants' meanings: 73, or 33.2% of the total participants, who listed the clarity of the senior manager as 2 also reported that 28 (38.4%) of them, wanted more thorough communication from the senior manager. Also, 15, or 20.6%, of them, wanted more general clarity from the communication coming from the senior manager. Further, 14, or 19.2% of them, found no issues with the clarity of the senior manager.

Notably, three participants, or 1.4% of them, reported confusion concerning how to answer the survey questions. They were also those who rated the senior manager's clarity as 1 and 2.

What was discovered. Clarity of information does not always mean operational communication between the senior and middle managers occurs. The Community Toolbox (2015) posited that communication does not exist unless it is clear-cut, thorough, and recent. The degree of technical knowledge or operational steps may require more than being clear alone. For example, on May 11 John might get a micro-directive from his senior manager follows: *One: paint the house red.* That sentence is a clear micro-directive communication, but lacks thoroughness and depending on the timing of that communication it may, or may not, be recent. *Two: paint the house brick red by 2 o'clock today.* That sentence is a clear micro-directive with a given timeframe and has increasing thoroughness. *Three: paint the house brick red by 2 o'clock next Wednesday the 15th of May*. That statement is a clear micro-directive that suggests clarity, increases thoroughness, and allows for planning and prioritization of jobs, if that communication disseminates in a timely manner.

Competing priorities to accomplish operational tasks are inputs to clear and effective communications. Effective communication requires managers to disclose understandable information to their subordinates that includes enough depth to get the operational job done. The clarity of message and the perception of that message by the receiver determines if effective communication occurs.

Although the quantitative portion of this RQ noted deviations from what I

expected, the qualitative portion provided information that supported further study in this

area. I was not able to provide significant statistical data that supported that clarity affects

the decision-making processes. Therefore, I could not reject H0, which stated that the

decision-making process is not associated with clarity of information. I rejected the

alternative hypothesis H1 stating the decision-making process is associated with clarity of

information.

Research Question 2

What effect do the information delivery tools have on the division manager's

decision-making process?

This RQ required the analysis between three quantitative and two qualitative

questions. Survey Questions 2, 4, 5, and 8 were compared with Question 9 and

juxtapositions between them to form meta-analysis. Questions 2, 4 and 9 were closed

ended, and. Questions 5 and 8 were open ended. I used the Statistical Analysis Software,

SAS/STAT software tool to compute the analysis of variance (ANOVA) statistic for

Questions 2 and 4.

Although 220 participants responded to Questions 2 and 4, those questions

produced responses did not always add up to 220 for each IDT. The results show the

participants' responses that include those who may not use one or the other form of IDT.

For example, a participant may or may not chose to give telephone a percentage of use

for either Question 2 or 4. A cursory review of the question may appear as if the

participant had not participated in the question when they actually had. These questions

represent the use of *either or* IDT in organizations. The other choices of face-to-face,

email, and company or social meetings may complete the answer as stipulated to meet the

100% criteria.

Quantitative Question 2: What information delivery tools are most utilized to

deliver decisional information to complete your divisional job? The choices of IDTs,

listed as percentage choices between telephone, face-to-face, email, and company or

social meetings to equal 100% in boxes, existed in the survey instrument. I illustrate and

discuss this RQ by examining the differences in communication delivery tools using

ANOVA (see Table 7), and then the average proportion of use for each IDT when

associated to the decision-making processes using a Pearson correlation (see Table 6).

Table 7

RQ2: Comparison of Individual Delivery Tools/Most Utilized

IDT	*M*	*SD*	Df	*F* value	Pr > F
CSM	13.1090909	12.242486			
Email	42.3681818	23.38961			
F2F	31.3136364	21.787617			
Telephone	13.2090909	12.955206			
			3	136.2	< .0001

Note. N = 220, *p* < 0.05. IDT= information delivery tools; CSM = company and social
meetings; F2F = Face-to-Face

Table 7 displays the means and standard deviations of the ANOVA statistics for

the four IDTs most currently used in businesses and organizations. The statistical

difference between the choices of IDTs were highly significant *(p* < 0.0001). These

ratings reflect a percentage of use for each IDT. The combined percentages had to total

100% for the individual combinations of IDT choice. The results indicate that the mean

ratings indicated a significantly higher mean score for current email use ($M = 42.37$) to

make decisions while the lowest, company and social meetings (CSM) with ($M = 13.11$).

Table 8

RQ2: Correlations of Individual Delivery Tools/Current

IDT (q2)	*r*	*p*-value
CSM	0.0447	0.5095
Email	-0.02174	0.7485
F2F	0.05116	0.4502
Telephone	-0.08904	0.1883

Notes. N = 220, q2 = question 2, CSM = Company and Social Meetings and F2F = Face-to-Face

Table 7 illustrates that the results indicate that all *p*-values are greater than 0.05,

which implies nonsignificant correlations between the IDTs and the rational decision-

making process. Consequently, since the choice between rational or intuitive decisions

are directly related to one another, the obverse of the correlation could also be stated

concerning the intuitive decision-making process. In Table 8, the correlations would

change signs, but the *p*-value would remain the same which indicates no significant

correlations between the IDTs and the intuitive decision-making process.

Question 4. In your opinion, which information delivery tool(s) would be most

effective for the delivery of *micro-operational* guidance?

Table 9

RQ2: Comparison of Individual Delivery Tools/Most Effective

IDT	*M*	*SD*	Df	*F* value	Pr > *F*
CSM	15.159091	16.411577			
Email	35.418182	24.160945			
F2F	39.059091	24.550036			
Telephone	10.363636	11.02486			
			3	114.79	< .0001

Note. N = 220, p < .05.

      Table 9 displays the ANOVA statistics for the four Information IDTs that the participants believed would be the most effective for the delivery of micro-operational guidance in businesses and organizations.

      The ANOVA statistic differences between the choices of IDTs were highly significant ($p < 0.0001$). These ratings reflect a per-cent of use for each IDT. The combined percentages had to total 100% for the individual combinations of IDT choice. The results indicate that the mean ratings indicated a significantly higher mean score for efficiency improvement occurs with face-to-face (F2F) use ($M = 39.06$) to make decisions while the lowest, telephone (tel) with ($M = 10.36$).

Table 10

RQ2: Correlations of Individual Delivery Tools/Most Effective

IDT (q4)	*r*	*p*-value
CSM	-0.01686	0.8036
Email	0.00225	0.9735
F2F	0.04214	0.5341
Telephone	-0.07368	0.2766

Note. N = 220, q4 = question 4, CSM = Company and Social
Meetings and F2F = Face-to-Face

Table 10 illustrates that the results indicate that all *p*-values are greater than 0.05,

which implies nonsignificant correlations between the IDTs and the rational decision-

making process. Consequently, since the choice between rational or intuitive decisions

are directly related to one another, the obverse of the correlation could also be stated

concerning the intuitive decision-making process. In Table 8 the correlations would

change signs, but the *p*-value would remain the same which indicates no significant

correlations between the IDTs and the intuitive decision-making process.

Question 9. Which general decision-making process do you prefer to use to make

divisional decisions? Please give in percentages, (a + b), to = 100% in boxes.

Table 11

RQ2: IDT Current and IDT Effectiveness

Response	IDT	Confidence Interval of OR
Rational	email	0.999 (0.987,1.010)
Rational	f2f	1.003 (0.992,1.014)

Note. N = 220, f2f = face-to-face

This test was run using a logit multiple regression model. The analysis revealed that neither the most utilized IDT nor the most effective IDT were associated with the decision-making process (see Table 11). For both of the IDTs, email for question two and f2f for question four, the confidence interval for the odd ratio (OR) contain 1, which indicates a lack of association between Questions 2 and 4 with rational decision-making.

Qualitative Question 5: In your opinion, how could the answer to the question directly above be improved? Or N/A?

Table 12

RQ2: Improvement of Individual Delivery Tools (IDT)

Priority	Timeliness	Personalized	No Issues	Confused	Follow-up	Thorough	Clarity
6	10	6	134	13	8	42	77
Total	Responses		296				
Original	Responses		220				
Mixed Rsp	Difference		76	0.35			

Note. N = 220

Seventy-six, or 35% of the total participants' fit into more than one coded Excel spreadsheet theme during the coding process (see Table 12). Considerations concerning the majority of comment meanings before aligning with the overall eight themes of priority, timeliness, personalized, no issues, confused, follow-up, thorough, and clarity were the result. The groups reporting to the follow-up from question four, concerning how to improve the effective delivery of IDTs show the precedence of their opinions (see Table 12). The results indicated the first respondent group reported no issues, 134 or 61%

of the total participant comments, to improve the delivery of micro-operational guidance.

The second group, 77 or 35% of the total respondent comments, reported that general

clarity from the senior manager requires improvement. The third group, 42 or 19.1% of

the total respondent comments, reported the senior manager's thoroughness when

explaining or showing what he or she wanted to accomplish needed improvement. The

fourth group, 13 or 5.9% of the total respondent comments, were confused about how to

answer the question. The fifth group, 10 or 4.5% of the total respondent comments,

reported that the timeliness of the information to them needed improvement. The sixth

group, eight or 3.6% of the total respondent comments, reported the senior manager

needed to follow-up more often. The seventh and eighth participant thematic group

reported identically. Six or 2.7% of the total respondent comments described the need for

more priority for the information given to them and improvements associated with the

need for personalized directives to improve their work.

Question 8. How would you improve the information to accomplish your

divisional management job concerning clarity or the tools utilized to deliver them?

Table 13

RQ2: Improvement of Clarity and Individual Delivery Tools (IDT)

Priority	Timeliness	Personalized	No Issues	Confused	Follow-up	Planning	Clarity
29	12	1	48	5	21	23	134

Total	Responses		273				
Original	Responses		220				
Mixed Rsp	Difference		53	0.2409			

Note. N = 220, and Rsp = Responses

The participants reported differently than in previous questions that changed the coded themes slightly. The construct thorough was replaced by the construct planning, which became more descriptive while examining participant responses. Further, I condensed the thoroughness column and priority columns because the majority of participant answers seemed to require it. There were 53, or 24% (Table 13) of the total participant comments, that fit into more than one theme during the coding process. The overall eight themes of priority, timeliness, personalized, no issues, confused, follow-up, planning, and clarity were the outcomes once the data was dissected and scrutinized.

The groups, listed in order of precedence of their opinions, who reported on this question of what would improve the information concerning the clarity or the tools to accomplish their divisional management job - follow. The results indicated the first respondent group, 134 or 61% of the total participant comments, revealed that general clarity from the senior manager was required to improve the information to accomplish the middle manager's divisional job. The second group, 48 or 21.8% of the total participant comments, revealed there were no issues to improve the information to accomplish their divisional tasks. The third group, 29 or 13.2% of the total participant comments, revealed that the senior managers could improve the information to help them understand the priority of the tasks assigned. The fourth group, 23 or 10.5% of the total participant comments, revealed that the senior manager could plan the information given to them better. The fifth group, 21 or 9.6% of the total participant comments, revealed that the senior manager needed to follow-up concerning the information given them. The sixth group, 12 or 5.5% of the total participant comments, revealed that the senior

manager should increase his or her timeliness concerning the information given them.

The seventh group, 5 or 2.3% of the total participant comments, revealed that they were

confused when filling out the survey. The eighth group, one or .45% of the total

participant comments, believed more personalized direction would improve their ability

to complete their jobs better.

Mixed quantitative and qualitative. The mixed methods, combination of both

the quantitative and the qualitative data, revealed the following:

Table 7 contains the means and standard deviation of the means between the

current uses of information delivery tools (IDT), Question 2, using the ANOVA test for

significance. The results indicate that the variance is highly statistically significant

between the organizational information delivery tools (IDT) currently used in

organizations (Pr > F = < .0001). Email is the most utilized IDT within businesses and

organizations in South Carolina.

The participants reported their opinion of the most effective use of IDT in

Question 4, using the ANOVA test for significance (see Table 9). The results indicate

that the variance is highly significant between the organizational information delivery

tools (IDT) and their effectiveness to communicate micro-organizational guidance in

organizations (Pr > F = < .0001). Middle manager participants reported that effectiveness

could be enhanced senior managers offered more face-to face communication.

Qualitative -The participants reported their opinion of the most effective use of IDT in

Question 5 using a constant coding comparison of participant statements and then

categorizing them into eight concentrated themes (see Table 12). The results indicated

that outside those participants with no issues, improving general clarity was the chief way to improve effectiveness. Further, the results indicate that general clarity from the senior to middle managers represent a large proportion of the problems associated with the performance of the division managers' jobs.

The participants reported their opinion of how to improve the information clarity and IDT use to accomplish divisional jobs in Question 8 (see Table 13). I analyzed these data using a constant coding comparison of participant statements and then categorizing them into concentrated themes. As in Question 5, the survey indicates that clarity was the chief way to improve effectiveness.

However, the results indicate the general clarity statements were variations such as the following: improve clarity, more clarity, needs more clarity, and so on. Therefore, general clarity provided inconsequential answers when associated with decision-making. The other six developed themes (see Tables 12, and 13) once operational communication was broken out, helped identify a more precise definition of where clarity breaks down within the organization associate with the when and how, or if, those breakdowns affect the decision-making process. This should be a consideration for future studies.

What was discovered. Substantial differences existed between the quantitative and qualitative data concerning how participants answered the questions for this RQ. The results indicate that the analyzed data did differentiate between the choices of current and most effective uses of IDT, but I was not successful to prove that the decision-making process is statistically associated with the IDTs. A careful analysis of the data suggests there was a difference in understanding of general communication and operational

communication, and that difference substantially affected the way the participants answered the question. Therefore, the hypothesis H_0 for RQ2 was that the decision-making process is not associated with clarity of information and the analysis proved that I must accept the original H_0 and reject the null hypothesis that decision-making is associated with the clarity of information.

Research Question 3

What effect does the division manager's, mental frame, have on division manager's decision-making processes?

To answer RQ3, Questions 6 and 9 were compared. Participants provided their opinion of their relationship with their senior managers using a Likert scale from 1 to 6 (1 representing the best). In Question 9 they chose how much of each of the two decision-making processes – rational or intuitive (in percentages to equal 100).

Quantitative **Question 6**: In your opinion, how would you say your relationship is with your senior manager?

Results of Question 6, relationship with senior manager, were compared to Question 9, choice of decision-making process (see Table 14). The middle managers reported their perceptions of their relationship with their senior managers and how their decisions are made based on those relationships. The respondents who rated their relationship with their senior manager as 1, 160 or 72.7% of the total respondents, also rated their choice of the decision-making process as 81, or 36.8% of the time, for rational decision making and 79, or 35.1% of the time, they chose the intuitive process of decision making. The respondents who rated their relationship with their senior manager as 2, 69

or 31.4% of the total respondents, also rated their choice of the decision-making process

as 66, or 30.0% of the time, for rational decision making and 68, or 30.1% of the time,

they chose the intuitive process of decision making. Table 14 shows how the participants

reported their relationships with their senior.

Table 14

RQ3: Senior Relationship

Rating >	1	2	3	4	5	6	Total
Responses	0.5679	0.358	0.037	0.0247	0.0123	0	0.9999
Q17: 1	46	29	3	2	1	0	81
–	0.1739	0.4348	0.2174	0.1159	0.058	0	0.3136
Q17: 2	12	30	15	8	4	0	69
–	0.125	0.3333	0.1667	0.2083	0.125	0.0417	0.1091
Q17: 3	3	8	4	5	3	1	24
–	0	0.087	0.2174	0.4783	0.1304	0.087	0.1045
Q17: 4	0	2	5	11	3	2	23
–	0.0833	0.1667	0.3333	0.0833	0.3333	0	0.0545
Q17: 5	1	2	4	1	4	0	12
–	0.0909	0.1818	0.0909	0.4545	0.1818	0	0.05
Q17: 6	1	2	1	5	2	0	11
Total Responses	63	73	32	32	17	3	220

Note. N = 220

Table 15

RQ3: Grouped Ratings of Relationship and Decision-Making Process

DMP Choice	(a) Pugh Matrix, SWOT analysis, Military Decision-making process (MDMP), Pareto analysis, Company directed decision-making process, and decision trees. % and *n* responses	(b) Experience or Gut Feeling	Total
Rel w/Senior			
Q17: 1	100.00%	97.53%	72.73%
	81	79	160
Q17: 2	95.65%	98.55%	60.91%
	66	68	134
Q17: 3	95.83%	100.00%	21.36%
	23	24	47
Q17: 4	100.00%	100.00%	20.91%
	23	23	46
Q17: 5	100.00%	100.00%	10.91%
	12	12	24
Q17: 6	100.00%	100.00%	10.00%
	11	11	22
Total Respondents	216	217	220

Note. N = 220

The averages of all combined answers concerning the decision-making processes appear in Table 15. This table shows that overall the middle manager participants chose the rational decision-making process ($M = 56\%$) of the time and the intuitive ($M = 44\%$) of the time. It is important to note that there are 220 participants in the study, but the odd number of three remaining in the table above cannot be divided evenly between the two choices of decision processes that make the table appear incorrect, but it is not.

Table 16

RQ3: Overall Average of Decision-Making Process Choice

Answer Choices	Average Number	Total Number	Responses
(a) Pugh Matrix, SWOT analysis, Military Decision-making process (MDMP), Pareto analysis, Company directed decision-making process, and decision trees.	56	11,892	216
(b) Experience or Gut Feeling	44	10,108	217

Note. N = 220

Table 17

RQ3: Grouped Ratings of Relationship and Decision-Making Processes

	Rated 1	Rated 2	Rated 3	Rated 4	Rated 5	Rated 6
Relat w/Senior	81	69	24	23	12	11
	Rat/Int	Rat/Int	Rat/Int	Rat/Int	Rat/Int	Rat/Int
DM-Process	81/79	66/68	23/24	23/23	12/12	11/11/

Note. N = 220, Relat = Relationship and DM = Decision Making

The groups that reported their relationships with their senior managers are in

Table 17. The top two groups of respondents are represented as 81 or 36.8%, and 69 or

31.4%. of the total respondents that rated their relationships as 1 and 2, respectively.

These two groups also reported their decision-making processes they most prefer to use

as having only a 36.8% and 35.9% and a 30% and 30.1% difference between the rational

and intuitive decision-making processes for the total respondents, again respectively.

Table 18

RQ3: Relationship and Decision-Making Process

Response	Correlation	*p* - value
Rational	0.02373	0.07264

Note. N = 220

Table 18 displays the correlation statistics for the middle manager's opinion of his or her relationship with the senior manager. I used Microsoft Excel to obtain the Pearson correlation statistic and *p* value calculated with SAS to find the probability of finding a value greater than .05 is $r = .02373$ and $p = 0.7264$ to reveal the relationship with the senior manager and the decision-making processes. They proved to be not statistically significant as $r = .02373$ and $p = 0.7264$ which is greater than 0.05 significance level. Since the obverse of a two choice variable, rational versus intuitive, would be just the opposite, it must also be true that the intuitive decision-making process is larger than 0.05 and is similarly not statistically significant when associated with the decision-making process.

What was discovered. No statistically significant association existed between the middle managers' relationship with their senior manager and their choice of decision-making processes. Therefore, I could not reject the null hypothesis that decision-making process is not associated with the mental frame, and I rejecedt the alternative hypothesis (HE1) that decision-making process is associated with the mental frame.

Research Question 4

What effect does the amount of for your information (FYI) and for your action (FYA) have on the decision-making process?

To answer RQ4 I compared Questions 1, 7, and 9. Notably, RQ4 combined the same questions as RQ1 with the exception of the addition of the FYI and FYA for comparison and analysis.

Question 1. How clear are the overall micro-operational directions from senior management to make your decisions for your division?

As shown below, to answer Question 1, the participants provided their opinion of the clarity of the directions from their senior manager on a Likert scale from 1 to 6 (1 representing the best). The comparisons between Questions 1, 7, and 9 appear in Table 17. The number of respondents who listed the senior manager's clarity as one was 63 or 28.6% of the total respondents. Participants who reported the senior manager clarity as one also reported that they used the rational decision-making process 61% of the time and the intuitive decision-making process 63% of the time. The number of respondents who listed the senior manager's clarity as two was 73 or 33.2% of the total respondents. Participants who reported the senior manager clarity as two also reported that they used the rational decision-making process 72% of the time and the intuitive decision-making process 70% of the time.

Table 19

RQ4: Clarity, FYI and FYA, and the Decision-Making Processes

	Rated 1	Rated 2	Rated 3	Rated 4	Rated 5	Rated 6
Clarity	63	73	32	32	17	3
FYI/FYA	63/63	73/72	32/32	32/32	17/17	3/3
Tot/%	126/57.3	145/65.9	64/29.1	64/29.1	34/15.5	6/2.7
	Rat/Int	Rat/Int	Rat/Int	Rat/Int	Rat/Int	Rat/Int
DMP	53/47	51/49	59/41	58/42	55/45	58/42

Note. N = 220, FYI = For Your Information, FYA = For Your Action, Rat = Rational, Int = Intuitive, and DMP = Decision-making process

To answer Question 7, the participants selected the form of the information received from the senior manager as FYI and FYA in percentages, the combined percentages must equal 100%.

Participants who answered 1 concerning the clarity of the micro-operational clarity also reported they, 63 or 28.6% of the total respondents, had challenges understanding what directions FYI and FYA from the senior manager 63% of the time for both forms of communication. Participants who answered 2, 73 or 33.2% of the total respondents, concerning the clarity of the micro-operational clarity also reported they had challenges understanding what directions were For your Information (FYI) and For Your Action (FYA) from the senior manager 73% of the time for FYI and 72% of the time for FYA.

To answer question nine participants chose, in percentages to equal 100%, between their preferences for two different decision-making processes – rational and intuitive.

Question 9. Which general decision-making process do you prefer to use to make divisional decisions?

Participants who reported the senior manager clarity as 1, 63 or 28.6% of the total respondents, and the form of communication from the senior manager as 63% for both the FYI and FYA, also reported that they used the rational decision-making process 61% of the time and the intuitive decision-making process 63% of the time. Participants who reported the senior manager clarity as 2, 73 or 33.2% of the total respondents, and the form of communication from the senior manager as 73% and 72% FYI and FYA respectively, also reported that they used the rational decision-making process 72% of the time and the intuitive decision-making process 70% of the time.

The results compare the senior manager's clarity, the forms of information, and the decision-making processes (see Table 19). Since the *p*-values are based on the test for a linear relationship between the two variables under analysis, when the linearity is weak the Pearson correlation will be low – or near zero so the probability of finding a value larger than the one calculated by chance is high (a large tail area), hence the high *p*-values. The results indicate that FYI and FYA are not significantly statistically correlated with decision-making (p >0.05 in both cases). However, an interesting part of the output indicates is that clarity is significantly statistically correlated with FYI and FYA.

Table 20

RQ4: Correlations Between Clarity, FYI/FYA, and DMP

	FYI	FYA
Rational	0.00217	0.09004
	$p = 0.9744$	$p = 0.1833$
Intuitive	-0.00217	-0.09004
	$p = 0.9744$	$p = 0.1833$
Clarity	0.26392	0.16483
	$p < 0.0001$	$p = 0.0144$

Note. N = 220

What was discovered. There was no statistically significant association between the FYI and FYA and the middle manager's decision-making processes (see Table 20). Therefore, I could not reject the null-hypothesis that percentage of either FYI or FYA information from the senior manager(s) is not statistically associated with the decision-making processes. However, the results also indicated that the senior manager's clarity levels and FYI and FYA rating was statistically significant, $p < 0.0001$ for FYI which was expected, but I was not expecting a strong correlation between FYA and the senior manager's clarity rating which was $p = 0.0144$. The results indicate that I must reject the alternative hypothesis (HE1) that a percentage of either FYI or FYA information from the senior manager(s) is associated with the decision-making processes and could not reject the null-hypothesis that a percentage of either FYI or FYA information from the senior manager(s) is not associated with the decision-making processes.

Evidence of Trustworthiness

A doctoral candidate from another institution reviewed the pilot study results to see if any adjustments to the questions were required prior to the release of the main study. One question required adjustment for clarity, but the question itself was not changed. This adjustment, forwarded to the IRB for approval, was accepted (see Attachment E). Second, the open-ended wording used by participants and the conclusions of coding groups based on answers from the later main study were reviewed for possibilities of misinterpretations or possible bias in my conclusions of the data provided before the release of the coded results. There were no discrepancies in the continual coding of the qualitative questions.

<div align="center">

Summary

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The results of the survey are broken down into the respective RQs.

Research Question 1

RQ1. How clear are the overall micro-operational directions from senior management to make your decisions for your division?

Questions 1, 3, and 9 addressed RQ1. For Question 1, the results indicated some confusion between general communication and organizational communication. The Community Toolbox (2015) posited that effective communication requires managers to disclose information to their subordinates that is understandable and with enough depth to get the job done. For Question 3, the results indicated that the majority of middle managers believe their senior manager's clarity to be adequate. However, the results also indicate some confusion between the clarity of communication and the clarity of

communication associated with operational tasks. For Question 9, the results indicated that 133 of the participants, or 60.5% of the total respondents who rated the clarity of their senior manager as both one and two also rated their choices of the rational and intuitive decision processes as ($M = 54.1$) and ($M = 46.0$), respectively.

Thus, clarity of information does not always mean communication between the senior and middle manager occurs. The degree of technical knowledge or operational steps may require more than being clear alone. The participants for this survey wanted information from their senior manager that provides a clear micro-directive that infers clarity, increases thoroughness, and allows for planning and the prioritization of jobs requiring scheduling, if that communication arrives on time. Competing priorities to accomplish operational tasks are inputs to clear and effective communications. Effective operational communication requires managers to disclose information to their subordinates that is understandable and with enough depth to get the job done. Therefore, depending on the clarity of message and the perception of that message by the receiver effective communication may or may not occur.

Research Question 2

RQ2. What information delivery tools are most utilized to deliver decisional information to complete your divisional job?

Questions 2, 4, 5, and 8 addressed RQ 2. For Question 2, the results indicated that email was the primary IDT used in current organizations. For Question 5, the results indicated the most effective IDT to use is face-to-face. For Question 5, the results indicated similar challenges reported in Question 3. The majority of middle managers

believe their senior manager's clarity to be adequate. However, the top three

improvement areas indicate some enhancements to the senior management

communications is required when associated with thoroughness, confusion in the

direction of tasks, and timeliness of communication. For Question 8, the results were

again similar to both Questions 3 and 5 with the following differences. The top three

improvements middle managers reported was the lack of enough communication to help

set both the priority for tasks and enough information to help them plan to complete

divisional tasks adequately, and the need for increased follow-up from the senior

manager to see that the divisional managers were doing what was intended from their

original communication.

Thus, there were substantial differences between the quantitative and qualitative

data. After carefully analyzing the data it is apparent there is a difference in

understanding of general communication and operational communication and that

difference substantially affected the way the participants answered the question. The

analyzed data did differentiate between the choices of current and most effective uses of

IDT, but I was not successful to prove that the decision-making process is associated with

the IDTs. Therefore, the hypothesis $H0$ for RQ2: Decision-making process is not

associated with clarity of information. The analysis indicated that I could not reject the

original Ho and I rejected the null hypothesis that decision-making is associated with the

clarity of information.

Research Question 3

RQ3. What effect does the division manager's mental frame have on division manager's decision-making processes?

The majority of middle managers rated their relationship with their senior managers as 1 or 2, 136 or 61.8% of the total respondents. The participant chose between the rational – A and the intuitive – B choices - (a) Pugh Matrix, SWOT analysis, Military Decision-making process (MDMP), Pareto analysis, Company directed decision-making process, and decision trees - or (b) Experience or Gut feeling?

There was no association between the middle manager's relationship with their senior manager and their choice of decision-making processes. Therefore, I could not reject the null hypothesis that decision-making process is not associated with the mental frame, and I rejected the alternative hypothesis that decision-making process is associated with the mental frame.

Research Question 4

RQ4: What effect does the amount of for your information (FYI) and for your action (FYA) have on the decision-making process?

The results indicated that approximately 136 of the middle manager participants' who had previously chosen their relationship with their senior manager as one and two, also chose 61.8% of the time that FYI was confused with FYA and 61.4% of the time that FYA was confused with FYI information from the senior manager. The participants chose between the rational – A and the intuitive – B choices - (a) Pugh Matrix, SWOT analysis, Military Decision-making process (MDMP), Pareto analysis, Company directed

decision-making process, and decision trees - or (b) Experience or Gut feeling? Further, the results indicated that 133 of the participants, or 61.8% of the total respondents who rated the clarity of their senior manager as both one and two also rated their choices of the rational and intuitive decision processes as ($M = 54.1$) and ($M = 46.0$) respectively.

Thus, there was no significant statistical association between the FYI and the FYA and the middle manager's decision-making processes. Therefore, I could not reject the null-hypothesis that percentage of either FYI or FYA information from the senior manager(s) is not associated with the decision-making processes, and I rejected the alternative hypothesis that a percentage of either FYI or FYA information from the senior manager(s) is associated with the decision-making processes. However, the results also indicated that the senior manager's clarity levels and FYI and FYA rating is significantly statistically correlated with p values of <0.0001 which was expected, but the FYA – also significantly correlated at $p = 0.0144$ was not expected.

Central Research Question

What is the extent of the relationship between micro-operational direction clarity, its information delivery tools, the mental frame of the division managers, and the form of the information when given to the division managers to the decision-making process?

Questions 1, 2, 4, 6, 7, and 9 addressed the central RQ. The results indicated that email was the primary IDT used in current organizations. The most effective IDT to use is face-to-face. Further, the results indicated that 136, or 61.8% of the total middle managers rated their relationship with their senior managers as a 1 or 2. Approximately 136 or 61.8% of the total participants who had previously chosen their relationship with

their senior manager as 1 or 2 also noted 61.8% of the time that FYI was confused with

FYA, and 61.4% of the time that FYA was confused with FYI direction from the senior

manager. Finally, 133 of the participants, or 60.5% of the total respondents, who rated the

clarity of their senior manager as both 1 and 2 also rated their choices of the rational and

intuitive decision processes as ($M = 54.1$) and ($M = 46.0$), respectively.

The combinations of results from Qualitative Questions, 3, 5, and 8, and

Quantitative Questions, 1, 2, 4, 6, 7, and 9 helped to form meta-inferences. The

quantitative questions did not support the hypothesis that the variables influence the

decision-making processes, but the qualitative questions provided contrary information.

For instance, while the senior manager's clarity is rated one thing in the quantitative

analysis, the improvement to clarity reported by the participants contradicted those

quantitative findings in their responses to the qualitative questions. These contrary

findings indicated a lack of explanation between general communication and operational

communication. The senior may communicate well when using general communication

that does not require operational specificity, but he or she may not communicate well

enough to middle managers when operational tasks require increased specificity.

Although the quantitative portion of this RQ noted deviations from what I

expected, the qualitative portion provided information that supported further study in this

area. The results indicated there was not enough understanding between general

communication and operational communication. Because clarity associates with the

communication between the senior and middle managers in this study, I did not provide

significant statistical data to support the variables of clarity, information delivery tools,

mental frame, and type of information effects decision-making. Therefore, I could not reject the null hypothesis that the clarity, information delivery tools, mental frame, and type of information are not related to the decision-making processes, and I rejected the alternative hypothesis that clarity, information delivery tools, mental frame, and form of information are related to the decision-making processes.

Overall, the results indicated that the questions did provide some fidelity for improving the communications between these two management groups. Although the purpose of the pilot study was to add fidelity to the questions, they were analyzed separately to see any differences associated with the questions in the main study to further substantiate differences of understanding should there be any. The same outcome for improvement was evident in both the pilot and main study. I learned that the pilot study provided a parameterized group of participants in the same environment while the main study provided disparate groups in differing environments, but the results were similar.

The results from the analysis of RQ2 were similar. Both the pilot and the main study groups presented clarity as a means to an end when associated with improving communication between the senior and middle manager. The instrument itself had shortcomings in the analysis concerning the second purpose of the study with the possible exception of RQ2, which depicted two separate groups when comparing the information delivery tools currently used in businesses and organizations with what middle managers believed would be the most effective IDT to use in the same organizations in South Carolina. The results indicated the possibility for subculture development because the

IDTs currently used in organizations and the IDTs preferred for use by middle managers in those same organizations diverge from one another. The support and buy-in from divisional managers who have the choice to provide proper attention to the IDT chosen and the one they would prefer will slowly diminish unless corrections develop within the organizations to address what the problems are with the currently used tool.

Chapter 5 includes comparisons of these results to the literature, conclusions and implications, and suggestions for future scholarly research on this topic.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

Introduction

The primary purpose of this research was to provide ways to improve the communication effectiveness between a company's senior management and middle management. The secondary purpose of this study was to advocate for the identification of divisional misalignment and provide information for a future tool to better identify communication misalignment.

This chapter contains an interpretation of the findings, limitations of the study, recommendations for future research, and implications for senior managers, business owners and social change. Developing a nascent subculture identification tool could help senior managers or owners of businesses identify shortfalls in business production or personnel dysfunction associated with and supportive of subculture development.

In this study, some quantitative and qualitative findings converged to provide a more inclusive depiction of how proportions of clarity, information delivery tools (IDT), mental frame, and the form of message delivered to the middle manager encourage the decision-making processes of middle managers. Second, this study provided indications of the possibilities of providing a nascent tool to help identify subculture development in companies and organizations. In other examples, quantitative and qualitative findings diverged, suggesting the need for further examination.

This quantitative research did not show that clarity, IDTs, mental frame, and the form of message delivered to the middle managers affected the decision-making processes of middle managers. By contrast, the qualitative answers showed improvement

of communication between the senior and middle managers. Middle managers reported how the clarity, IDTs, their individual mental frames, and the form of the messages affect their operational jobs, especially in their qualitative descriptions.

The secondary purpose, to advocate for identifying divisional misalignment and providing information for a future developed tool to aid in misalignment identification, provided limited positive results. The quantitative results concerning IDTs provided a glimpse of continuity between clarity and FYI and FYA, and the qualitative results for RQ2 denoted significant differences between what IDTs used currently in companies and what respondents believe effective in South Carolina organizations. Overall, and after a close examination of all the data led to the conclusion that the participants did not connect the terminology of general communication and operational communication.

Interpretation of the Findings

Chapter 2 contained an overview of the literature related to management communication clarity and nascent findings of independent researchers concerning the possible effects of that communication within organizations. The topics included cultural integration, leadership styles, cultural alignment for competitive advantages, leader *vs.* communication manager perceptions, information systems, multiple information sharing devices, message integrity, strategic communication in the change processes, importance of gaining consensus, breaking silos, communication and task performance, decision maker characteristics, relationship stresses, mental models, decision rules, and performance, synthesis, capabilities, and overlooked insights, epistemic decision theory, information *vs.* communication, cognitive frames in corporate sustainability, emotions

and decisions, leader-member exchange and culture alignment, team failure, creating

leadership and engagement through better communication, optimizing employee

engagement, information systems – successes and failures, testing rational decision

making, intellectual capital and job satisfaction, organizational values in managerial

communication, the 2020 workplace, job satisfaction, cross-cultural interactions,

managing across cultures, unified communications, dynamic decision making, economic

considerations, strategic communication, decision making styles and team effectiveness,

and CEO communications. This section contains a discussion on the interpretation of

findings as they relate to the research questions and the literature of communication and

cultural impacts related to strategic businesses and organizational sustainability.

As discussed in the literature review, Meng (2014) advocated communication

improvements in organizations so that company effectiveness could improve. Silic and

Back (2016) hypothesized that timely information to be important to unified

communication and collaboration (UC&C) adoption. Also, organizational culture is a

primary acceptance element in the UC&C circumstance (Silic & Back, 2013). These

findings support the primary and secondary purposes for my study and provide a baseline

for following studies of similar topics in management, communication, and decision-

making within organizations.

Research Question 1 addressed the relationship between the senior manager's

clarity when he or she communicates distinct directions to the middle manager and how

that communication might affect the decision making of the middle manager. Malbsic

and Brcic (2012) believed clarity to be an important factor in communication. The

methodology for this research was a mixed, quantitative and qualitative, survey.

Venkatesh et al. (2013) suggested mixed methodology can best provide meta-inferences

from the assimilating quantitative and qualitative findings. Although the results indicated

no significant quantitative correlations for RQ1, the data provided functional information,

including a robust need for better communication between the senior and middle manager

management groups. The qualitative results for RQ1 indicated that overall thoroughness

associated with the communication from the senior manager requires improvement.

Associatively, the Community Toolbox (2015) posited that good communication

does not exist unless the communication contained three elements: being clear-cut,

thorough, and recent. The quantitative comparisons showed little differences in the

decision-making processes and the senior manager's clarity. When combined with the

qualitative component, middle managers might rate the clarity of the senior manager high

on the Likert scale but find areas he or she might improve to help them complete their

divisional tasks. According to the findings, middle managers need more clear

communications from their senior managers to complete their jobs well. Further, future

researchers may consider an interview process to help the participant understand the

difference between clarity associated with general communication and operational

communication.

Research Question 2 addressed the relationship between the IDT and the middle

manager's decision-making processes. This aim for this question was to reveal the

current IDT status of the organization, how the middle manager would prefer to receive

the information, how they would choose to improve the clarity and tools used to complete

their divisional jobs well. The goal for this question was to identify any associations between the IDT and decision-making variables. The focus on the clarity of communication and decision-making largely results from current studies and previous literature that thrust possible connections between the two. Silac (2016) posited the understandability of communication enables a collaboration technology to provide quick utilization by the user to adjust to organizational needs. The results for support Silac. Technology and communication must be integrated seamlessly for effective use. Research Question 2 also indicated how middle managers would prefer their organizations communication technologies to be.

Research Question 3 addressed the relationship between the middle manager and his or her decision-making process. Mental frame, in the survey instrument, was associated to the interpersonal relationships between the senior and middle managers in the organization. The hypothesis in RQ3 was that the perception of the middle manager's relationship to his or her senior manager would not affect the middle manager's decision-making process. Several past theorists, namely, Kecmanovic et al. (2014), Lucke et al. (2014), and Gary and Wood (2011), all believed the effects of the decision maker is influenced their relationship with their senior managers. Still, decision making may not be affected. In the current study, I found the mental frame does not influence their decision making. However, the quantitative and qualitative responses differed to such a degree that more study could improve the fidelity of this phenomenon.

Research Question 4 addressed the relationship between the form of communication the middle manager received from the senior manager and his or her

decision-making process. For your information (FYI) and for your action (FYA), in the survey instrument, was associated with the directive nature of the communication from the senior to the middle manager. One, FYI, is less directive than the specified direction (FYA) to the middle manager. In this study. the form of communication did not affect the middle manager's decision-making process. The literature review emphasized Hermann-Nehdi's (2013) belief that different thinking styles can cause confusion and misalignment of how they think individually and as a group that may lead to different conclusions and decisions. Within this study, the quantitative data rejected the hypothesis that different thinking styles, associated with RQ3 and RQ4 mental frames and FYI or FYA would affect the decision-making of the middle managers within organizations. The qualitative answers contrasted with the quantitative results. The survey results indicate the divergence between the quantitative and qualitative results are the results of participant misunderstanding the difference between general communication and operational communication.

The primary purpose of this research was to provide ways to improve the communication effectiveness between the company's senior management and middle management. The results of the survey showed wide differences between how the senior manager communicates and how the middle managers would improve that communication to complete their divisional management jobs. This understanding clarifies where some of that diversion takes place. This, I believe the primary purpose of the research was successful.

The secondary purpose of this study was to advocate for the identification of divisional misalignment and provide information for a future developed tool to aid in misalignment identification. The results indicated the secondary purpose of the study remains only partially fulfilled. There was a statistically large divergence between clarity and FYI and FYA. That statistical difference denotes that this question begs for more emphasis between the senior and middle manager communication.

Business and organizational communication is a universal management element and the primary indicator for this study. The section of the literature on cultures revealed that organizational culture is a sensitive component as a primary acceptance element in the UC&C circumstance (Silic & Back, 2013). Thus, there exists the possibility for codependency between communication and subculture development exist.

Limitations of the Study

The target population for the study was small- to medium-sized businesses and organizations (N = 220) in South Carolina, much more than the minimum of 143 needed for the .80 confidence interval. Participants included a pilot sample from a local manufacturing company, a paper copy, and a random cross-section of different types of businesses using participants from various upstate South Carolina Rotary membership lists. All business types with three or more divisions were part of the random sampling method. The president of the Greenville, South Carolina and the District Governor of the Upstate Rotary clubs granted me access to general membership lists for the main study. I used the lists to contact each individual club member by email to solicit their agreement

to take the survey. Any other probability or nonprobability sampling method would have biased the study results.

One limitation was that interviews were not conducted, which could have addressed subculture developments within organizations. Participants could have been asked about their associated with the relevant terminology. Thus, future researchers need to increase the fidelity of the terminologies between general communication and operational communication for the participants. Second, the results indicate that a breakout of the eight different themes associated with this survey require further refining to obtain the reasons for middle manager discontent and ways to improve communication. One follow-up question could be, how clear is your senior manager's guidance to middle managers concerning planning ore thoroughness, or how does it help you set priorities in the accomplishment of your divisional tasks, and so on?

A third limitation was the introduction of recent and newer comparative concepts in terminology to the research field. As an example, understanding "clarity" required denoting the differences between general communications versus operational communication. Understanding this primary definition is a significant component associated with this survey. Other examples are the following: communication versus clarity, mental frame versus personal opinion of the relationship with the senior manager, FYI versus for your action FYA, and the compartmentalization of decision-processes into rational and intuitive in the context presented. A pilot study, initiated before the main study, revealed how well the participants understood these definitions, thus adding validity the survey instrument. Only one annotation required addition to one question,

Number 9, to convey better meanings of the questions, but did not change the question itself: Which general decision-making process do you prefer to use to make divisional decisions? Please give in percentages, (a + b) to = 100% in boxes required the addition of the (a + b) to add clarity to the question per participant request on the pilot. If a future researcher defines the measure of clarity when associated with general communications versus operational communication initially in a survey instrument, the results might be dissimilar from those offered in this study.

Recommendations for Future Research

The literature on small- to medium-sized businesses and their communication efforts, the possibilities of subculture development, and the findings in this study had implications for specific areas for research continuation. The results indicate da wide divergence between the quantitative and qualitative reports. This divergence requires more study concerning the clarity between the senior and middle managers in companies and organizations. The literature explaining where those specific needs exist is undefined.

The study indicates a deficiency of correlations in the findings. While personal likes, between the middle and senior managers, suggest a propensity for acquiescence of information shared, the clarity of that information might elude better business and operational alignments. Also, the study indicates confusion between the distinct terms general communication and operational communication. Emphasizing that difference is important to future research on this topic.

Therefore, future researchers should address the following questions: What are the differences between general communication and operational communication? How

clear is your senior manager's guidance to middle managers concerning planning, thoroughness, or how does it help you set priorities in the accomplishment of your divisional tasks, and so on? I did not focus these questions in this research, but they may assist future scholars in defining how senior and middle manager communication can improve, or how to develop a tool to assess the development of subcultures in companies and organizations.

Implications for Research and Practice

The results suggest there are various ways to capture data associated with the impact of senior management communication on small- to medium-sized businesses or organizations. The clarity, information delivery tools, mental frames, or the forms the information takes when delivered by the senior manager to subordinates and the choices of types of decision-making processes made by the middle manager based on those inputs. As such, companies and organizations might spend resources, time, and money to research the differing ways of how to identify subcultures within organizations. Previous segmented research has shown how literature supports those partial findings. Known research (Community Toolbox, 2015; Hahn et al., 2014; Hermann-Nehdi, 2013; Kecmanovic et al. 2014; Lucke et al. 2014; Silac, 2016) complements discretionary items in the research provided in this study in a non-holistic way.

Future conceptual studies might include business and organizational cycles associated with how long the business or organization has been in existence, and types of businesses (service vs. manufacturing or military vs. civilian). One possible research question is whether small to medium-sized businesses provide internal communications

training using various IDTs and if that training involves the clarity of the messages

delivered between the senior and middle managers. Future survey instruments could

include how and when the management teams are trained on the communication tools

and to what extent the messages were understood and how to improve that clarity. The

limitation of this approach may be how the senior and middle managers might be able to

self-identify their training acumen before and after the training.

The preponderance of the suggestions for future research comprises only minimal

tweaks to the study performed on the senior management's communication clarity to the

middle managers. Future researchers can improve and then reuse this study to bring more

fidelity to this topic.

Implications for Social Change

This study was designed to improve the communication between the senior and

middle managers in companies and organizations and develop a nascent way to identify

subcultures within organizations. The survey results indicated success concerning the

first purpose. From the social standpoint, it is important to improve the communication

between the senior and middle-management decision makers in organizations to reduce

the waste of resources and losses associated with improvements that may keep the

business operating profitably for longer periods of time. Community health associated

with longer employment and the community financial stability is the goal for this

communication improvement. The study results indicated that prodigious differences

exist in the workplace between general and operational communication. Further emphasis

to improve the fidelity of the general and the operational communications definitions and

how each contribute or deny strategic profitability and longevity is important to those communities in which these businesses are located.

The second potential outcome was mixed. The survey results indicate subculture development, primarily in the qualitative sections. However, the findings were not supportive in the quantitative results. Developing quicker ways help identify subcultures that diverge from supportable business directions, in or outside of the company vision, is important. Such knowledge can help leaders set proper resources allotments and achieve more than competitors who do not concern themselves with internal subcultures. Additional internal benefits might derive from identifying mutual areas of distress between divisions associated with subcultures and may spur greater collaboration and cooperation between the senior and middle managers.

Koury (2013) believed in middle management's ability to be closer to the customer. Associatively, subculture identification may help senior managers discover either latent abilities or latent profitability within their own company because the middle managers might be closer to the customer than what corporate or general management oversight to understand more localized customers has the capacity to reveal. Finding how to provide early subculture identification might allow companies and organizations to stay ahead of their competitors by using the identification process to capture nascent forming relationships that only the middle managers know about. Finding the symmetry and profitability associated with budding relationships, outside the general corporate purview, might benefit the organization.

Conclusion

Bronn (2014) noted the important problem of communication between upper and lower management Bronn, but few organizations see how to implement and obtain synchronicity with efforts that are not fully developed. Engle (2013) noted several factors that influence subculture development, including the communication shortfalls between senior and middle managers, protectionism, and fear. This study supports Engle and warrants consideration for any small- to medium-sized business.

Small- to medium-sized business owners can greatly benefit a local community. As Surdez et al. (2012) noted, to become effective business people, individuals should develop their abilities to negotiate and improve their vision and leadership. This potential can be critical to communities and areas experiencing economic struggle. Providing better communication and identifying new subcultures might be a valuable component to future successes in the business development strategy supportive of those communities. The statistical analysis showed no relationships between the four variables of clarity, information deliver tools, mental frame, or the forms of message and the decision-making processes most preferred by middle management decision makers. However, further research is needed because of differences in the quantitative and qualitative results.

Business and organization strategy developers and the stakeholders in local and military government agencies, given the findings in this study, could amend their communication tactics and human resources oversight to include identification of subculture development to improve trust and profit abilities.

One shortfall is apparent: I should have explained up front to participants the difference between the clarity associated with general communication and that of operational communication needs. The Community Toolbox (2015) posited that good communication must be recent, timely, and thorough. Operational communications require this style of good communication, while general communication may be less formal or intentional. Although some participants (24%) stated there were no problems in clarity, many of those same participants (50.1%) also stated they required more thoroughness of information, more timely information, and more complete information to help middle managers set priorities within their divisions. Although information could be clear, it may not meet the requirements of good communication when associated with operations within the workplace. To improve company communication associated with operational changes in fluid environments, parallel initiatives must be initiated to reduce subculture development. The difference between the two descriptions in communication could deter fidelity in the analysis when micro-operational communication disseminates from the senior to the middle manager. Future scholars studying this phenomenon should consider this difference.

This chapter included a discussion on the propositions for social change surfacing from this study. I hope the research helps forge an understanding and sustained collaboration between the senior and middle managers in companies and organizations. These indications suggest an association of that improvement with the possibility of a nascent administrative tool to help identify subculture development growing or already grown in companies and organizations.

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Appendix A: IRB Study Approval

Dear Mr. Farrier,

This email is to notify you that the Institutional Review Board (IRB) has approved your application for the study entitled, "Overcoming the Adverse Affects of Subcultures in Organizations."

Your approval # is 05-31-16-0056521. You will need to reference this number in your dissertation and in any future funding or publication submissions. Also attached to this e-mail is the IRB approved consent form. Please note, if this is already in an on-line format, you will need to update that consent document to include the IRB approval number and expiration date.

Your IRB approval expires on May 30, 2017. One month before this expiration date, you will be sent a Continuing Review Form, which must be submitted if you wish to collect data beyond the approval expiration date.

Your IRB approval is contingent upon your adherence to the exact procedures described in the final version of the IRB application document that has been submitted as of this date. This includes maintaining your current status with the university. Your IRB approval is only valid while you are an actively enrolled student at Walden University. If you need to take a leave of absence or are otherwise unable to remain actively enrolled, your IRB approval is suspended. Absolutely NO participant recruitment or data collection may occur while a student is not actively enrolled.

If you need to make any changes to your research staff or procedures, you must obtain IRB approval by submitting the IRB Request for Change in Procedures Form. You will receive confirmation with a status update of the request within 1 week of submitting the change request form and are not permitted to implement changes prior to receiving approval. Please note that Walden University does not accept responsibility or liability for research activities conducted without the IRB's approval, and the University will not accept or grant credit for student work that fails to comply with the policies and procedures related to ethical standards in research.

When you submitted your IRB application, you made a commitment to communicate both discrete adverse events and general problems to the IRB within 1 week of their occurrence/realization. Failure to do so may result in invalidation of data, loss of academic credit, and/or loss of legal protections otherwise available to the researcher.

Both the Adverse Event Reporting form and Request for Change in Procedures form can be obtained at the IRB section of the Walden website: http://academicguides.waldenu.edu/researchcenter/orec

Researchers are expected to keep detailed records of their research activities (i.e., participant log sheets, completed consent forms, etc.) for the same period of time they retain the original data. If, in the future, you require copies of the originally submitted IRB materials, you may request them from Institutional Review Board.

Both students and faculty are invited to provide feedback on this IRB experience at the link below:

http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=qHBJzkJMUx43pZegKImdiQ_3d_3d

Sincerely,

Libby Munson
Research Ethics Support Specialist
Office of Research Ethics and Compliance
Email: irb@waldenu.edu
Fax: 626-605-0472
Phone: 612-312-1283

Office address for Walden University:
100 Washington Avenue South, Suite 900
Minneapolis, MN 55401

Information about the Walden University Institutional Review Board, including instructions for application, may be found at this link: http://academicguides.waldenu.edu/researchcenter/orec

Appendix B: Participant Consent to Take Survey

*** Thank you for taking this survey. It could be very important for the businesses in

South Carolina ***

This survey is voluntary only. You may exit the survey at any time without any

negative connotations whatsoever. Although you will not receive direct compensation for

participating in this survey, your participation may help South Carolina businesses

remain competitive in the future. Communication improvement is directly associated

with sustained profits. The need to associate where communication breakdowns occur

from senior to middle managers may help reveal where sustainable profits might be

realized, but yet unproven. Those sustained profits might help keep companies vibrant

when outside competitors attempt to take customer bases from businesses in South

Carolina. This survey is intended to be for small to mid-sized company middle managers

who report to senior managers, have at least 3 divisions (example: admin, operations,

manufacturing, shipping, etc.) within them, have over 50 employees, and are in the State

of South Carolina. It only has a few questions and it will take you approximately 6

minutes, so there are minimal risks associated with taking the survey. Please note: Only

fully completed surveys can be used and if there are questions you do not want to answer,

you may discontinue your participation at any time. Please be totally honest with your

answers. You can be assured of confidentiality of your answers as the researcher himself

does not have a list of the individuals who participate. This survey is intended to provide

a generalizable measure of communication efficiencies within companies or

organizations within the State of Carolina.

All electronic data will be stored on a thumb drive by the researcher for 5 years locked in a business office owned by the researcher and will be destroyed. The permission by the participant to "consent" to answer this instrument for communication efficiency is considered given when the participant continues after this point. Please feel free to keep a copy of this consent form. Walden University's approval number for this s study is 05-31-16-0056521 and it expires May 30, 2017.

If you have questions about your rights of participation for this survey, please contact IRB@waldenu.edu. Also, results of this survey will be available upon request should you wish to find out the research outcome by contacting the Greenville Rotary Club.

Appendix C: Confidentiality Statement

Confidentiality Statement

I will not reveal the name of the company that provided pilot data for Overcoming the Adverse Impact of Internal Sub-cultures within Organizations prepared by the Walden University PH.D. Candidate, Terrence L. Farrier.
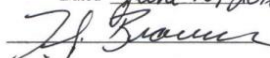
Dated *June 15, 2016*

Tracy Brouwer

Tracy Brouwer

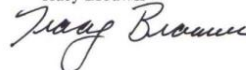# Appendix D: Pilot Study Review

Pilot Study Review
for
Overcoming the Adverse Impact of Internal Sub-cultures within Organizations

The one (1) augmentation to the study I recommend is adding (a+b) to question directions in question number 9 so that the participant will understand how to divide the percentages a little more clearly than in the original direction for answering the question. Other than that augmentation, the question and the study is still exactly the same.

Dated *June 15, 2016*

Tracy Brouwer

Appendix E: Qualitative Coding Review

Tracy S. Brouwer
305 Pinebrook Drive Boiling Springs, South Carolina 29316-7433
Cell 864-764-2071 Office 864-285-4880 Email t.s.brouwer@att.net

August 30, 2016

Dear Walden Dissertation Committee:

I have reviewed the coding process for the dissertation proposal entitled "Overcoming the
Adverse Impact of Internal Sub-cultures within Organizations" as an independent Ph.D.
candidate outside of the Walden Community. The continuous thematic review of qualified data
revealing and condensing the themes as they occur was reviewed for the accuracy of a
consecutive and rational process. I found no error in that process and agree with the themes as
presented by the examiner, Terrence L. Farrier.

Regards,

Tracy S. Brouwer MBA
ABD, Ph.D. Candidate Northcentral University
t.s.brouwer@att.net
Office (864) 285-4880
Cell (864)764-2071

Appendix F: Request for Change in Procedures – Approved

IRB

**IR
B** Sep
20

Dear Mr. Farrier,

This e-mail serves to inform you that your request for a change in procedures, submitted on 9/2/16 has been approved. You may implement the requested changes effective immediately. The approval number for this study will remain the same.

Both students and faculty are invited to provide feedback on this IRB experience at the link below:

http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=qHBJzkJMUx43pZegKlmdiQ_3d_3d

Sincerely,

Libby Munson
Research Ethics Support Specialist
Office of Research Ethics and Compliance
irb@waldenu.edu
Fax: 626-605-0472
Phone: 612-312-1283

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